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APPENDIX 1:

Message of the Consultation between Evangelicals and Orthodox

Alexandria, Egypt, July 1995

Preamble

1.1 The forty participants in the Consultation on "Proclaiming Christ Today" held at the Coptic Orthodox Conference Centre of St Verena, Alexandria, Egypt, are grateful to God for the opportunity of meeting together, noting in particular that St Verena who lived in the third century had exercised a remarkable ministry of health and healing in Switzerland. This consultation was a follow-up to an earlier consultation between Evangelicals and representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarch held in Stuttgart, Germany in February 1993. In Alexandria, in addition to members of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, there were representatives of the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Moscow and Romania and the Churches in Cyprus, Poland and in the Czech Lands and Slovak Republic, together with members of the Oriental Orthodox family from Armenia, Ethiopia, India and Egypt. The Evangelicals present largely came from member churches of the WCC, representing people of Evangelical commitment within the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed, and independently-instituted churches, from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America.

1.2 We are most grateful for the generous hospitality offered by the Coptic Orthodox Church in whose life we were able to share by seeing something of their work among youth and being present at Pope Shenouda's weekly lecture attended by more than 5,000 people in the new cathedral of St Mark in Cairo. The liveliness of the witness of the Coptic Church within a dominantly Islamic society gave us great hope for the future of Christian witness in this part of the Middle East and provided a most stimulating backcloth to our discussions. We are equally grateful to the World Council of Churches for enabling us to consolidate what was achieved in Stuttgart.

1.3 Our message cannot confine itself to the formal agenda of papers presented and ensuing discussion: perhaps even more fundamental was our praying

together, listening together to the Word of God, and a rich diversity of personal encounters, whereby all came to appreciate the depth of Christian faith and experience incarnated in those coming from a variety of Christian traditions hitherto only imperfectly known to one another. Because of this we believe that personal encounter as much as written statements greatly advance ecumenical understanding and co-operation.

1.4 Thus Evangelicals learnt with great delight of some of the achievements of the evangelistic endeavours of the different Orthodox churches, appreciated the Biblical theology and deep Christological undergirding of their current missiology, and were impressed by signs of renewal within the Orthodox family. Orthodox members paid testimony to the emphasis given by Evangelicals to God's initiative in redemption, learnt with interest of the increasing respect of some Evangelicals for the historic witness of the church throughout the ages (the continuous witness of the Holy Spirit through the people of God in every generation) and the importance of the eucharist both for nourishing mission in the world today, and for protecting the church against irresponsible appeal to any individual's isolated experience.

1.5 Our consultation was of an informal kind and makes no formally-agreed policy recommendations.

Shared convictions

2.1 The theme of our meeting, "Proclaiming Christ Today", revealed the sharing of much common ground especially in the theology of mission, the centrality and authority of Scripture, and faithfulness to the apostolic faith amidst the challenge of a secularised world. These truths we affirmed whilst recognizing the cultural and historical conditioning of all our church traditions and theological formulations. Together we came to recognize our need to be open to the continuing work of the triune God in our witness in and to our particular contexts.

2.2 There were times in our conversations when Evangelicals sounded like Orthodox and Orthodox spoke a distinctly evangelical language, and we are grateful to God for that. Together we affirmed the centrality of Christ and the urgency of being witness (martyria) to Him in every part of the world.

2.3 'Proclamation of Jesus Christ requires a personal response... The Living Word of God is never external, unrelational, disconnected, but always calling for personal conversion and relational communion.' Such a 'conversion is more than appropriation of a message: it is a commitment to Jesus Christ, imitating his death and resurrection in a very visible and tangible way.' That which begins with a personal commitment must, however, immediately lead into relationship with other members of the Body of Christ, the local witnessing community. 'The truth of the gospel calls for more than belief in terms of intellectual assent: it is a truth to be participated in.'

2.4 Solidarity between Christians of differing traditions is of crucial importance recognizing that some have suffered more than others: when one member suffers all suffer. In this spirit we share Christian love with all who are oppressed.

2.5 There was considerable discussion of the extent to which the proclamation of Christ was *implicit* within the witness of the faithful regularly celebrating the liturgy week by week, especially in times of persecution, and the extent to which it was necessary to add to this, *explicit* testimony to the good news in Jesus Christ in ways that extend beyond the liturgy and spell out the demands of the gospel in the contemporary world.

2.6 Associated with this was discussion of who might be involved in presenting the message of salvation: was this the exclusive responsibility of the local congregation or could that local congregation be aided in its task by more specialised national and international missionary bodies? Clearly such organizations should not go into any situation without first consulting the local churches in the area.

2.7 The importance of 'the liturgy after the liturgy' was stressed: that is to say that, complementary to the gathering of the people of God together for worship of the Triune God within the sanctuary is their dispersal back into the world, there to be witnesses of faith, there too to do liturgy, that is, to undertake the work of the people of God. Indeed it was suggested that whilst the number of celebrants in the sanctuary were limited, all believers had a priestly role to fulfil in daily witness.

2.8 The same emphasis was also present in our discussion of the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication, especially since language had lost the essential experiential dimension always entailed within the way the Hebrew mind confessed its faith: we need to return to 'the integration of word and deed, of presence and proclamation in our witness'.

2.9 Attention was focused on the nature of authentic mission, which had to be that which followed the model given by Jesus himself. Thus its particular marks had to be that it was costly, vulnerable to human rejection, holistic and always majoring on love.

2.10 The converse to this was the posing of questions about the ethics of evangelism: What were the limits of authentic evangelism? What methods were to be rejected as in conflict with the model provided by Jesus? When does legitimate evangelism become illegitimate proselytism?

2.11 More attention needed to be given to those who receive our proclamation, for example by giving more thought to their ability to respond to the message proclaimed, whether because of social constraint, economic condition, or the pluralistic context in which their lives are set. On more than one occasion speakers referred to the spiritual sensitivity and the appropriate apologetics required for proclaiming Christ in a context of many religions. There is a need to discern the Christ-ward call latent in people's faith traditions and bring them to a

personal, experiential encounter with the unique and living Christ. Proclaiming Christ in a context of many religions should be undertaken, confident that such proclamation was able to make its appeal effectively in that forum.

2.12 Proclaiming Christ in a post-Christian culture which does its best to 'materialise humankind' is no easier. An analysis of all culture as a context for sensitive evangelism is necessary.

2.13 Our relationships in the past have not been, and indeed in many parts of the world today are not, all that they might be, and, therefore, each constituency would do well to consider what it has to repent of in relationship to the other and in relationship to the missionary calling of the church. Authentic incarnational witness cannot bypass the pain and obstacle of a divided church, including the need to heal the divide between Western and Eastern Christianity.

2.14. In situations where different religions live in close proximity with one another, common action to secure a civil society (in which those of different religious faiths and none may participate fully and freely), by all religious leaders is highly desirable.

Areas where further work needs to be done

3. More work needs to be undertaken in the following areas of ongoing tension:

- (1) divergent ecclesiologies
- (2) the sacraments
- (3) the saints and their veneration
- (4) the place of Mary in the faith of the church
- (5) differing baptismal theology and practice
- (6) our understanding of salvation
- (7) effective mechanisms for co-operation in common witness.

Future plans

The Consultation:

4.1 COMMENDS the message and the reports of the groups for study, reflection and response by the appropriate offices of the WCC, our individual churches, and major Evangelical organizations.

4.2 RECOMMENDS that conversations between the Orthodox and those of Evangelical commitment continue, with a view to identifying new areas of future co-operation, identifying the desirability of bringing together missiologists, theologians, those responsible for ministerial formation, and for work among the youth.

4.3 URGES the traditions from which we come to commit themselves to an ongoing process of collaboration and to a search for deeper understanding.

4.4 BELIEVES that similar consultations could usefully take place within the regions with a view to identifying the priorities for local ventures together.

4.5 OFFERS the present documentation to the forthcoming Conference on Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Conclusion

5. Rejoicing in the Triune God's gifts to us in one another, and, in the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, we pray for His continued guidance as we seek to support one another in hope in our common endeavour to fulfil the great commission, Amen.

(Quotations in this document are taken from papers presented to the Consultation).

APPENDIX 2:

Insights from the Groups

Alexandria, Egypt, July 1995

The following notes on discussion within the several groups were presented to the plenary but there was no attempt to secure agreement on such a wide ranging cluster of issues: accordingly they represent views presented and not positions agreed.

Historical wounds and contemporary rapprochement

Prejudices, caricatures and distorted images very often seem to determine Evangelical attitudes towards Orthodox Christians and sometimes Orthodox attitudes to Evangelicals. Attitudes, for instance, which regard a predominantly Orthodox country simply as a pagan territory never touched by Christianity have deeply hurt feelings of Orthodox Christians. On the other side, whilst recognizing the problem associated with foreign-funded sectarian activity, the indiscriminate labelling of Protestant and Evangelical groups as 'sects' have created feelings of rejection and misconception.

There is little knowledge in many Western Christian circles of the fact that Orthodox feelings of anger about proselytism have a longer and more complicated historical background than what is usually assumed. Negative Western impact on Eastern Christianity did not start with the invasion of Western groups in the late 1980s, but goes back to the roots of the historical schism between West and East in the 11th century. Continued attempts by the Latin West to enforce an ecclesial union by coercion have added to long-standing fears within Orthodoxy of its becoming "Westernised" and divided by external ecclesiastical influences. The exploitation of vulnerable situations in the allegedly weaker Christian East shows an ignorance of a history of Christian perseverance, resistance and martyrdom. This

ignorance has often been the hidden foundation of Western attitudes towards Eastern Christianity.

Some Evangelical minorities also have a history of persecution from state churches in Eastern Europe, and therefore harbour suspicions of any attempt to recreate the kind of Church-State relations which they see as a threat to their freedom. They also experience local situations where their reputation and, consequently, their life and witness are now libelled.

Mutual understanding involves, therefore, the recalling of a painful history. It might also involve a long process of the healing of memories and reconciliation through understanding on both sides. Within the broad framework of such a process, negative perceptions on either side may be corrected by studying each other's history as the work of the Holy Spirit, participating empathically in each other's life of common worship, respecting historical achievements of each other's traditions even when they appear at first glance to be wholly contrary to one's own beliefs, and beholding with deep gratitude the martyrs and saints of each other's tradition.

Mutual Theological/Missiological Enrichment

Orthodox and Evangelicals agree on the need to develop a clarified theological vocabulary of mission to express their faith. Theological differences must not be minimized for the sake of unity since real and legitimate differences do exist. The most important areas of agreement, however, are in the truths expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (known as the dogma of the 318 scholars/Fathers).

A strong christocentrism within a trinitarian framework should serve as the foundation for Orthodox-Evangelical dialogue. Both sides would further stress the importance of viewing the Church as the body of Christ in time. There are, however, different emphases on how -- liturgically and sacramentally -- this faith community is lived out in diverse cultural contexts.

Orthodox and Evangelicals agree that the apostolic faith must be proclaimed to everyone everywhere -- within our Churches as well as to the world. A part of that task demands that we seek to "make Christians truly Christian".

Perhaps the most fruitful point of intersection between the Orthodox and Evangelical communities is to be found in spirituality. Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism share a common concern for true doctrine and a vibrant spiritual life. Our monastic and pietistic traditions converge on this point and offer us common ground for mutual enrichment.

Identifying Flash Points of Potential Divergence

Major divergences between Orthodox and Evangelicals hinge on baptism and sacramental practice, various misconceptions or aborted communications concerning the veneration of saints and the proper use of icons, differences about ecclesial organization and authority, and whether the free and open competition of confessions in the "free market" of religious ideas is ultimately strengthening or weakening of the life of both church and society.

The most divisive and counter-ecumenical attitudes and issues as understood by the Orthodox are: proselytism, ignoring or demeaning the history of martyrdom, ignorance and insensitivity toward centuries of a Christian culture and the treating of it as if unevangelized, falsely or maliciously stereotyping popular Orthodox practice as idolatrous, unbiblical, backward, or lacking in spiritual depth.

Evangelical difficulties with Orthodoxy often tend to revolve around religious and civil liberty concerns, including the right of free assembly, freedom of speech and press, and freedom to disseminate ideas.

Evangelicals and Orthodox jointly disavow that syncretism in the dialogue with world religions which so affirms salvific universalism that it denies the sole Lordship of Jesus Christ and the uniqueness of Christian revelation. They are largely very close together on politically divisive issues, notably those on sexuality, which in some countries focus on abortion, homosexuality, sexual permissiveness, and hedonism.

Several topics, where theological divergencies exist, demand for further clarification and future dialogue. These include:

- the understanding of conversion (individual decision versus community-based faith experience, single-event versus continued process, inner experience versus more wholistic metanoia/repentance);

- the relation between Church and salvation. What is the meaning of salvation through or in the Church? What does it mean to affirm the uniqueness of Christ while at the same time not limiting the scope of the working of the Holy Spirit in the whole cosmos, i.e. beyond the institutional Church? This is particularly relevant within the context of inter-religious dialogue.

Among several key issues, two of the more important ones that unite and divide our communities are the meaning of "tradition" and the nature of "baptismal communion".

(a) *Tradition*. There is a need to identify and to clarify Evangelical and Orthodox conceptions of tradition.

- (i) A greater *knowledge* of tradition is needed by Evangelical communities. There is a need to raise the level of historical *consciousness* in the minds of believers. Some cultural contexts require more of this than do others. Our faith has a long history and this must occupy a place of special importance.

(ii) The *content* of tradition remains an open question for Evangelicals. How much of the past has continuing relevance for the present? Clearly there exists an evangelical *paradosis* that goes back to the Reformers. Among Evangelicals there is less consensus about perceiving the life of the Spirit in the pre-Reformation period. While Evangelicals strongly wish to claim the Church Fathers as part of their theological heritage, some aspects of patristic theology cannot be accepted by certain communities because of its perceived lack of conformity with the Bible. The validity of icons in Christian worship remains a problem for some Evangelicals, and should be explored at some future date. For the Orthodox, tradition includes not just the reception of truths, but also a living connection with the past through the bond of the Holy Spirit in the Church, then and now.

(iii) The *authority* of tradition requires a clarification of the relation of Scripture and tradition or the ongoing life of the Body of Christ. Following the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, Evangelicals hold the Bible as the final authority for faith and practice. The Orthodox likewise ascribe to the Bible an authoritative role, but stress the importance of tradition as the proper context for biblical exegesis. Hence, the Lord himself through the Church is the final criterion of truth. In order not to confuse national cultures with the Gospel itself, the Orthodox distinguish "T"radition (apostolic truth) from "t"radition (human customs).

(iv) The Gospel demands that we *participate* in tradition by entering into communion with the risen Lord and proclaiming the Good News of salvation to those outside the Church. On this Orthodox and Evangelicals are agreed.

(b) *Baptismal Communion*. Most would agree that infant baptism requires taking seriously confirmation or the reaffirmation of baptismal faith at an age of accountability, so that both believer's baptism and infant baptism are viewed as complementary traditions. It was also widely believed that the Lima document on 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' could usefully guide future conversations on baptism. Most of those who were not Baptists believed that the 'rebaptism' of those already baptised should cease but the Baptists defended their right to 'rebaptize' those who so requested it thought clearly there was need for a great deal of sensitivity in approaching this issue.

The area of baptism and baptismal communion highlights more than any other the great diversity within Evangelicalism. The identity of Evangelicalism, therefore, needs to be understood as a multiformed phenomena. Any comparison with Orthodoxy must be done on a community by community basis. Traditional differences remain over the validity of infant baptism and the efficacy of the sacrament. For the Orthodox, baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the kingdom of God and life in the Church. Some Evangelical Reformation traditions would agree but others would not. It was underlined that there is a need for further

study, reflection, and response to the Lima Document on 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' as a promising platform for both the Orthodox and Evangelical communities. Both Orthodox and Evangelicals, however, are agreed that God is not confined to the sacraments to bring about new life in Christ; we humans need the sacrament, but God does not.

A common missiological affirmation

As Orthodox and Evangelicals we affirm together that mission or witness is inherent in the very nature of the church. We seek a mediating principle between insensitive Evangelical proselytism and inordinate Orthodox territorialism. For Evangelicals this means a deeper level of respect for the liturgical, iconographic, and martyrial traditions of Orthodoxy. Mission should be focused on those outside the community of the church: it was a most serious breach of Christian fellowship to attempt to disquiet those who were faithful in their celebration of the liturgy. For Orthodox this means in some countries greater tolerance for pluralism and relaxed constraints on religious freedom.

Evangelization and "Proselytism"

That false activity which under the aegis of Evangelicalism seeks manipulatively to convert Christians from one confession to another through methods that contradict the spirit of Christian love and fellowship is to be deplored and condemned. We pledge to admonish fellow Christian believers to desist from such practices, and from attitudes of confessional pride and inordinate ethnocentricity.

Although the common theological ground between Orthodox and Evangelicals is much broader than usually realized, there are examples of continuing conflicts and areas of theological divergence where future dialogue and clarification are needed. Most of the conflicts start with inappropriate ways of perceiving one another. For instance, to pose of an Orthodox Christian the question "have you been saved?" would be an insult and a hurt. Proselytism thus seems to start even before any conscious attempts to win converts from other living faith traditions. It already exists in any inclination to view another person's faith in terms only of one's own faith categories and understanding.

Open and strategic proselytism takes place in regions or in nations which have locally rooted forms of Christianity and where evangelistic attempts are made without consulting with the local churches beforehand. What makes the situation worse is the financial capacity of sending organizations. This implies an unbalanced access to media and print technology, educational, medical and professional services.

What makes some people from the Evangelical tradition more tempted to engage in proselytism, deliberately or unintentionally, is a certain tendency to present an over-individualistic concept of conversion, by focusing only on a personal or individual relation to Christ to the exclusion of any rootedness in ecclesial community or tradition, an aspect which is more emphasized by the Orthodox.

As to the missiological significance of already existing local churches:

(a) Where a church has become deeply interwoven over a long period of time with a particular national culture or ethos, all efforts in Christian mission should respect that cultural intertwining, without ceasing to be critical in timely and restrained ways of excessive accommodation to a nation or culture.

(b) Evangelicals should inform fellow Evangelicals that the Evangel is already powerfully present in Orthodox liturgy and church life.

(c) Where the unevangelized are identified as the concern of the church's mission, great care should be taken not to identify covertly or disingenuously one's own specific cultural history with the will of God.

Dialogue with Evangelical sending agencies that are not currently part of the ecumenical movement though of extreme difficulty is imperative. Perhaps this could best be accomplished through the initiative of Evangelicals from within WCC member-churches. This would constitute an Evangelical-to-Evangelical dialogue. Ecumenically-minded Evangelicals should encourage those participating in ecclesiological and culturally insensitive enterprises to listen seriously to Orthodox concerns. For many Orthodox a halt in insensitive sending practices is a prerequisite to ecumenical dialogue and the building of trust.

Areas of missiological convergence – A holistic understanding of witness

Two messages could provide a starting point for deepening our understanding of missiological convergence: Evangelicals in our consultation have learned anew:

- that Orthodoxy has a deep appreciation of Biblical tradition, its continuous re-reading and recapitulation in liturgy, and its continuing interpretation for contemporary times;

- that Orthodoxy has a profound missionary tradition and missionary understanding of the Church both in its history as well as in important signs of renewal today (i.e. Orthodox youth movements, Sunday School movements, etc.);

Christian witness has been maintained by the Orthodox churches for almost five centuries under successive foreign regimes, Muslim domination and difficult socio-political conditions, a fact that gives testimony to the missionary character and perseverance of the Orthodox faith tradition.

There was a clear consensus that the missionary task and nature of the Church, i.e. to give witness to God the creator, to proclaim the Lordship of Christ

over against all powers in society, and to witness for the life-giving Spirit of God in all nations, is held in both streams of Christianity. The centrality of evangelistic responsibility as well as of the central role of the Bible in missionary work and in renewing theology was consequently affirmed by both sides.

It was also maintained that only a holistic understanding and practice of martyrria; keeping together proclamation and action; liturgical and prophetic witness; personal spirituality and social responsibility; will serve properly the missionary task of the ecumenical community.

When examining areas of missiological convergence, it is also necessary to discuss the issue of religious freedom. A general affirmation of a shared mission responsibility includes, for most of us, the acceptance of a plurality of historically-founded Christian churches even in traditionally Orthodox countries. The proposition and notion of "canonical territories", according to which it would not be allowed in principle to other than but one Church tradition to be present in one region, does not seem to be applicable to the complex situation in some Eastern European countries today. On the other hand, it was emphatically affirmed that support for the witness of locally and historically-rooted Church community always has priority over against any self-interested attempt to establish a new church tradition which has neither historical rooting nor is in ecumenical partnership with the existing local churches.

On this point, it should be kept in mind that in many Muslim countries Orthodox Christianity occupies the position of an inculturated faith with a long standing, centuries-old experience of survival in a predominantly Muslim context and in the communication of its message to a non-western environment. Its experiences therefore should not be easily bypassed but thoroughly considered, studied and supported from Christians of other traditions.

Imperatives for an ecumenical discipline of mission

More than once the following question was asked: To whom shall we (both Orthodox and historical Protestant churches) address our complaints about proselytism? Can we really reach those organisations working outside the existing channels of ecumenical cooperation? What are the proper instruments and channels of communication for dialogue with para-church organizations which have little accountability-structure with mainline-churches?

It was emphasized on this matter that we need more effective mechanisms of enlarged ecumenical cooperation, an extended scope of mutual missiological education and principles of mutual accountability. The WCC and regional ecumenical organizations could help to encourage their member-churches as well as non-member Evangelical organizations to develop proper instruments to this effect.

The question also was asked whether we need a more developed ethics of missionary sending and an ethic of missionary receiving. It was suggested that principles for an ecumenical code of behaviour in common mission ("ecumenical discipline for mission") could be worked out as a means of strengthening mutual accountability and that they might be shared and tested with national associations of Evangelical mission organisations. Some preliminary points for an ecumenical discipline for mission were tentatively indicated in our discussions:

(a) Genuine and deep respect for existing local church traditions is a pre-condition for any participation in ecumenical common mission.

(b) Contact with local and neighbouring churches, informing them of evangelistic goals, methods and financial resources, is an imperative. Before entering into a given region, an invitation from locally-rooted churches to missionary groups or to personnel from outside should be a prerequisite.

(c) Being fully supportive of the missionary and social work of locally-rooted churches is a priority.

(d) A joint committee for mission could serve as a clearing place for evangelistic projects and for their periodic evaluation.

(e) No means should be applied which exercises coercion, financial pressure or cultural uprooting or is threatening to the integrity of a local church.

(f) New converts should be directed where possible to existing churches.

Common tasks in the ecumenical movement

Despite conflicts and tensions, signs and new developments were reported from many countries of a growing rapprochement between Orthodox and Evangelical Christians. This very consultation here in the Middle East would probably not have been possible in this spirit fifteen years ago. In many countries personal encounters between Evangelical and Orthodox have increased considerably, new mechanisms of cooperation have been formulated and a new depth of mutual understanding has been developed. Unfortunately new evangelistic initiatives of a sectarian kind seem to endanger and partly to destroy what has otherwise been reached as a consensus in some regions.

The urgent need for increased mutual cooperation and learning is further underlined by the following factors:

(a) Both within Orthodoxy and the Evangelical movement there exist signs of a growing influence of an unhelpful conservatism and even fundamentalism which at its worst can impact upon the credibility of Christian witness. Evangelical and Orthodox Christians need each other to overcome isolation and to strengthen their respective ecumenical commitments.

(b) In predominantly Muslim countries insensitive forms of evangelistic witness have contributed to reducing and to endangering the operating space of historical local churches because they have sometimes led to hostile Muslim

counter-reactions. Ecumenical sensitivity and cooperation between Evangelicals and Orthodox have, therefore, a particular urgency in contexts where Christian churches are in the minority.

(c) The successful activity of non-Christian sectarian groups and peculiar forms of religious ideologies is increasing influence, owing to their personnel, and financial outpouring that is occurring on a massive scale in many countries. The existence of this common threat by sectarian religious groups outside Christianity or by these distorted forms of Christianity highlights the urgency of an improved Evangelical-Orthodox cooperation.

We rejoice that many forms of cooperation between Evangelicals and Orthodox already exist but they need further development. Among these are: the establishment of societies for translating the Bible; societies for the cooperative distribution of the Bible; shared or coordinated ministries of compassion and relief; new organizations for the joint study of Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism; shared efforts in the recovery of patristic exegesis; some broadcast ministries, such as "Credo" in the Czech Republic, which receive questions from all callers about the Bible; scholarly societies such as the International Society for Biblical Literature, the Oxford Patristic Conference, the Evangelical Theological Society, and the Eastern Christianity sections of various societies for the study of religion, where the texts of ecumenism are studied.

Emerging features of our common participation in the ecumenical movement as Orthodox and Evangelicals include (a) earnest prayers for the deepening of each other's ministries and congregational life, (b) full and open consultation on emerging ministries, and (c) practising missiological principles widely agreed upon by both Orthodox and Evangelicals, such as cross-cultural sensitivity, timely and sufficient ecumenical consultation, restraint against presumptions about cultural superiority, and a reasonable level of toleration of diversity in doctrinal and sacramental practice.

With regard to future areas of cooperation between Evangelical and Orthodox Christians the following points have been discussed and suggested:

(a) *Practical issues.*

- strengthening ecumenical cooperation in Bible societies;
- increasing ecumenical cooperation in the production of catechetical material and visual media;
- developing common methods of Bible study;
- working out ecumenical projects for diaconal and social projects;
- establishing common seminars with college students or students in theological education;
- developing, on the level of the practical outworking of the faith, a functional cooperation in such areas as youth conferences, educational meetings and evangelistic outreach;

- encouraging Orthodox and Evangelical speakers to participate in the life of each others' churches;
- introducing courses on ecumenism and missiology in all denominational colleges;
- publishing articles on Evangelical-Orthodox dialogue in leading Evangelical-Orthodox periodicals;
- working out common suggestions for religious legislation in post-communist countries;
- developing agreed syllabi for religious education in state schools.

(b) *Theological issues.*

- developing a critical understanding of an ethic concerning the use of mass media;
- contributing to the continuing discussion of gospel and culture and appropriate ways of contextualizing the faith;
- cooperating in the development of a "missiology for the West";
- developing a theology of inter-religious dialogue which does not surrender the uniqueness of Christ to theological relativism;
- contributing to the development of a theology of ecology.

(c) *Ecumenical issues.*

- encouraging WCC Evangelicals to work as ecumenical mediators to other Evangelicals in explaining Orthodoxy, its liturgical tradition, its missionary self-understanding, its strength and its needs;
- educating experts for an ecumenical information service on new religious movements and non-christian sects;
- bringing together a delegation of Orthodox experts and bishops to talk to some leaders of Evangelical para-church organizations and right-wing Evangelicalism in the US;
- strengthening those who are ecumenically-minded, both within the Evangelical movement and within the Orthodox churches.

APPENDIX 3:

Evangelicals: Who are we? *Historic Summary and Traits of Identification*

Bishop Björn Bue

Some of us were present at the Orthodox-Evangelical meeting in Stuttgart in February 1993. To a certain extent it has not been possible to continue the dialogue on the basis of our talks in 1993. The reason for this seems to be a fundamental lack of understanding on who the Evangelicals are. The lack of ecclesiology on behalf of the Evangelicals made it difficult for the Orthodox to get an exact notion on how to relate to the Evangelicals.

As we are starting anew, I think it is primordial on the part of the Orthodox to recognise that this is a dialogue of another nature than the traditional bi-lateral theological dialogues between Orthodox churches and other confessional denominations.

We are here present as Evangelicals and not representing officially our churches. We are however all members of a local church, being part of a denomination. But in this particular connection, we consider ourselves as partners in a world-wide movement, namely *The Evangelical Movement*.¹

My introductory presentation will try to give a picture of the Evangelicals that hopefully could be of some help to the understanding by the Orthodox. My desire is to find convergences that could make it possible for us to unite in a common passion: *Proclaiming Christ Today*.

¹ Main sources used for this presentation: *The Lausanne Covenant and Manila Manifesto*. Mark Ellingsen, *The Evangelical Movements*, Augsburg Publishing House, 1988. John Stott, "Twenty years after Lausanne: Some personal rejections," in: *International Bulletin*, April 1995. R.T. France and A.E. Mc Groth, *Evangelical Anglicans*, Great Britain, 1993. David L. Edwards and John Stott, *Essentials*, Holden & Stoughton, 1988.

Evangelicalism and Evangelicals

On the global Christian scene, the Evangelicals can no longer be ignored. Any assessment of the status and developing trends of world Christianity shows the same findings: evangelicalism is of growing importance to the world-wide church. The global renaissance of evangelicalism is sensed on all continents. Even Latin America, traditionally regarded as a stronghold of Roman Catholicism, is now expected to become dominated by evangelicalism by the year 2025. The growth and emerging influence of evangelicalism have led mainline theologians to examine the movement in terms of its theological viewpoints. Only a few years ago such theological examinations were mainly done to criticise evangelical theology. Today Evangelicals are taken seriously by mainline churches and the ecumenical movement. Therefore, a genuine dialogue is being undertaken. This present dialogue here in Alexandria is a sign of the new-found evangelical confidence and visibility. Even with the Roman Catholic Church a dialogue has been held: *ERCDOM* (Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue On Mission).

In this short presentation it will be impossible to give an extensive sketch of the evangelical movement. A presentation of the evangelicals is further complicated by the problem of where to begin. Some would place the roots of the evangelical movement back to the reformation at the 16th century, where the earliest Protestant churches were identified as *evangelical*. In the 1530s the term *protestant* came to be more significant. However, this term was imposed upon evangelicals by their opponents, and was not one of their own choosing. *Evangelical* is the term chosen by Evangelicals to refer to themselves.

Some might refer to the deviation of the term *evangelical* from the New Testament Greek word *euangelion*, meaning gospel, or good news, so that the history of the evangelical movement must begin with Jesus, or at least include the entire history of the Protestant tradition. A great number of Christians throughout the world identify themselves as *evangelicals*, being part of the evangelical movement. As such these Christians have a special kind of fellowship with others who identify themselves as evangelicals across denominational boundaries. This fellowship is more intimate than the links Evangelicals have with those in their own denomination who do not identify themselves as fellow Evangelicals.

This shows that evangelicalism is *trans-denominational*. It is not confined to any one denomination, nor is it a denomination in its own right. There is no inconsistency involved in speaking of "Anglican evangelicals," "Presbyterian evangelicals," "Methodist evangelicals," "Lutheran evangelicals," "Roman Catholic evangelicals," etc. In some countries evangelicalism is even becoming a significant force within the Roman Catholic church, with local Bible Study groups being the centre of renewal and growth. There is a considerable cross fertilisation between leading evangelical institutions world-wide (many of which do not operate within denominational boundaries) especially seminaries, graduate schools of

theology and research institutes, publishing houses, journals, television and radio networks, and ministerial conventions.

Furthermore, evangelicalism is not a denomination in itself, possessed of a distinctive ecclesiology, but a trend within the mainstream denominations. There is a continuous discussion going on among Evangelicals on how to relate to the official churches. If liberal theology becomes too influential, voices raise and claim the withdrawal from the existing churches and the forming of separate evangelical denominations. But influential evangelical leaders continue to insist that the rightful place is within these mainstream denominations, which then could be renewed from within.

No Specific Ecclesiology

Evangelicalism would like to present itself as an ecumenical movement. There is a natural affinity amongst Evangelicals, irrespective of their denominational associations, which arises from a common commitment to a set of shared beliefs and outlooks. Evangelicals often refuse to allow any specific ecclesiology to be seen as normative. They would honour the orders which are clearly grounded in the New Testament and Christian tradition. This means that the potentially divisive matters of church ordering and government are treated as of secondary importance, nearly as *adiaphoron*.

Historically, evangelicalism has never been committed to any particular theory of the church, regarding the New Testament as being open to a number of interpretations in this respect. Denominational distinctives therefore are of secondary importance to the gospel itself. This most emphatically does not mean that evangelicals lack commitment to the church as the body of Christ, rather it means that evangelicals are not committed to any one theory of the church. This does not mean that ecclesiology is of no importance to evangelical Christians. To many of us, members of mainline churches, the ecclesiology and the sacraments are of great importance, but do not belong to the common glue binding evangelicals from different theological traditions together. These facts are of central importance to an informed understanding of the evangelical movement.

Uniting Beliefs

Historically, we can identify four major theological assumptions uniting the Evangelicals:

- (a) The authority and sufficiency of Scripture.
- (b) The uniqueness of redemption through the death of Christ upon the cross.
- (c) The need for personal conversion.
- (d) The necessity and urgency of evangelism and mission.

Persons and groups that would not bind themselves to these truths could not be reckoned as evangelicals.

The Emergence of the Evangelical Movement

An essential question which demands some clarification, concerns the relation between fundamentalism and evangelicalism. They are not identical. The evangelical movement, as we understand it, actually did not emerge in the United States until the 1940s, but it had been preceded by the so-called fundamentalist movement.

Fundamentalism, as developed in North America in the beginning of this century, could summarily be characterised as following:

- Biblically, fundamentalism is hostile to the notion of biblical criticism in any form, and is committed to a literal interpretation of Scripture.
- Theologically, fundamentalism is committed to a narrow set of doctrines, some of which evangelicalism regards as peripheral or even irrelevant.
- Sociologically, fundamentalism is a reactionary counter-cultural movement, with a tight criteria of membership.

The evangelical movement takes a more constructive and less defensive stand than the fundamentalist. Evangelicals do not see themselves as defenders of faith over against culture. Confronted by theological liberalism and cultural decay, they proclaim the fundamental gospel principals while engaging in modern society in order to influence and transform it.

The separatist tendencies of fundamentalism are largely repudiated by evangelicals. The man usually given credit for organising the evangelical movement in North America, Harold Ockenga (1905-1985), proposed that the task of evangelicals should be "to infiltrate, rather than separate" from their churches. It is important to keep in mind the distinction between evangelicals and fundamentalists, in order not too quickly dismiss the evangelical movement with unfair characterisation which only apply to fundamentalism.²

I particularly stress this distinction in the context of our dialogue as I know the embarrassment of historical national church leaders in the former Soviet-Union and Eastern Europe, after the enormous confusion caused by an influx of Western mission organisations after the collapse of Euro-Marxism. I would not hesitate to categorise the greater part of these empire-building enterprises as being part of the fundamentalists, and not as traditional evangelicals.

A landmark in the development of the evangelical movement is the establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942 in USA. This resulted in a new confidence and a further encouragement for the movement in the

² cf. the Norwegian slogan: "Fill the Institutions". Inner Mission. The Free Faculty of Theology.

1940s. Thus in 1947, the flagship institution for the new movement, the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, was founded. *Christianity Today*, the most important evangelical periodical, came into being. Thanks to Billy Graham and the general religious revival in the 1950s, the evangelical movement enjoyed growth and a new status in the first 25 years after World War II.

Some developments in the 1960s and the 1970s, worked to enhance the image of evangelicalism in the American public and to distance it from being too closely associated with fundamentalism. Among these factors, which were also responsible for the increased international attention given the movement, were the continuous positive image of Billy Graham and his contacts with influential politicians. A Gallop Poll in 1976 discovered that almost one out of every five Americans (18%), almost one out of every two Protestants, holds faith commitments which are compatible with evangelical beliefs (a *born again* experience, authority of the Bible, witnessing their faith to others). Based on these data and on the election of Jimmy Carter, a born again Christian, to the American presidency, Gallop and *Newsweek* magazine named 1976 "the year of the Evangelicals." It clearly marked the beginning of renewed interest in, and attention to the Evangelical phenomenon. A 1980 study on American clergy of all denominations, conducted by the Gallop organisation, indicated that 53% identified themselves as Evangelicals. The proportion of younger clergy (under age 30) who identified themselves in this way, is even higher (in Norway a similar study would probably lead to the identification of 60-80% of the clergy as Evangelicals).

The Evangelical Movement in Europe

The evangelical movement in Europe and in the Third World has developed independently and differently, not springing out of fundamentalism as was the situation in North America. In the German-Scandinavian language setting two different words are used. *Evangelisch* denotes *Protestant*, more specifically Lutheran in the German context, whilst a new word *Evangelical* has been coined to refer to theological conservatives, identifying with the conservative evangelical movement.

Evangelical theology has made a great impact on European Christianity in the 19th and 20th century, but the organisation of the evangelical movement is in many respect a post World War II phenomenon in Europe and in the Third World. The so-called *Bekennnisbewegung* (confessing movement) has largely developed in reaction to two distressing circumstances:

- (a) the emergence of new pluralistic social mores, and
- (b) the theological controversy, generated by the work of German New Testament scholar, Rudolf Bultmann, and his programme of "demythologisation" (the idea that the gospel, as presented in Scripture,

is framed by a mythological world view and demands that we re-conceptualise its deeper truth in terms of our modern world view).³

European Roots

The Evangelical Alliance, which is considered the predecessor of World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), was founded in 1846. This organisation itself inspired the emergence of several world mission organisations, like the World Christian Student Association. In so doing, the Evangelical Alliance helped create a climate which made possible the establishment of various organisations, which became predecessors of the World Council of Churches (the Edinburgh Conference on World Mission in 1910, the International Missionary Council, etc.). The modern ecumenical movement would have been unthinkable apart from the contribution of these early European Evangelicals. A fact that is quite ironic given the present Evangelical critiques of the ecumenical movement.⁴

Conservative *Christendom* in Europe in the 18th and 19th century has been marked by a strong emphasis on foreign mission work. So-called para-church organisations, free mission organisations, working for the spreading of the gospel, were formed. People supporting mission work through these organisations were usually all members of the mainline churches in Scandinavia, Great Britain, Germany and The Netherlands. Liberal theology would have no zeal for spreading the gospel. Thus missionaries bringing the gospel to Africa, Asia and Latin America were in great majority conservative Evangelicals. This explains why most of the younger churches in the Third World are theologically rooted in conservative evangelical theology.

It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that different theological streams of liberal character were making their influence in the Third World churches. As a result of the forming of confessional world bodies like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), and also the World Council of Churches (WCC), the younger churches in the Third World got direct relations to the mainline churches and not only influence from the missionary organisations. Students of theology from the younger churches got degrees from other than traditional evangelical theological schools.

From the 1960s theological tension is being felt in many churches. This gives birth to regional evangelical associations, like the AEAM (Association of

³ Mark Ellingsen, *The Evangelical Movement*, p. 107.

⁴ Mark Ellingsen, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar) and likewise Evangelical Associations in Asia and Latin America.

The evangelical background of traditional missionaries must be understood in order to realise why most Third World churches have a conservative theological background.

The evangelical movements are greatly indebted to a diversity of streams like pietism, revivalism and puritanism. These differences of background have been united by a sense of common enemies. They all emerged out of a context which perceived their culture to be in chaos and decay. In response all took a position which stressed regeneration and a sanctified life, always with a strong affirmation of the Bible's authority.⁵

The diversity of the constituent streams of evangelicalism helps us to appreciate the rich diversity which characterises the evangelical movement.

The Lausanne Movement

At this point of my presentation, I think that my Orthodox friends, used to a more structural ecclesial environment, are very bewildered. I must admit that it is difficult to decide where to base present days evangelical positions. I have chosen to give a more extensive presentation of the Lausanne Movement instead of linking the presentation to World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), founded in 1951 as an international association of Evangelical churches. The above mentioned National Association of Evangelicals in the United States is included in WEF. These organisations provide a home for those who are part of evangelical churches, but they are not a comfortable place for the many evangelicals who are part of mainline churches.

For the evangelical movement, the Lausanne Movement has certainly been the most decisive and influential for the development of the global evangelicalism. The movement is named after the Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization, held in Lausanne in 1974. 2,700 church leaders from many different theological streams came together to focus upon world evangelisation. As shown from my presentation, Evangelicals have often been dispersed and divided into small streams, each one enthusiastically involved in evangelism. At Lausanne, these streams came together into one flow, thus making a huge river for world evangelisation. As a result, a new self-confidence has since marked Evangelicals across the world. Its honorary chairman and initiator, Billy Graham, has written: "Lausanne bursts upon us with unexpected significance and power." Among its surprises has been the long-standing influence of the Lausanne Covenant, which was drafted during the congress and was almost unanimously endorsed by its

⁵ Mark Ellingsen, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

participants. The Lausanne Covenant has provided challenge and direction to many, and has constituted a basis on which evangelical Christians could unite in mission.

As a follow-up of the Lausanne Congress, several international consultations treating theological and missiological questions have been organised. Reports from these consultations have been published as *Lausanne Occasional Papers*.

The Lausanne Covenant

Looking at the Lausanne Covenant, I believe that Orthodox Christians would find many points of common interest. Article 1 - "The purpose of God", states in the beginning:

We affirm our belief in the one eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his Kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the Glory of his name.

The other articles are:

2. The authority and power of the Bible
3. The uniqueness and universality of Christ
4. The nature of evangelism
5. Christian social responsibility
6. The church and evangelism
7. Co-operation in evangelism
8. Churches in evangelistic partnership
9. The urgency of the evangelistic task
10. Evangelism and culture
11. Education and leadership
12. Spiritual conflict
13. Freedom and persecution
14. The power of the Holy Spirit
15. The return of Christ

The architect of the Lausanne Covenant was Dr John Stott, characterised as the most influential clergyman in the Church of England during the twentieth century. His many books have been spread all over the world. *Basic Christianity* for example, has sold more than a million copies in more than forty languages. Dr John Stott has more than anyone else contributed to give evangelical theology scholarly credibility. For many years after the Lausanne Congress, Dr Stott served as chairman of the Lausanne theology work group -- and has by this given dear

theological directions, based on the most solid Evangelical principles, to the Lausanne Movement.

Many of the above mentioned articles would be expected to be found in an evangelical covenant. Evangelicals are often accused of being anti-cultural and uninterested in social concerns. In our dialogue I want to underline §10 - Evangelism and Culture. A special consultation on *Gospel and Culture* was held in Bermuda in 1978. As *Gospel and Culture* is one of the main issues currently debated in the WCC, it is interesting to note that the Lausanne Covenant in § 10 acknowledged that because every culture is a human construct ("nature" is what God gives us, "culture" is what we do with it), culture reflects our human ambiguity. Because we bear God's image, some human culture is "rich in beauty and goodness." But because we are fallen creatures, all culture is "tainted with sin, and some of it is demonic." The Lausanne Covenant thus recognised what missiologists have always affirmed, that human beings are culture creatures and that everything we think, say and do is conditioned by our cultural inheritance. The Lausanne Movement has contributed to clarify for evangelical missionaries that all Christian mission involves an interaction between three cultures. Messengers of the gospel have to ask themselves the following question: how can I, who was raised in one culture, take the gospel from the New Testament, which was written in a second culture, and communicate it to people who belong to a third culture, without either falsifying the gospel or rendering it unintelligible.⁶ It is not our task in this context to answer. Much more thinking needs to be done by Evangelicals in this field. I think a dialogue with Evangelicals would be important in the on-going process of *Gospel and Culture* in the WCC.

Christian Social Responsibility

The Lausanne Congress was in time fairly close to the 1968 Uppsala Assembly of the WCC. The waves from Uppsala for a stronger social commitment of churches were still being felt. Thus the Lausanne Congress is rather vague in specifying the social responsibility of the church. Without entering into details, the paragraph concludes that "faith without works is dead." At the second Lausanne Congress, held in Manila 15 years later, in 1989, the claim for a more active social involvement from the Evangelicals was clearly articulated by young people. At the conclusion of the congress, the Manila Manifesto was endorsed by the participants.

§ 4 in the Manila Manifesto entitled *The Gospel and Social Responsibility*, reaffirms that "evangelism is primary because our chief concern is with the gospel." Yet, it goes on to insist on an "integration of words and deeds." In addition "the proclamation of God's kingdom necessarily demands the prophetic

⁶ John Stott, "Twenty Years after Lausanne," in: *International bulletin*, April 1995, p. 50.

denunciation of all that is incompatible with it.” This is “not a confusion of the kingdom of God with a Christianised society” (which had been the fault of the liberal social gospel), but rather “a recognition that the Biblical gospel has inescapable social implications.” The first paragraph in the Manila Manifesto, entitled *Our human predicament*, has no parallel in the Covenant. This article affirms both our dignity as bearers of God's image and our depravity as “self-centred, self-serving rebels.” The Manila Manifesto concludes:

So the Christian mission is an urgent task. We do not know how long we have. We certainly have no time to waste. And in order to get on urgently with our responsibility, other qualities will be necessary, especially unity (we must evangelise together) and sacrifice (we must count and accept the cost). Our covenant at Lausanne was ‘to pray, to plan, and to work together for the evangelisation of the whole world.’ Our manifesto at Manila is that the whole church is called to take the whole gospel to the whole world, proclaiming Christ until he comes, with all necessary urgency, unity, and sacrifice.

After Lausanne

The Manila conference, with about 3,500 people from 170 countries, proved to be very costly. The Lausanne Movement encountered a financial crisis, and at the same time the movement was drained by the formation of two other global organisations. “AD 2000 and beyond” and the so-called “DAWN” (Discipling a Whole Nation) movements. These are evangelistic movements with specific goals of “a church for every people and the gospel for every person by the end of the millennium.” Statistically, world evangelisation is attainable according to these terms, not least because of the great interest for foreign mission shown by churches in Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and East Asia. These many new mission organisations may under God, not only take the gospel to the ends of the earth, but also revitalise the tired churches of the West.⁷

There is, however, a danger of triumphalism. As we look ahead with hope, we must not overlook the spiritual factors without which, whatever the statistics may promise, world evangelisation will not be attained.

Some of my critical remarks to present global mission activities are that I would like to see the work carried out in a greater unity, as stated in § 7 of the Lausanne Covenant. This article declares that unity strengthens our witness, while disunity undermines it. It expresses penitence for our “sinful individualism” and “needless duplication” and pledge that we would “seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission.”

⁷ John Stott, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

I also believe that our gospel presentation must be genuine, bearing witness of the gospel integrated in our individual life and the life of the churches. "Our gospel lacks credibility if its transforming power cannot be seen. This implies personal sacrifices as well as good works carried out by the churches."⁸

I sometimes wonder if one single strategy or method of evangelism is applicable for the whole world, when considering the social and cultural differences from one part of the earth to the other. Our presentation of the gospel is often culturally inappropriate and intellectually confusing. Each new generation of Christians has to recover and restate the gospel to struggle in its own context with the contemporary challenges to the gospel.

Despite the drainage by some of these new global movements, the Lausanne movement is still powerful, making its theological impact on evangelical groups, probably in the most significant way in Europe. The leaders of today feel a strong and urgent need to reconnect internationally. It is my hope that the Lausanne movement can still be an evangelical counterpart for theological discussions and the search for Christian unity.

It is my conviction that basic documents, issued by the Lausanne movement, could be a good basis for our dialogue between Orthodox and Evangelicals. As we are talking together, I believe that we will discern a common heritage and a common desire to be faithful to the gospel and the calling of the Church. In a situation where the churches are under constant pressure from non-Christian cultures and rationalistic theology, I believe that the Orthodox churches, with their long and unchanged traditions, could be of great inspiration to the modern, sometimes activist, evangelical movements. The Orthodox could give stability and steadfastness to the evangelical movements, and the Evangelicals might give new impetus to the Orthodox churches for discovering the need for evangelism, and an open proclamation of the gospel. Mutually we can encourage and inspire each other in our duty of *Proclaiming Christ Today*.

⁸ John Stott, *op.cit.*, p.54.