

The St. Martin's statement

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5. The St. Martin's Statement

This report is dedicated to the memory of Blessed + Alberto B. Ramento, ninth Obispo Maximo of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, martyred on 3 October 2006, prophet of social justice and true friend of the people.

At the invitation of the Most Rev. Dr. Joris Vercammen, Archbishop of Utrecht and President of the International Bishops' Conference of the Union of Utrecht, a commission of five theologians met from 6–11 November 2006 at the Emmaus Priory in Maarssen, the Netherlands, in a "Theological Conference on Catholicity and Globalization." With the work of this week began a three-year consideration of catholicity in the context of globalization. The five participants, representing three catholic churches in full communion with one another, were the Very Rev. Eleuterio J. Revollido of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), the Rev. Prof. J. Robert Wright and Prof. Marsha L. Dutton of the Episcopal Church in the USA, and the Rev. Prof. Franz Segbers and the Rev. Dr. Peter-Ben Smit of the Old-Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. In this first meeting the group began to formulate a report entitled "What does catholicity mean for us as sister churches in a globalized world?"

A Eucharist celebrated by Archbishop Vercammen initiated the week's consultation. The archbishop then met with the commission to explain his vision for its work and his desire that these three churches explore and develop an understanding of their common ecclesiality in the context of globalization. Papers that had been circulated in advance by the Rev. Dr. Segbers and the Rev. Dr. Wright provided an entry point for discussing the concepts of catholicity and globalization and for beginning to explore their relationship.

The group began its work by identifying the specific aspects of catholicity and globalization that required examination and discussion. Recognition of the historical and formal differences among the three churches suggested an additional theme – their origins in the early church, their different experiences, and their current situations, all to be used as ways of reaching toward a fuller understanding of catholicity. The participants agreed to consider the importance of independence or autonomy for each of the churches, both historically and in the globalized world of the present. Two ecclesial models for catholicity – the Orthodox model, with multiple autonomous churches united theologically and historically but

not administratively, and the Roman Catholic model of centralization with a papal primacy – offered points of view for this discussion.

On the first full day of work the commission discussed the main themes and ideas to be explored, aided by a reading and discussion of three papers: those of Dr. Wright (“Catholicity and Globalization: A Perspective from the Episcopal Church”), of Dr. Segbers (“Observing the Context: Effects, Logic and Practice of Globalization”), and of Dr. Smit (“Globalization: Network Society and Christian Responses, Past and Present”). In the course of the day five concerns emerged as central:

- Different ways of understanding and evaluating globalization
- Globalization as a context for catholicity
- Political/sociological/cultural approaches to the question of globalization and its effects
- An ethical approach contrasting human greed or avarice [*cupiditas*] with charity or generosity [*caritas*] (e.g. 1 Tim 6:10)
- Different terms or images for globalization (a networked world, various forms of empire, universalism, globalization).

This first day's work dealt centrally with globalization rather than with catholicity, as the group attempted to conceptualize globalization alternatively as different *kinds* of globalization (i.e., a multi-faceted historical process of benign origins vs. ideologically driven political and economic domination leading variously to increasing social and economic gaps between the rich and the poor, to a sole concentration on market ethics, to environmental devastation, to unlimited competition, etc.) or as a single phenomenon with both bad and good results. Although the question remained unresolved, everyone agreed on the profound ambiguities inherent in globalization and on the fact that all people today are implicated within it. There is no safe space outside of globalization from which one can attack or defend it. The churches and their members, whether they like it or not, are all participants in globalization, linked by networks of technology, communication, language, education, conceptual understandings, and travel as well as by economic forces. The group agreed, therefore, that the churches' solution to globalization may be found not in an attempt to condemn globalization as such but by transforming it from within, using its own tools.

The group found a meaningful articulation of its own struggles with the complex nature of globalization in the language of former Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, who has written of globalization as “a form of domination whereby others are made to bear the

burden of our greed” and “that highly ambiguous reality which is perceived as both curse and blessing.” He has also recognized the place of the Anglican Communion in the globalized world as “part of . . . a vast web of relationships. . . . [W]e are ‘members of one another’ . . . across the world, our global village” ([EpiscopalChurch.org], 1 May 2000 and 16 July 2002). Words from the installation sermon of the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, the new Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, calling for a world in which all are fed, all housed, all healed in God’s own *shalom*, also spoke to the group’s inquiry into the devastating consequences of globalization.

After a second morning of discussion of globalization and catholicity, the participants traveled into Utrecht to meet with Dr. Hielke Wolters and Ms. Greetje Witte-Rang, respectively director and research fellow of Oikos, an ecclesiastical think tank. The afternoon’s conversation provided helpful new information about the endeavor of Oikos to address the economic problems of globalization and to transform rather than defeat it, recognizing the impossibility of attempting unilaterally to reject globalization when all are part of the globalized world. Many of the themes and topics that had been discussed during the commission’s early sessions re-emerged in the Oikos discussion, including the significance of the various terms for globalization, the relationship of economic globalization to the other kinds of global networks that encircle the world, the way those who possess power drive the engine of global development, and some ways of transforming the networks from within.

Both Dr. Wolters and Ms. Witte-Rang spoke at some length about their view that public discussion and political/social participation are fundamental ways of transforming the forces of globalization. Ms. Witte-Rang noted that among the difficulties facing those who seek to affect global forces in a socially positive way are people’s resistance to taking steps that will be costly to them and the increasing individuation and pietistic devotion of those who withdraw rather than taking the active role required for social and economic change. Dr. Wolters emphasized the necessity that Christians recognize themselves as bound to one another as members of the Body of Christ.

On the third day the commission focused on a paper by Fr. Revollido about the present danger experienced by himself and other leaders of the IFI who have spoken out against the consequences of globalization for the people of the Philippines. The recent murder of the ninth Obispo Maximo of the IFI, Alberto B. Ramento, and the death threats that have even more recently forced Fr. Revollido to leave the seminary where

he is rector, to go into hiding, and then to flee the country, contributed significantly to the group's recognition of the urgency of the churches' response to globalization. Fr. Revollido's paper provided an eloquent reflection on the history of the IFI as it has sought to resist the deleterious effects of globalization, understanding the mission of the church as *koinonia*, "in which everyone is included to experience life in its fullness" and called "to realize an effective ministry for the sake of the kingdom."

Fr. Revollido's paper also offered a thoughtful consideration of catholicity as understood by the IFI and recorded in that church's documents. Catholicity, he wrote, includes among its characteristics "recognition and respect for all human beings as children of God," "subscribing to the faith handed over by the apostles," a grounding in the Word of God, "preaching God's love to the world," and "being nourished and sustained in the Eucharist." His articulation of the Eucharist as the embodiment of catholic theology was particularly valuable for the group's work:

The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament is one venue for God's people to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with God (Micah 6:8). It is a venue in which to remember the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord, and it is an occasion to remember like our Lord Jesus Christ to be broken in pieces and to be of service and sustenance to others.

In its discussion of Fr. Revollido's paper the group identified questions requiring further consideration. A major concern was the need for prophetic witness and advocacy on behalf of peoples adversely affected by the process of globalization; is "the preferential option for the poor" an appropriate expression of this concern? How do *catholicity* and *Eucharistic community* express these concerns and contribute to the ability of churches in the catholic tradition to make a difference for those in suffering and need?

As the week drew to an end the delegates designed four steps for continuing work, agreeing on the various elements to be explored in preparation for the fall 2007 meeting, to be hosted by the Episcopal Church in New York City.

1. *An ecclesiological and historical survey of the development of catholicity in the early church, considering patristic writers' use of the word, the development and functional understanding of, e.g., episcopate, orthodoxy, synodality, koinonia, and diocesan structures.* This survey may allow examination of the catholicity of the church in the historical, political, and economic context in which it arose (e.g., that of the

Roman Empire), a context that might be compared with today's globalized world.

2. *An examination of the particular and contextual origins of each of the three churches (IFI, Old-Catholic, and Episcopal) with attention to their historically shaped understandings of themselves as catholic.* This step can involve examination of early documents and writings of the churches as well as of the adoption, content, and form of liturgy in each church, so encouraging the consideration of Christological and liturgical aspects of each church's catholic self-understanding, looking specifically to sacramental and incarnational theology as key both to catholicity and to a way of responding to the ever-changing world. This is the step that will deal most specifically with the three churches as sisters, as catholic churches in communion with one another, looking to one another to learn from one another as each brings its own gifts from different corners of the globe to offer new perspectives, so that all three may be informed by the synthesis to emerge.
3. *A statement of what the three churches together understand about what it means to be catholic today, in the context of increasing globalization, technological interconnections, and the imbricated layers of many kinds of networks.* This is the portion of the project that will focus most explicitly on the globalized context, considering the phenomena of globalization, pernicious as well as beneficial, that confront and challenge the three sister churches as they attempt to be catholic. This section will contain not only experiential descriptions of the methods and effects of globalization, like those presented by Fr. Revollido, but also the recognition of such agents of change as the United Nations (the Millennium Development Goals), the World Council of Churches (the Uppsala and Harari Assemblies), and global networks of emancipatory and social movements as modern challenges to the destructive forces of globalization, although in some cases they are also its product. These agents may also be recognized as summoning the churches to reconfigure their understandings of catholicity as they read the signs of the times.

Lines drawn from the official documents of the IFI and quoted in Fr. Revollido's paper powerfully articulate the ways and reasons that Christians must live together in a globalized world: "We are commissioned to preach God's love to the world; we are the extension of the incarnation of Christ, the voice of the poor, the exploited, and the deprived. Our catholicity is seen if we become a community of people

who struggle for life and dignity, a community that cares for the poor and fights against the exploitative structures of the global society in her pursuit to build the Kingdom on earth, where peace based on justice reigns.”

4. *A discussion of possible responses of catholic churches to the phenomena of the globalized world.* This step moves beyond the historical and experiential explorations of globalization, catholicity, and the peculiar circumstances of the three churches to offer specific suggestions of how to counter the dire effects of globalization, to encourage its positive aspects, and to seek transformation through justice and compassion. It will also recommend ways in which sister churches may be truly catholic and in which as local/national churches they may achieve *koinonia* in a globalized world. This final portion of the project may be structured in terms of three traditional ways of being the church, each of which involves laity as well as clergy: *leitourgia*, *diakonia*, and *martyria*.

This portion of the project will thus especially consider ways of taking action, of moral and intellectual responses to globalization, including such things as attempting to shape shareholders' understanding of the consequences of corporate decisions, buying products from non-exploitative companies, refusing to do business with employers and companies that exploit the poor, and contributing to the kinds of academic analysis (e.g., sociological, economic, geographic, and demographic) that will help others understand the negative consequences of globalization and work to transform the forces of power. Other practical recommendations include the creation of a common page on the websites of all three churches to provide information about possible responses to globalization, as well as positive consideration of the possibility of Bishop Ramento's canonization according to the norms and ideals of each of the sister churches.

The commission concluded its work with a visit to the Old Catholic Cathedral of Saint Gertrud, in Utrecht, followed by Vespers in the Cathedral. The representatives were honored to participate in the annual St. Martin's Banquet with the Chapter of Utrecht on Friday evening.

As members of our three sister churches, we seek to understand ourselves in our catholicity as the leaven in the loaf: we seek not to stand against the world in judgment but rather to recognize ourselves as inseparably a part of it. Whereas we began our work by thinking of globalization as background, accompanying but separate from God's Word in the church, we have come to understand globalization as part of the reality

in which we live. Though today our globalized world – this little earth, our island home – is the sullen loaf, nonetheless it will be transformed from dough to bread when the churches in their catholicity become truly its leaven. We pray that we may, through our separate gifts to the manger, the world in which Christ dwells, share in the transformation of that world through the Eucharistic offering, his body made bread. In a world of hunger, that body is bread for humankind. This truth demands that we take action to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to heal the suffering, and to bring justice to the oppressed – to be truly the new creation that is Christ.

*Utrecht
The Feast of Saint Martin of Tours 2006*