

June 29, 2007 **Latin America Consultation**

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### **Latin America Consultation**

The Latin America consultation was the last of the four regional consultations. It took place in Santiago, Chile, on 26 – 29 June 2007. The meeting brought together 58 participants from the Anglican, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Protestant churches and the Catholic Church in Latin America, and from several national and regional church bodies. There was also participation from the Caribbean. Such a meeting of representatives of all the main Christian traditions had never happened before in the region. Participants enjoyed in particular the sharing of faith journeys and testimonies as an innovative and inspiring way of encountering one another in Christ and getting to know each other's traditions. For many it was an entirely new experience of building relationships and entering into a dialogue based on trust and mutual recognition. Two of the significant aspects were the fact that the meeting was held shortly after the Assembly of CELAM in Aparecida, Brazil, and the participation of the Orthodox diaspora. The consultation issued a Message to the Churches:

### **MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES**

Father...that they be one in us,  
so the world may believe that you sent me (John 17:21)

We have gathered together in Santiago, Chile, June 26–29, 2007, Latin American and Caribbean sisters and brothers from the diverse Christian traditions, invited by the Global Christian Forum, under the theme: Jesus Christ in Latin America, our pilgrimage with Him. This Latin American and Caribbean consultation is the last of a series of regional meetings that have been held in Asia, Africa and Europe. This process will culminate with a global meeting of the Forum which will take place in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Forum is an open space in which representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and inter-church organizations which confess the Triune God and Jesus Christ as perfect in His divinity and humanity, can gather to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges. Inspired by the prayer of Jesus, the Forum proposes to stimulate cooperation and communication among the churches, broaden mutual understanding and comprehension, and deepen commitment to the Word of God so that the world may believe in Jesus Christ.

During these days we have recognized one another in our pilgrimage with Jesus. The testimonies of encounter with Jesus and of personal calling from each one of the participants allowed us to see each other as our brothers and sisters, beyond differences

and traditions, overcoming distrust and hostilities in an environment of humility and frankness. We have rejoiced together in the praise and exaltation of the good name of our God in daily devotionals and times of worship.

The new challenges presented by the world today have affected the life and mission of the Latin American and Caribbean church. In this way, the Forum has been an open space which has allowed us to also be challenged by different concerns: the growing number of internally displaced and immigrant populations, the millions of street children, gangs, urban and socio-political violence, violence against women and children, the advance of AIDS and other pandemics, discrimination and offenses against human dignity and the environment. In the midst of all this is the temptation of walking without the foundation of faith or of distorting faith. However, the signs of hope are evident in our communities through the varied expressions of faith, particularly among the youth.

We have seen that the attempts for advancing toward the unity for which the Lord prayed, have been many and varied. From the past century, the spaces, movements, instruments and attempts for dialogue and moving closer together have multiplied at the global, regional and national levels, as well as among denominational families and diverse ecclesiastical traditions. All of this has contributed and contributes today to the visible unity of the church, the credibility of witness to faith in Jesus Christ, and to the expansion of the Reign of God. However, we recognize that there is still much to do so that we can see the prayer of Jesus fully accomplished. In Latin America and the Caribbean today, the church presents many faces, old and new. We have tried to identify them in our meeting in Santiago, rejoicing in the richness of their diversity, and have attempted to understand what God asks of us in light of this new reality.

We see in the Forum the possibility of a renewed and broadened place in which to meet one another, appreciate our differences, unite our efforts and commit ourselves in mission. Our arms are open so that together we may build in diversity, support one another in hope, and be witnesses to Jesus Christ along the way. Thus, we desire to extend the widest possible invitation to our brothers and sisters of all churches so that with courage they may join this pilgrimage of faith, recognizing one another on a new common foundation in which trust and mutual love may grow and make us capable of proclaiming Jesus Christ with renewed strength so that the world may believe in Him and have life, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Anglican Churches  
Catholic Church  
Evangelical Churches  
Orthodox Churches  
Pentecostal Churches  
Protestant Churches

Santiago, 29 June 2007