

Toward Unity – Ecumenism after Augsburg 1999

A contribution to a Round Table Discussion during “On Our Way Together” Leaders Conference, May 11 – Stuttgart 2007

A written expanded text of impulse given by Kim Kollins

To look forward requires the ability to look back, where you will often be able to see the leading of the Holy Spirit with greater clarity. I have learned to look also at the focus of the prayer movements that have been raised up during the various decades and centuries to recognize the Holy Spirit’s continued leadings. The Augsburg Declaration of 1999¹ is not just a significant moment in the healing of the divisions of the past, but also a moment of recognition of the fruits of a long journey of prayer, since *the first well-spring of action is prayer, which connects us with the Spirit of Christ and it is He that renews the face of the earth.* (Blessed Elena Guerra)

You begin to see several calls for the prayer for unity of Christians in various traditions in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, which flow to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity held today in January each year.²

Another example is Blessed Elena Guerra³ at the end of the nineteenth century, who urged Pope Leo XIII to lead the Church back to the Upper Room. From 1895 to 1903, Sr. Elena was led by the Holy Spirit to write twelve confidential letters to Leo XIII, requesting a renewed preaching on the Holy Spirit. In her many writings to him, she exhorted him to

invite the faithful to rediscover life lived according to the Holy Spirit. She called and prayed for a renewal of the Church, the reunion of Christianity, a renewal of society, and thereby “a renewal of the face of the earth”.

In one of the letters she proclaimed, “*Oh, if only... unanimous and fervent prayers could be raised to Heaven in every part of Christendom, as they were one in the Cenacle [Upper Room] of Jerusalem for a rekindling of the Divine Spirit*” On these promptings, Leo XIII issued several important documents in response to her letters in 1895, 1897 and 1902⁴, concerning the Holy Spirit and requesting the Church to enter into a special time of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost, every year thereafter (perpetual) for the specific intention of the unity of Christianity.

So I see the Augsburg 1999 Declaration as a fruit of the many prayers of the faithful in all traditions, whose hearts had been inflamed by the Holy Spirit with the desire for the unity of Christians during these last centuries⁵ – And we can see the fruits of the new movements and communities of today, many who carry in their vocations a major call to pray and serve the mission of the Christian Unity.

¹ The Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran World Federation signed in Augsburg on October 31, 1999, a joint declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

² Resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church)

³ Founder of the Oblate Sisters of the Holy Spirit in Lucca, Italy

⁴ Leo XIII wrote *Provida Matris Caritate*, 1895, an apostolic letter in response to Blessed Elena Guerra’s 1st letter; *Divinum Illud Munus*, 1897, an encyclical letter in response to her 3rd letter; *Ad Fovendum in Christiano Populo*, letter to the Bishops, 1902 a response to her 9th letter

⁵ *Ecclesia Catholica*, Dec. 1949, “as a result of the common prayers of the faithful, through the grace of the Holy Spirit” a desire for unity has grown.

I recall a particular moment in my journey, when I led an evening of prayer with a Lutheran renewal leader in 1983 in Worms, Germany on April 18⁶. Around 120 gathered in a side chapel of the Cathedral, that evening was the 462nd anniversary of Martin Luther's response at the Diet of Worms, as well as the year of the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth. The scripture text for that evening was from the prophet Haggai and his call to the people of Israel - Now was the hour to rebuild the temple. We were challenged by the Holy Spirit - Now was the time to unite to rebuild His Church - we all knew what a providential and prophetic moment of grace it was to stand in this place at that moment, as we joined together in the song, *Father Make us one, that the world may believe* (John 17.21). At the end of the meeting, a visitor to the cathedral, who happened upon our gathering, came to say, she had prayed for years for that which she experienced that evening.

On the Way Together

I am a member of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal⁷, which is celebrating this year its 40th anniversary and it is from this experiential background that I respond to our theme of today "on the way together", knowing that there are a great many other examples in the various communities and movements represented here, lived in the context of their spiritualities, which flow out of their specific charisms and vocations into a variety of experiences. So this is one contribution to the great diversity of the Holy Spirit's workings.

One form of "coming together" birthed in the last half of the twentieth century was a fruit of the Pentecostal/ Charismatic movement and is often called a "grass roots" spiritual ecumenism in relationship to the official

dialogues. It was born from a common experience, in the last century, as hundreds of millions in every part of Christianity have encountered God in an Upper Room experience of a personal Pentecost, "baptism in the Spirit"; a concrete experience of the "grace of Pentecost" in which the working of the Holy Spirit and His gifts have become an experienced reality in their lives and in their faith community.

And from this has flowed the development of various key ecumenical Pentecostal/Charismatic realities in America and Europe⁸, whose congresses and consultations have gathered hundreds of thousands⁹. The International Charismatic Consultation (ICC) was birthed out of the call for the "Decade of Evangelization" (1990-2000). ICC organized the first international Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal leaders

⁸ Various charismatic ecumenical realities: Northern American Renewal Service Committee (NARSC), European Charismatic Consultation (ECC) now a part of International Charismatic Consultation (ICC)

⁹ NARSC - In 1977, the first Pentecostal/Charismatic congress held in Kansas City, KC, "*Jesus is Lord*" (over 50,000 participants) organized by the Northern American Renewal Service Committee (NARSC) with five additional congresses during 1986, 1987 in New Orleans LA, 1990 in Indianapolis, IN, in 1995 in Orlando, FL and in 2000 in St. Louis, MI. ECC - In Europe, the first ecumenical European Charismatic Leaders Conference (ECLC) was held at Schloss Craheim in Germany in 1972; this group of leaders developed into the European Charismatic Consultation (ECC) in 1988 and in 2003 became part of International Charismatic Consultation (ICC).

The first pan-European Charismatic Congress, Strasbourg 1982 with over 20,000 participants, "*Pentecost over Europe*", organized by the (ECLC); in 1986 in Birmingham, England the pan-European Congress ACTS'86 was organized by the Birmingham committee by a group from the ECLC. In 1990, over 3,500 leaders gathered together in Bern for the European Charismatic Leaders Congress, *Jesus, Hope for Europe*", where East met West in a new way after the fall of communism with over 1700 participants from Eastern Europe organized by ECC.

⁶ April 17, 1521 Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms on the evening of the 18th, he gave his response with, *I can not do otherwise, Here I stand, God help me...*

⁷ International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, Michelle Moran, president, www.iccrs.org

congress with a key theological track in 1991 in Brighton, England, “*That the World May Believe*”¹⁰, and continues with regional/international consultations with theological tracks. It was in these encounters the Holy Spirit has birthed the call to pray and serve the mission for Christian unity in thousands and thousands of hearts – my call came in 1982 at Strasbourg.

At the turn of a millennium – A new season in our journey

Another special moment for me, as a Catholic Charismatic, came at Pentecost 1998, as I received a call to serve a deeper intra-Catholic ecumenism among the movements and communities. Many heard the same call and are responding in a variety of ways. Pope John Paul II had invited the various ecclesial movements and new communities, born as fruits of the working of the Holy Spirit during the century to join him in St. Peter’s Square for the 1998 Pentecost vigil. There we saw the variety and diversity of the different charisms given by the Holy Spirit’s action of the 20th century in the Catholic Church. It was the first gathering of this kind ever to take place and over fifty different ecclesial movements and new communities were represented¹¹, as an estimated 350,000 gathered.

¹⁰ ICC – (was formally International Charismatic Consultation for World Evangelization - ICCOWE) Brighton 1991 was the first world-wide Leaders Congress, over 3000 leaders from all expressions of the worldwide Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal affirmed their commitment to seek greater unity with fellow Christians, and the goal of reaching all nations for Christ. A key component was the theological track. – ICC Regional/International consultations with theological components have been held in Luray, VA, 1992; Port Dickson, Malaysia 1994; Prague 1997, 2000 co-organized with ECC, Penang, Malaysia 2000, Malta 2004; www.iccove.com, Charles Whitehead, chairman

¹¹ Including: Foyers de Charite, (France) 1936 www.foyers-de-charite.com; Focolare Movement, (Italy) 1943 www.focolare.org; Cursillo Movement, (Spain) 1944, www.cursillo.org; Movement of Light-Life Movement, (Poland) 1954,

In this new season of our journey, there are new realities and forms both on international, continental and national levels, giving new opportunities for encounters of “coming together” that have begun to emerge, including several that connect strongly with the Pentecostal Movement/Charismatic Renewal:

1. New Repentance and Prayer Initiatives have emerged since the end of the 1990s from various traditions and movements - day and night houses of prayer, prayer vigils, national prayer movements and even prayer-mountains have been established. There are major world-wide prayer networks which have sprung up among young people. Many initiatives have a renewed focus of prayer for Christian Unity, Renewal, Evangelization and renewal of Society in various forms and with a great diversity and a variety of contexts. Some have a special focus of prayer for our elder brother, Israel.¹²
2. Another illustration of various key leaders coming together is an international bilateral encounter; *A Gathering in the Holy Spirit, a Conversation among Non-denominational¹³ Christians and*

www.oaza.pl; Movement of Communion and Liberation, (Italy) 1954, www.clonline.org; Neo-Catechumenal Way, 1964 (Spain) www.camminoneocatecumenale.it; Catholic Charismatic Renewal, (USA) 1967, www.iccrs.org; Community of Sant’ Egidio; (Italy) 1968, www.santegidio.org

¹²Including: Burning Bush Initiative – International, Kim Kollins, www.burningbushinitiative.com; International House of Prayer, day and night prayer, Kansas City, Mike Bickle www.fotb.com; www.24/7prayer.com, *Red Moon Rising*, P. Greig/D. Roberts; National Prayer Coverage is an initiative of *Campus fuer Christus* of Switzerland, (Campus Crusade for Christ), Hanspeter Nueesch, www.cfc.ch; Global Day of Prayer, www.globaldayofprayer.com

¹³ Contemporary Non-denominationalism emerged in the 1950’s and consists of a wide variety of realities manifested in many different forms. The

Roman Catholics, sponsored by the Centro pro Unione¹⁴ in Rome. The first gathering was held in 2001 and since are held very two years.

The beginning of the modern-day Messianic Jewish movement (1967) has brought an international work of reconciliation between the Jewish believers and Gentile believers called Toward Jerusalem Council II, which initiated international gatherings since 2001.¹⁵

In 2004, ICC organized another international Consultation with a theological track in Malta. The theme of “*The Suffering Church*”, where over 130 key leaders and theologians from 30 countries gathered for 4 days, from the various traditions, raising awareness of an increasing commitment to Christians, who live under persecution and even in martyrdom.

In 2006, the Azusa Street Centennial was held in Los Angeles, it celebrated the 1906 revival that began the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement now with an estimated 600,000,000 participants. Over 30,000

new independent non-denominational charismatic communities are often linked in loosely formed fellowships of various kinds. Another term that is recently being used is Neo-Charismatics, which refers to all new groupings outside the classical Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal in the historic Christian traditions of this last century.

¹⁴ The Centro pro Unione is an ecumenical research and documentation center founded almost 40 years ago in Rome. It is a place of meeting for people of every Christian persuasion and is committed to spiritual ecumenism. It is one of the various aspects of the works of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, under the direction of Fr. Jim Puglisi, sa

¹⁵ Toward Jerusalem Council II is an initiative of repentance and reconciliation between the Jewish believers and Gentile believers. The vision is that one day there will be a second Council of Jerusalem that will be, in an important respect, the inverse of the first Council described in Acts 15. Booklets:

The Messianic Jewish Movement: An Introduction, P.Hocken and D. Juster; *Toward Jerusalem Council II: The Vision and History*, P.Hocken, www.tjci.org

gathered from 113 nations during the Centennial Celebration from various denominations, charismatic renewal movements of different traditions and parachurch organizations – now similar “Centennial” events are taking place on continental and national levels through the world.¹⁶

Together for Europe

The Augsburg Declaration of 1999, I see as the reopening of a major well of grace for the healing of the divisions of the past, which have been blocked almost for half a millennium. I believe this has led to a releasing of a flood of grace in our continued journey on the way together toward Christian Unity – it has brought with it new possibilities which flow into the above events as well as what we are experiencing today.

“Together for Europe” is a major development along our journey and a very visible direct fruit of 1999, with the May 8, 2004 gathering of 9,000 gathering from over 170 movements, with over 100 parallel gatherings reaching 100,000 via satellite. And now May 12, 2007, with 12,000 gathered from over 240 movements in Stuttgart, Germany¹⁷.

The two-day Leaders Congresses in 2004 with 2000 participants and 2007 with 3000 participants, “On the Way Together, takes us to a wider and broader European “coming together and co-operation” of Christian Communities, Organizations, Renewal Movements and Initiatives to reflect the fruits of Europe’s Christian roots – past, present and future. New impulses have been generated for the social, political and cultural life of society.

A “coming together and co-operation” built on a pact of mutual love (Jn 13.34) with Jesus the link between the single persons and the movements (Mt 18.20), where the meaning of our cooperation is to bring Jesus into the

¹⁶ www.azusastreet.com

¹⁷ www.europ2007.org

world in awareness that our diversities constitute a richness and not a reason for fear or division, where new impulses are generated for the social, political and cultural life of society. We have heard in these days the testimonies to the fruits of the 2004 encounter and the other gatherings of “Together for Europe” held since 2004 in Europe.

As a contribution to a round-table discussion at the Congress for Leaders and Members of Christian Communities and Organizations, Renewal Movements and Initiatives in Stuttgart, Germany May 10–11, 2007 written by Kim Catherine-Marie Kollins, Member of the executive committee of the International Charismatic Consultation (ICC) www.iccove.com Member of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Let us continue to be led of the Holy Spirit
“on the way together” – it is only the
beginning

Kim Kollins spoke in the Congress for Leaders and Members of Christian Communities and Organizations, Renewal Movements and Initiatives in Stuttgart, Germany May 10–11, 2007. The day after was Together for Europe: 9000 Christians from all over Europe met in Stuttgart, May 12th. Texts of different speakers are in many languages on: <http://www.miteinander-wie-sonst.de/en/programme.php>

Dutch information on Together for Europe: www.samenvooreuropa.nl.

This is document 0226uk at www.stucom.nl.