

Resources for
THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
and throughout the year

Jesus said to her:
“Give me to drink”
(John 4:7)

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TO THOSE ORGANIZING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The search for unity: throughout the year

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul, and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time churches often find other days to celebrate the week of prayer, for example around Pentecost (suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926), which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the Church.

Mindful of the need for flexibility, we invite you to use this material throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

Adapting the text

This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use in local situations. Account should be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of the whole social and cultural context. Such adaptation should ideally take place ecumenically. In some places ecumenical structures are already set up for adapting the material; in other places, we hope that the need to adapt it will be a stimulus to creating such structures.

Using the Week of Prayer material

- For churches and Christian communities which observe the week of prayer together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is provided.
- Churches and Christian communities may also incorporate material from the week of prayer into their own services. Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the "eight days", and the selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in their own setting.
- Communities which observe the week of prayer in their worship for each day during the week may draw material for these services from the "eight days".
- Those wishing to do bible studies on the week of prayer theme can use as a basis the biblical texts and reflections given in the eight days. Each day the discussions can lead to a closing period of intercessory prayer.
- Those who wish to pray privately may find the material helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world for the greater visible unity of Christ's Church.

BIBLICAL TEXT FOR 2015

John 4:1-42

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John”— although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the

people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world."

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME FOR THE YEAR 2015

Jesus said to her: “Give me to drink”

(John 4:7)

1. Who drinks of this water...

Journey, scorching sun, tiredness, thirst ... “Give me to drink.” This is a demand of all human beings. God, who becomes human in Christ (Jn 1:14) and empties himself to share our humanity (Philippians 2:6-7) is capable of asking the Samaritan woman: “Give me to drink” (Jn 4:7). At the same time, this God who comes to encounter us, offers the living water: “The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14).

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman invites us to try water from a different well and also to offer a little of our own. In diversity, we enrich each other. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a privileged moment for prayer, encounter and dialogue. It is an opportunity to recognize the richness and value that are present in the other, the different, and to ask God for the gift of unity.

“Whoever drinks of this water keeps coming back,” says a Brazilian proverb, always used when a visitor leaves. A refreshing glass of water, chimarrão¹, coffee, tereré², are trademarks of acceptance, dialogue and coexistence. The biblical gesture of offering water to whomever arrives (Mt 10:42), as a way of welcoming and sharing, is something that is repeated in all regions of Brazil.

The proposed study and meditation on this text during the Week of Prayer is to help people and communities to realize the dialogical dimension of the project of Jesus, which we call the Kingdom of God.

The text affirms the importance of a person knowing and understanding her/his own self-identity so that the identity of the other is not seen as a threat. If we do not feel threatened, we will be able to experience the complementarity of the other: alone, a person or culture is not enough! Therefore, the image emerging from the words “give me to drink” is an image speaking of complementarity: to drink water

¹ Chimarrão is a traditional infuse drink in the South of Brazil; it is prepared from steeping dried leaves of yerba mate. Drinking together with friends or family is the common practice.

² The principle is similar to Chimarrão, but instead of boiling water, tereré uses cold water.

from someone else's well is the first step towards experiencing another's way of being. This leads to an exchange of gifts that enriches. Where the gifts of the other are refused much damage is done to society and to the Church.

In the text of John 4, Jesus is a foreigner who arrives tired and thirsty. He needs help and asks for water. The woman is in her own land; the well belongs to her people, to her tradition. She owns the bucket and she is the one who has access to the water. But she is also thirsty. They meet and that encounter offers an unexpected opportunity for both of them. Jesus does not cease to be Jewish because he drank from the water offered by the Samaritan woman. The Samaritan remains who she is while embracing Jesus' way. When we recognize that we do have reciprocal needs, complementarity takes place in our lives in a more enriching way. "Give me to drink" presupposes that both Jesus and the Samaritan ask for what they need from each other. "Give me to drink" compels us to recognize that persons, communities, cultures, religions and ethnicities need each other.

"Give me to drink" implies an ethical action that recognises the need for one another in living out the Church's mission. It compels us to change our attitude, to commit ourselves to seek unity in the midst of our diversity, through our openness to a variety of forms of prayer and Christian spirituality.

2. The ecclesial and religious context of Brazil

Brazil can be considered a very religious country. It is traditionally known as a country where a certain "cordiality" characterizes relations between social classes and ethnic groups. However, Brazil is living through a time of growing intolerance made manifest in high levels of violence, especially against minorities and the vulnerable: black people, the young, homosexual people, people practicing Afro-Brazilian religion, women, and indigenous people. This intolerance was hidden for a long time. It became more explicit and revealed a different Brazil when, on October 12 1995, the feast of Our Lady Aparecida, the patron of the country, one of the bishops of a Neo-Pentecostal church kicked a statue of Our Lady Aparecida during a national TV broadcast. Ever since there have been other instances of Christian based religious intolerance. There have also been similar incidents of Christian intolerance towards other religions, particularly Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous traditions.

The logic that undergirds this kind of behaviour is competition for the religious market. Increasingly, in Brazil, some Christian groups adopt a competitive attitude towards one another: a competition for a place on mass media, and a competition for new members and public funds for major events. Pope Francis points to this very phenomenon when he writes, "Spiritual worldliness leads some Christians to war with other Christians who stand in the way of their quest for power, prestige, pleasure and economic security" (*Evangelii Gaudium* #98).

This situation of religious competition has affected the life of traditional Christian confessions, which have experienced a reduction or stagnation in the number of their members. It has encouraged the idea that a strong and dynamic church is a church that has a high number of members. As a result, there is a tendency among significant sectors of traditional churches to distance themselves from the search for the visible unity of the Christian Church.

This market-driven Christianity is investing in party politics, and, in some cases, creating its own political parties. It is allying itself with specific interest groups such as big landowners, Agro-business and the financial markets. Some observers go as far as speaking of the confessionalisation of political life, which threatens the separation between state and religion. Thus the ecumenical logic of breaking down the walls of division is replaced by a “corporatist” logic and the protection of denominational interests.

Although the 2010 official Census shows that 86.8% of the Brazilian population identify themselves as Christian, this country has very high rates of violence. Thus a high rate of Christian affiliation does not seem to translate into non-violent attitudes and respect for human dignity. This statement can be illustrated with the following data:

Violence against women: between 2000 and 2010, 43,700 women were murdered in Brazil. Forty per cent of these women who suffer violence, are violated in their own homes.

Violence against indigenous people: violence against the indigenous population is often related to large hydroelectric developments and the expansion of Agro-business. These two projects express the model of development prevailing in the country today. They contribute significantly to the slow demarcation and recognition of indigenous territories. In 2011, the report “Violence against Indigenous Peoples in Brazil” of the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), an organism connected with the Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops of Brazil, identified 450 developments underway on indigenous lands in Brazil. These developments take place without proper consultation with indigenous peoples as envisaged in the Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). CPT’s report denounces the murder of 500 indigenous people between 2003 and 2011; 62.7% of these are in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The annual murder average is 55.8 natives.

Overcoming intolerance in its various forms should be dealt with in a positive way: respecting legitimate diversity and promoting dialogue as a permanent path of reconciliation and peace in fidelity to the gospel.

3. Hermeneutical choice

The methodology adopted by CEBI, and widely practiced across Latin America, is called the Contextual Reading of the Bible. This is both an academic and a popular approach to the biblical text.

In this methodology, the starting point for any biblical theology and interpretation is daily life. We adopt the approach of Jesus on the road to Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-24): What is going on? What are you talking about? From the context we move to the Biblical text. In this methodological journey the Bible is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps 119:105). We take the Bible as a flashlight to illuminate the path of our lives. The biblical text teaches us and transforms us so that we may bear testimony to God's will in the context in which we live.

4. The journey through the days

The journey we are proposing for the coming eight days starts with proclamation, which leads to denunciation, renunciation, and witness. The week starts with the proclamation of a God who has created us in his own image, that is the image of the Triune God, unity in diversity. Diversity is part of God's design. Next, some situations of sin which introduce unjust discrimination are denounced. Thirdly, the renunciation of those sinful attitudes which exclude marks a step towards the unity of God's Kingdom. Lastly, we bear witness to the graciousness of God who is always willing to welcome us despite our imperfection, and whose Holy Spirit impels us towards reconciliation and unity. Thus we experience Pentecost, the many gifts of the Spirit that lead to the realisation of God's Kingdom.

THE PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2015

The two bodies that co-sponsor the Week of Prayer invited the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC) to prepare the resources for the week of prayer 2015. CONIC appointed a working group formed by representatives from its member churches and affiliated ecumenical organisations to produce the material. The working group met in February and in April 2012, and completed its work in July.

The International Committee appointed by the two co-sponsor bodies met September 22-27 in São Paulo, Brazil, to finalize the preparation of the material. The meeting was held at Hotel e Centro de Convenções Santa Mônica, situated in a rather poor area at the outskirts of São Paulo. Maintained by the order of the

Augustinians, the Santa Monica Hotel and its conference centre generate resources for several social projects sponsored by Augustinians in its neighbourhood.

Apart from the editorial work on the text proposed by CONIC, the International Committee paid a visit to the Ecumenical Centre for Service to Popular Education and Evangelization (CESEP), where its members met with the CESEP director and students. The International Committee also dedicated one session to the contribution of the ecumenical movement (and particularly the World Council of Churches) to the clarification of violations to human rights committed during the years of military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985).

The International Committee expresses its gratitude to Fr. José Oscar Beozzo and to CESEP's team and students; as well as to Mr Anivaldo Padilha and to Prof. Dr Magali do Nascimento Cunha for the often moving ways whereby they helped the members of the International Committee to better understand the social and ecclesial background of the 2015 theme and prayer resources.

The International Committee particularly wishes to thank:

National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil

Bishop Manoel João Francisco – President (Roman Catholic)

Elder Elinete W. Paes Miller – second Vice-president (Presbyterian)

Rev. Romi Márcia Bencke – General Secretary (Lutheran)

Thanks to Bishop Francisco de Assis (Anglican), CONIC's first Vice-president, for mediating the initial contact between CONIC and the WCC in relation to the 2015 Week of Prayer.

Brazilian Regional Office of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI)

Elder Darli Alves – General Secretary (Presbyterian)

Ecumenical Centre for Bible Study (CEBI)

Rev. Odja Barros – Member of the Board (Baptist)

Mr Edmilson Schinelo – Executive Secretary (Roman Catholic)

Dr Paulo Ueti – Advisor (Anglican)

Ecumenical Centre for Advise and Formation

Mr. Cláudio Becker – Advisor (Lutheran)

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The **National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC)** was constituted in 1982 and comprises the following Churches: Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil, United Presbyterian Church and Syrian Orthodox Church from Antioquia. CONIC's mission is *to work for the unity of Christian Churches while accompanying Brazilian reality and*

confronting it to the Gospel and the requirements of God's Realm. Therefore, it is CONIC's commitment to strive for human dignity and for people's rights and duties as a way to express their fidelity to the message of the Gospel.

CONIC's goals refer to promoting and encouraging ecumenical relations amongst Christian Churches and strengthening their common witness in favor of Human Rights.

Besides the member-churches mentioned above, main ecumenical groups are fraternal-members affiliated to CONIC. They are:

Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). Created in 1982, CLAI aims to facilitate dialogue and cooperation amongst Churches and ecumenical bodies while creating space for dialogue between religions as a means to search for unity, witness and service.

Bible Studies Centre (CEBI). CEBI was formed in 1979 and it is devoted to the deepening and consolidation of popular reading of the Bible. It aims to strengthen the articulation and organization of people's groups through the methodology of popular reading of the Bible. It also foments a spirituality focused on the promotion of life, especially to the most excluded social groups of the country.

ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

Introduction to the worship

This outline for the ecumenical worship may be used for the opening of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity or for another appropriate moment chosen by the local communities.

Jesus deliberately chose to cross Samaria on his way to Judea in Galilee. His route passed by the well of the Samaritan woman who came there to draw water. The Brazilian ecumenical group that prepared the celebration invites us to use these two symbols of the route and water as images of the visible Christian unity for which we pray. The local group invites us to reflect on these initial questions that give shape to the celebration:

Which is the path of unity, the route we should take, so that the world may drink from the source of life, Jesus Christ?

Which is the path of unity that gives proper respect to our diversity?

On this path of unity, there is a well filled with water: both the water sought by Jesus, tired on the way, and also the water given by him, springing up to eternal life. The water drawn by the Samaritan woman in her daily task is the water that quenches thirst, the water that makes the desert bloom. The water that Jesus gives

is the water over which the Spirit of God hovered, the living water in which we were baptized.

The passage from John 4:1-42 is at the heart of this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This long Gospel passage may be read by several voices or by a dramatization.

For the meditation after the Gospel, there are several options depending on the size of the celebrating group:

- a sharing based on the initial questions in small groups, followed by returning to the assembly;
- a homily or sermon that will focus on the gospel and take into account the initial questions.

The path and the well

A path can be arranged with candles, flowers, colourful pieces of cloth... on the floor of the central aisle of the place of celebration, leading to the front of the assembly. In the center of the path, a large basin is placed and jugs of water nearby. These pitchers could be different from one another to represent the diversity of the assembly.

The celebrants may enter in procession along this path. Passing near the “well”, each representative of a participating church will slowly pour the water from a jug into the bowl. This water, from different sources, is a symbol of our unity, already present though incomplete and hidden from our eyes. This gesture should be introduced at the beginning of the celebration and may be commented upon in the preaching.

The path may be used in the preparation of the confession of sins. People come from different parts of the assembly on the way to express petitions for forgiveness.

After the blessing, participants can exchange a sign of peace and fellowship, as they leave the assembly and move towards a convivial place to end the service in a communal way.

Structure of the Celebration

NB: Particular attention should be given to include those with impaired hearing and people with disabilities so that they can fully participate in the celebration.

The celebration has five parts.

I. Prelude/Preparation

II. Opening

- Welcome and Introduction to the Week of Prayer – Theme
- Confession of Sins and Kyrie

III. Gospel Proclamation

IV. We Respond in Faith and Unity

- Affirmation of Faith
(The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the Apostles' Creed or another affirmation of faith may be used, for example a renewal of baptismal promises.)
- Intercessory Prayer
- Offering
- The Lord's Prayer (*said or sung*)

V. Benediction, Peace and Sending Forth

Postlude

Order of Service

C: Celebrant

L: Lector

A: All

I. Prelude/Preparation

The candles are to be lit as the service starts.

Welcome and Introduction to the Week of Prayer – Theme

A commentator welcomes people to the celebration introducing the theme of the prayer.

L: Please stand and join in singing the opening hymn as the celebrants enter in procession along the path. Passing near the “well”, each representative of a participating church will slowly pour the water from a jug into the bowl. This water, from different sources, is a symbol of our unity which is real, though still incomplete.

When the celebrating group is small, if possible, invite people to say their names and to which church they belong.

II. Opening

A água

(The Water/ L'eau / Die Wasser / El Agua)

Simeí Monteiro, Brasil

Alberte Correia, Brasil

Leader, then All

C F C C7 F C

A - qui che - gan - do, Se - ñhor, que po - de - re - mos te dar?
 Ar - riv - ing here oh, dear God! What can we of - fer to you?
 Nous ar - ri - vons, ô Sei - gneur, que pour - rons - nous te don - ner?
 Gott, wie sind hier, hier vor dir, Gott, wir ru - fen zu dir.
 A - qui lle - ga - mos, Se - ñor. ¿Qué te po - de - mos tra - er?

F C7 C F C

Um sim - ples co - ra - ção e u - ma von - ta - de de can - tar.
 A sim - ple heart and deep - est wish to sing a joy - ful song.
 un hum - ble coeur et dans la joie l'en - vie de te chan - ter.
 In uns' - er Seh - such nach dir, sin - gen, sin - ger wir ein Lied:
 Un sim - ple co - ra - zón y nues - tras ga - nas de can - tar.

Dm Em C Dm G7/B C

Re - ce - be nos - so lou - vor e tu - a paz vem nos dar.
 Re - ceive our best gifts of praise and may your peace be with us.
 Sei - gneur re - çois - den lou - anges et viens nous don - ner ta paix.
 Lass dei - nen Frie - den mit uns, lass dei - nen Frie - den mit uns sein.
 Re - ci - be nues - tro lo - or y da - nos tu ple - na paz.

C Dm Em C Dm/F G9 C

A tu - a gra - ça, Se - ñhor, me - lhor que a vi - da, se - rá.
 Your faith - ful mer - cy and grace will be much bet - ter than life,
 Sei - gneur, ta fi - dé - li - té, no - tre vie trans - for - me - ra.
 Bring dei - ne Gra - de, du Gott in - un - ser Le - ben hin - ein.
 Por - que tu gra - cia, Se - ñor, vi - da a - bun - dan - te tra e - rá.

F G F C/G

E o teu a - mor, em nós, se - rá ma - nan - ci - al
 And in the de - sert of our lives a ri - ver flows
 Dans les dé - serts de no - tre vie: u - ne ri - vière,
 Und al - le Wis - ten uns - res Le - bens bli - hen auf,
 Y tu a - mor se - rá cual fuen - te sin i - gual

C Dm C F6 Dm7/G C

de á - gua bo - a a jor - rar pra nos - sa se - de es - tan - car.
 a pure wa - ter for growth; re - fresh ing, heal - ing our land.
 vi - ve ton eau cou - le - ra pour re - ver - dir no - tre terre.
 wenn dein Se - gen uns trifft und uns er - neu - ert und heilt.
 de a - gua pu - ra en rau - dal que to - da sed cal - ma - rá.

Invitation to prayer³

C: Almighty God, breathe into us the wind of unity that recognizes our diversity,
 A: **Breathe into us tolerance that welcomes and makes us community,**

C: Breathe into us fire that unites what is torn apart and heals what is ill,
 A: **Breathe into us grace that overcomes hatred and frees us from violence,**

C: Breathe into us life that faces down and defeats death,
 A: **Blessed be the God of mercy, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and makes all things new. Amen!**

Confession of Sin and Kyrie

C: In humility, as children of God and sisters and brothers in Christ, we receive God's mercy and respond to God's call to make new all relationships.

Señor, ten piedad de nosotros

Traditional

Clara Ajo and Pedro Triana, Cuba
 (from "Misa Cubana")

Se - ñor, ten pie - dad de no - so - tros. Cris - to,
 Se - ñhor, tem pie - da - de de nós. Cris - to,
 Sei - gneur, aie pi - tié de nous. Christ,
 O Lord, have mer - cy u - pon us. Christ,
 Oh Herr, er - bar - me dich. Chris - tus,

ten pie - dad de no - so - tros. Se - ñor, ten pie - dad de no -
 tem pie - da - de de nós. Se - ñhor, tem pie - da - de de
 aie pi - tié de nous. Sei - gneur, aie pi - tié de
 have mer - cy u - pon us. O Lord, have mer - cy u -
 er - bar - me dich. Oh Herr, er - bar - me

so - tros. Sí, ten pie - dad de no - so - tros.
 nós. Sim, tem pie - da - de de nós.
 nous. Oui, aie pi - tié de nous.
 pon us. Yes, have mer - cy u - pon us.
 dich. Ja, er - bar - me dich.

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³ Adapted from the prayer written by Inês de França Bento in: Rubem Alves (Org), *CultoArte, Celebrando a Vida, Pentecostes*, Ed. Vozes, Petrópolis, RJ 2002, p. 21.

L: Merciful Lord, your Spirit hovered over the waters where diversity sprouted and flourished. We confess our difficulty to live with legitimate differences. Forgive us those attitudes of mind, words and actions that do violence to unity in diversity.

A: **O Lord, have mercy upon us...** (*sung*)

L: Merciful Christ, grace and joy of the multitude, listener and teacher, you give birth to new visions of hope and heal the wounds of mind and body. We confess that we have failed to listen to voices different from our own, failed to say words that bring healing and hope, and we have perpetuated exclusive attitudes to those who cry out for solidarity and fellowship.

A: **O Lord, have mercy upon us...** (*sung*)

L: Merciful Lord, you are the source of all creation, the Eternal and life-giving Word. We confess that we do not listen to your creation that groans and cries out for liberation and renewal. Help us to walk together and to hear your voice in all living things that suffer and yearn for healing and care.

C: O God, fountain of mercy and grace, pour over us your pardon. May your love transform us into a source of living waters to restore the strength of your people. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

A: **Amen.**

Vem, Santo Espírito

Simeí Monteiro, Brasil

Simeí Monteiro, Brasil

Lento

1. Vem, ó Tu que fá - zes no - vos, os sis - te - mas de pen - sar, que às
 1. Ven, oh Tu que ha - ces nue - vos los sis - te - mas de pen - sar, que a las
 1. Come, O come, cre - at - ing Spir - it, You can change our way of thought; to the
 1. Es - prit Saint qui re - nou - vel - le nos pen - sées et nos es - prits, viens ou -
 1. Kom - me zu uns als Er - neu - rer, än - dre uns - re Den - kungs - art, gib im

le - tras das sen - ti - do e am - pli - as nos - so - o - lhar! Vem, e
 le - tras das sen - ti - do y que am - pli - as el mi - rar. Ven y
 writ - ten word give mean - ing, wi - der vi - sion You have brought. Touch our
 vrir nos yeux, nos lè - vres, et fais lui - re nos é - crits. Viens et
 Han - deln uns die Stüt - ze, dei - ner sich - ren Ge - gen - wart. Komm be -

to - ca nos - so mun - do: ter - ra á - ri - da de dor. Nes - te
 to - ca nues - tro mun - do: tie - rra lle - na de a - fli - cción. A es - tos
 earth dried out with sor - row, touch our world of ar - id death. On the
 tou - che no - tre mon - de, souf - fle vie et vé - ri - té sur les
 rüh - re un - ser Da - sein, die - ses dñr - re Land der Qual, lass den

va - le de os - sos se - cos so - pra vi - da e a - mor!
 hue - sos se - cos so - pla nue - va vi - da y a - mor!
 dry bones of this val - ley blow Your lov - ing, liv - ing breath.
 plaies les plus pro - fon - des, les os - se - ments des - sé - chés.
 Le - bens - quell der Lie - be strö - men in diestrock - ne Tal.

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III. Gospel Proclamation

Aleluia

Don Pedro Casaldáliga
Pedro Tierra

(from *Missa da Terra sem Males*)

Martin Coplas
Arr. Pery A. Alves de Souza

Refrain $\text{♩} = 132$

A - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia! A - le - ia!
Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - ia!

To - dos os po - vos da ter - ra, da Ter - ra sem Ma - les lou - vem ao Pai!
Come, all you lands, join the prais - es, the Land with - out E - vil of - fers to God.

Portuguese: Don Pedro Casaldáliga, Brasil e Pedro Tierra, Paraguay. Music: Martin Coplas, Argentina
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Proclamation or dramatization of the Gospel of John 4:1-42

Meditation or Sermon

IV. We Respond in Faith and Unity

Affirmation of Faith

(The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the Apostles' Creed or another affirmation of faith may be used for example the renewal of baptismal promises.)

Intercessory Prayer

The Congregation may sing the following Indigenous melody Guaicuru Kyrie or choose another.

Ouve, Deus de Amor

(Hear us, God of love)

Simeí Monteiro

Melodia Guaicuru adap. Simeí Monteiro

♩ = 120

Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor nos - so cla - mor! Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor
Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry! Hear us, God of love!

nos - so cla - mor! Ou - ve Deus de a - mor, Ou - ve Deus de a - mor,
hear this our cry! Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor, Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor, o nos - so cla - mor, o nos -
Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry! Hear our cry, we pray Hear our

so cla - mor. Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor nos - so cla - mor!
cry, we pray! Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

Text by Simeí Monteiro. Music from Guaicuru People ©2000 General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusik. 475, Riverside Dr, New York, NY, 10115

L: God of eternal compassion, as individuals and as community, we ask for light, so we may become more welcoming and understanding towards others and reduce the suffering in our world.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, teach your children that charity, hospitality and unity are expressions of your revelation and will for humanity.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, we beseech you, grant us peace; teach us and guide us to be builders of a tolerant and non-violent world.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, who spoke to us through creation, then through the prophets and then through your Son Jesus Christ, grant us wisdom to listen to your voice that calls us to unity in our diversity.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord who as a stranger asked for a drink from a Samaritan woman, give us living water, springing up unto eternal life.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

The local community may add other prayers.

Offering

C: We learn from Jesus to offer our lives as a sign of love and compassion. God, may we become living offerings dedicated to the ministry of your Word and grace.

Offerings are presented to the community.

C: God, who are with us and walk in our midst, grant us this day the grace of your light and Spirit so that we may continue our mission and remain faithful to welcoming and listening to all, even those who are different from ourselves. Take away the violence that is in our hearts and the discriminating attitudes that exclude and devalue the human dignity of others. Enable our churches to be welcoming spaces where feast and forgiveness, joy and tenderness, strength and faith become our daily practice, our daily food, our daily movement forward in Jesus Christ.

A: **Amen.**

Note: Local communities are invited to organize the offerings according to local tradition. We suggest that offerings be brought and placed on top of the colorful cloth before the altar. While the offertory takes place, a song is sung, chosen by the local organizing team.

The Lord's Prayer (*said or sung*)

V. Benediction, Peace and Sending Forth

Benediction

C: May the Lord God,
bless you and protect you,
fill your heart with tenderness and your soul with joy,
your ears with music and your nostrils with perfume,
your tongue with song giving face to hope.

May Jesus Christ the living water be
behind you to protect you,
before you to guide you,
by your side to accompany you,
within you to console you,
above you to bless you.

May the life-giving Spirit
breathe into you that your thoughts may be holy,
act in you so that your work is holy,

draw your heart so that you love what is holy,
strengthen you that you will defend what is holy.
May he make his home in your heart,
water its dryness, and melt its coldness,
kindle in your innermost soul the fire of his love
and bestow upon you a true faith, and firm hope, and a sincere and perfect love.

A: **Amen.**

Sharing Peace

C: May God, who teaches us to welcome each other and calls us to practice hospitality, grant us peace and serenity as we move forward on the path of Christian Unity.

As we go in the peace of Christ let us share with each other the sign of peace.

Postlude

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS

DAY 1

PROCLAMATION

It is necessary to go through Samaria (John 4:4)

Genesis 24:10-33

Abraham and Rebekah at the well

Psalms 42

The deer that longs for running streams

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

The generosity of the churches of Macedonia

John 4:1-4

He had to go through Samaria

Commentary

Jesus and his disciples travelled from Judea to Galilee. Samaria is between these two areas. There was a certain prejudice against Samaria and the Samaritans. The negative reputation of Samaria came from its mix of races and religions. It was not uncommon to use alternative routes to avoid stepping into Samaritan territory.

What does the Gospel of John mean, then, when saying, “it is necessary to go through Samaria”? More than a geographical issue, it is a choice of Jesus: “going through Samaria” means that it is necessary to meet the other, the different, the one who is often seen as a threat.

The conflict between Jews and Samaritans was old. Samaritan predecessors had broken with the monarchy of the south which required the centralization of the worship in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12). Later, when the Assyrians invaded Samaria deporting many of the local population, they brought to the territory a number of foreign peoples, each with their own gods or deities (2 Kings 17:24-34). For Jews, Samaritans became a people “mixed and impure”. Later in John’s Gospel, the Jews, wanting to discredit Jesus, accuse him saying, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” (Jn 8:48).

Samaritans in their turn, also had difficulty accepting Jews (Jn 4:8). The hurt of the past became even greater when, around 128 BC, the Jewish leader, John Hyrcanus, destroyed the temple built by Samaritans as their place of worship on Mount Gerizim. On at least one occasion, reported in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus was not received in a Samaritan city simply because he was on his way to Judea (Lk 9:52). So resistance to dialogue came from the two sides.

John makes it clear that “going through Samaria” is a choice Jesus is making; he is reaching beyond his own people. In this he is showing us that isolating ourselves from those who are different and relating only to people like ourselves is a self-inflicted impoverishment. It is the dialogue with those who are different that makes us grow.

Questions

1. What does it mean for me and for my community of faith "to have to go through Samaria?"
2. What are the steps that my church has made to meet other churches and what have the churches learnt from each other?

Prayer

God of all peoples,
teach us to go through Samaria
to meet our brothers and sisters from other churches.
Allow us to go there with an open heart
so we may learn from every church and culture.
We confess that you are the source of unity.
Grant us the unity that Christ wills for us.
Amen.

DAY 2

DENUNCIATION I

Tired of the journey, Jesus sat down facing the well (John 4:6)

Genesis 29:1-14

Psalms 137

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

John 4:5-6

Jacob and Rachel at the well

How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

Each one of you says, "I am for Paul,"
or "I am for Apollos"

Jesus was tired out by his journey

Commentary

Jesus had been in Judea before his encounter with the Samaritan woman. The Pharisees had begun to spread the word that Jesus baptized more disciples than John. Perhaps this rumour has caused some tension and discomfort. Perhaps it is the reason behind Jesus' decision to leave.

Arriving at the well, Jesus decides to stop. He was tired from his journey. His fatigue could also be related to the rumours. While he was resting, a Samaritan woman came near the well to fetch water. This meeting took place at Jacob's well: a symbolic place in the life and spirituality of the people of the Bible.

A dialogue begins between the Samaritan woman and Jesus about the place of worship. "Is it on this mountain or in Jerusalem?" asks the Samaritan woman. Jesus answers, "neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him" (Jn 4: 21- 24).

It still happens that instead of a common search for unity, competition and dispute mark the relations between the churches. This has been the experience of Brazil in recent years. Communities extol their own virtues and the benefits that accrue to their adherents in order to attract new members. Some think that the bigger the church, the larger its number of members, the greater its power, the closer they are to God, presenting themselves as the only true worshippers. As a result there has been violence and disrespect to other religions and traditions. This type of competitive marketing creates both distrust between the churches and a lack of credibility in society towards Christianity as a whole. As competition grows the “other” community becomes the enemy.

Who are the true worshippers? True worshippers do not allow the logic of competition – who is better and who is worse – to infect faith. We need “wells” to lean upon, to rest and let go of disputes, competition and violence, places where we can learn that true worshippers worship “in Spirit and in Truth.”

Questions

1. What are the main reasons for competition among our churches?
2. Are we able to identify a common “well” upon which we can lean, and rest from our disputes and competitions ?

Prayer

Gracious God,
Often our churches are led to choose the logic of competition.
Forgive our sin of presumption.
We are weary from this need to be first. Allow us to rest at the well.
Refresh us with the water of unity drawn from our common prayer.
May your Spirit who hovered over the waters of chaos
bring unity from our diversity.
Amen.

DAY 3

DENUNCIATION II

“I have no husband” (John 4:17)

2 Kings 17:24-34
Psalms 139:1-12
Romans 7:1-4
John 4:16-19

Samaria conquered by Assyria
“O Lord, you have searched me and you know me”
“You have died to the law through the body of Christ”
“I have no husband”

Commentary

The Samaritan woman answers Jesus, “I have no husband.” The topic of conversation is now about the married life of the woman. There is a shift in terms of the content of their dialogue – from water to husband. “Go, call your husband

and come back” (Jn 4:16), but Jesus knows the woman has had five husbands, and the man she has now is not her husband.

What is this woman’s situation? Did her husbands ask for divorce? Was she a widow? Did she have children? These questions arise naturally when dealing with this narrative. However, it seems that Jesus was interested in another dimension of the woman’s situation, he acknowledges the woman’s life but remains open to her, to encounter her. Jesus does not insist on a moral interpretation of her answer but seems to want to lead her beyond. And as a result the woman’s attitude towards Jesus changes. At this point, the obstacles of cultural and religious differences fade into the background in order to give space to something much more important: an encounter in trust. Jesus’ behaviour in this moment allows us to open new windows and raise further questions: questions that challenge the attitudes that denigrate and marginalize women; and questions about the differences which we allow to stand in the way of the unity we seek and for which we pray.

Questions

1. What are the sinful structures that we can identify in our own communities?
2. What is the place and the role of women in our churches?
3. What can our churches do to prevent violence and to overcome violence directed against women and girls?

Prayer

O you who are beyond all things,
how could we call you by any other name?
What song could be sung for you?
No word can express you.
What Spirit can perceive you?
No intelligence can comprehend you.
You alone are inexpressible;
all that is said has come from you.
You alone are unknowable;
all that is thought has come from you.
All creatures proclaim you,
those who speak and those who are dumb.
Every one desires you, everyone sighs and aspires after you.
All that exists prays to you,
and every being that can contemplate your universe raises to you a silent hymn.
Have pity on us, you who are beyond all things.
How could we call you by any other name?
Amen.

Attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus

DAY 4

RENUNCIATION

Then the woman left her water jar (John 4:28)

Genesis 11:31-12:4

God promises to make Abram a great nation and a blessing

Psalms 23

The Lord is my shepherd

Acts 10:9-20

“What God has made clean, you must not call profane”

John 4:25-28

Then the woman left her water jar

Commentary

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman shows that dialogue with the different, the stranger, the unfamiliar, can be life-giving. If the woman had followed the rules of her culture, she would have left when she saw Jesus approaching the well. That day, for some reason, she did not follow the established rules. Both she and Jesus broke with conventional patterns of behaviour. Through this breaking forth they showed us again that it is possible to build new relationships.

As Jesus completes the work of the Father, the Samaritan woman, for her part, leaves her water jar, meaning that she could go further in her life; she was not confined to the role society imposed on her. In John’s Gospel she is the first person to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. “Breaking forth” is a necessity for those who desire to grow stronger and wiser in their faith.

That the Samaritan woman leaves behind her water jar signals that she has found a greater gift, a greater good than the water she came for, and a better place to be within her community. She recognizes the greater gift that this Jewish stranger, Jesus, is offering her.

It is difficult for us to find value, to recognize as good, or even holy, that which is unknown to us and that which belongs to another. However, recognizing the gifts that belong to the other as good and as holy is a necessary step towards the visible unity we seek.

Questions

1. Meeting Jesus demands that we leave behind our water jars, what are those water jars for us?
2. What are the main difficulties that prevent us from doing so?

Prayer

Loving God,

help us to learn from Jesus and the Samaritan

that the encounter with the other opens for us new horizons of grace.

Help us to break through our limits and embrace new challenges.

Help us to go beyond fear in following the call of your Son.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

DAY 5

ANNUNCIATION

You have no bucket and the well is deep (John 4:11)

Genesis 46:1-7

God tells Jacob not to be afraid of going down to Egypt

Psalms 133

How good it is when kindred live together in unity

Acts 2:1-11

The day of Pentecost

John 4:7-15

“You have no bucket and the well is deep”

Commentary

Jesus needed help. After a long walk, fatigue strikes. Exhausted in the heat of noon, he feels hungry and thirsty (Jn 4:6). Furthermore, Jesus is a stranger; it is he who is in a foreign territory and the well belongs to the woman's people. Jesus is thirsty and, as the Samaritan woman points out, he has no bucket to draw water. He needs water, he needs her help: everybody needs help!

Many Christians believe that they alone have all the answers and they need no help from anyone else. We lose a lot if we maintain this perspective. None of us can reach the depths of the well of the divine and yet faith demands that we delve deeper into the mystery. We cannot do this in isolation. We need the help of our Christian brothers and sisters. Only then can we reach into the depths of the mystery of God.

A common point in our faith, regardless of the church to which we belong, is that God is mystery beyond our comprehension. The search for Christian unity brings us to the recognition that no community has all the means to reach into the deep waters of the divine. We need water, we need help: everybody needs help! The more we grow in unity, share our buckets and join the pieces of our ropes, the deeper we delve into the well of the divine.

Brazilian indigenous traditions teach us to learn from the wisdom of the elderly, and at the same time, from the curiosity and innocence of infants. When we are ready to accept that we do need each other, we become like children, open to learn. And that's how God's Kingdom opens for us (Mt 18:3). We must do as Jesus did. We must take the initiative to enter into a foreign land, where we become a stranger, and cultivate the desire to learn from that which is different.

Questions

1. Do you remember situations in which your church has helped another church or has been helped by another church?
2. Are there reservations from the part of your church to accept help from another church? How can these reservations be overcome?

Prayer

God, spring of the Living water,
help us to understand that the more we join together the pieces of our ropes,

the more deeply our buckets reach into your divine waters!
Awaken us to the truth that the gifts of the other,
are an expression of your unfathomable mystery.
And make us sit at the well together
to drink from your water
which gathers us in unity and peace.
We ask this in the name of your son Jesus Christ,
who asked the Samaritan woman to give him water for his thirst.
Amen.

DAY 6

TESTIMONY

**Jesus said : “The water that I will give will become
in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life”
(John 4:14)**

Exodus 2:15-22

Moses at the well of Midian

Psalms 91

The song of those who take refuge in the Lord

1 John 4:16-21

Perfect love casts out fear

John 4:11-15

“A spring of water welling up to eternal life”

Commentary

The dialogue that begins with Jesus asking for water becomes a dialogue in which Jesus promises water. Later in this same gospel Jesus will again ask for a drink. “I thirst,” he says from the cross, and from the cross Jesus becomes the promised fountain of water which flows from his pierced side. We receive this water, this life from Jesus, in baptism, and it becomes a water, a life that wells up within us to be given and shared with others.

Here is the witness of a Brazilian woman who has drunk from this water and in whom this water becomes a spring:

Sister Romi, a nurse from Campo Grande, was a pastor in the Pentecostal tradition. One Sunday night, all alone in a shack, in Romi’s neighbourhood a sixteen year old indigenous girl called Semei gave birth to a baby boy. She was found lying on the floor and bleeding. Sister Romi took her to the hospital. Enquiries were made – where was Semei’s family? They were found, but they did not want to know. Semei and her child had no home to go to. Sister Romi took them into her own modest home. She did not know Semei, and prejudice towards indigenous people is great in Campo Grande. Semei continued to have health problems, but Sister Romi’s great generosity brought forth further generosity from her neighbours. Another new mother, a Catholic called Veronica, breastfed Semei’s child as she was unable to do so. Semei named her son Luke Nathaniel and in time they were

able to move away from the city to a farm, but she did not forget the kindness of Sister Romi and her neighbours.

The water that Jesus gives, the water that Sister Romi received in baptism, became in her a spring of water and an offer of life to Semei and her child. Prompted by her witness, this same baptismal water became a spring, a fountain, in the lives of Romi's neighbours. The water of baptism springing into life becomes an ecumenical witness of Christian love in action, a foretaste of the eternal life which Jesus promises.

Concrete gestures like these practiced by ordinary people are what we need in order to grow in fellowship. They give witness to the Gospel and relevance to ecumenical relations.

Questions

1. How do you interpret Jesus' words that through him we may become "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14)?
2. Where do you see Christian people being springs of living water for you and for others?
3. Which are the situations in public life to which the churches should speak with a single voice in order to be springs of living water?

Prayer

Triune God,
following the example of Jesus,
make us witnesses to your love.
Grant us to become instruments of justice, peace and solidarity.
May your Spirit move us towards concrete actions that lead to unity.
May walls be transformed into bridges.
This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

DAY 7

TESTIMONY

“Give me to drink” (John 4:7)

Numbers 20:1-11

The Israelites at Meribah

Psalms 119:10-20

“I will not forget your word”

Romans 15:2-7

“May God... grant you to live in harmony with one another”

John 4:7-15

“Give me to drink”

Commentary

Christians should be confident that encountering and exchanging experiences with the other, even other religious traditions, can change us and help us to reach into the depths of the well. Approaching those who are strangers to us with the desire to drink from their well, opens to us the “wonders of God” that we proclaim.

In the wilderness God’s people were without water and God sent Moses and Aaron to bring water forth from the rock. In the same way God often meets our needs through others. As we call upon the Lord in our need, like the Samaritan asking Jesus, “Sir, give me this water,” perhaps the Lord has already answered our prayers by putting into the hands of our neighbours that for which we ask. And so we need to turn also to them, and ask, “Give me to drink.”

Sometimes the answer to our need is already in the life and goodwill of the people around us. From the Guarany people of Brazil we learn that in their language there is no equivalent word for the term “religion” as separate from the rest of life. The expression usually used literally means “our good way of being” (“*ñande reko katu*”). This expression refers to the whole cultural system, which includes religion. Religion, therefore, is part of the Guarany cultural system, as well as their way of thinking and being (*teko*). It relates to all that improves and develops the community and leads to its “good way of being” (*teko katu*). The Guarany people remind us that Christianity was first called “The Way” (Acts 9:2). “The Way,” or “our good way of being” is God’s way of bringing harmony to all parts of our lives.

Questions

1. How has your understanding and experience of God been enriched by the encounter with other Christians?
2. What can Christian communities learn from indigenous wisdom and other religious traditions in your region?

Prayer

God of life, who cares for all creation, and calls us to justice and peace,
may our security not come from arms, but from respect.

May our force not be of violence, but of love.

May our wealth not be in money, but in sharing.

May our path not be of ambition, but of justice.

May our victory not be from vengeance, but in forgiveness.

May our unity not be in the quest of power,
but in vulnerable witness to do your will.

Open and confident, may we defend the dignity of all creation,
sharing, today and forever, the bread of solidarity, justice and peace.

This we ask in the name of Jesus, your holy Son, our brother,
who, as victim of our violence, even from the heights of the cross,
gave forgiveness to us all.

Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer from an ecumenical conference in Brazil, calling for an end to poverty as the first step on the path to peace through justice)

DAY 8

WITNESS

Many believed because of the woman's testimony (John 4:39)

Exodus 3:13-15

Moses at the Burning Bush

Psalms 30

The Lord restores us to life

Romans 10:14-17

"How beautiful are the feet of those
who bring good news!"

John 4:27-30, 39-40

Many believed because of the woman's testimony

Commentary

With her heart transformed, the Samaritan woman goes out in mission. She announces to her people that she has found the Messiah. Many believed in Jesus "because of the woman's witness" (John 4:39). The force of her witness stems from the transformation of her life caused by her encounter with Jesus. Thanks to her attitude of openness, she recognised in that stranger "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:14)

Mission is a key element of Christian faith. Every Christian is called to announce the name of the Lord. Pope Francis told missionaries, "wherever you may go, it would do you well to think that the Spirit of God always gets there ahead of us". Mission is not proselytism. Those who truly announce Jesus approach others in loving dialogue, open to mutual learning, and respecting difference. Our mission

requires us to learn to drink from the living water without taking hold of the well. The well does not belong to us. Rather, we draw life from the well, the well of living water which is given by Christ.

Our mission must be a work both of word and witness. We seek to live out what we proclaim. The late Brazilian Archbishop Helder Camara, once said that many have become atheists because they have become disillusioned by people of faith who do not practice what they preach. The witness of the woman led her community to believe in Jesus because her brothers and sisters saw coherence between her words and her own transformation.

If our word and witness is authentic, the world will hear and believe. “How are they to believe if they have not heard?” (Rom 10:14).

Questions

1. What is the relationship between unity and mission?
2. Do you know people in your community whose life story is a witness to unity?

Prayer

God, spring of living water,
Make of us witnesses of unity through both our words and our lives.
Help us to understand that we are not the owners of the well,
And give us the wisdom to welcome the same grace in one another.
Transform our hearts and our lives
So that we might be genuine bearers of the Good News.
And lead us always to the encounter with the other,
As an encounter with you.
We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

THE ECUMENICAL SITUATION IN BRAZIL

The ecumenical movement in Brazil has roots in the experience of interdenominational cooperation between different Protestant missionary agencies operating in the country since the 19th century. Encouraged by pan-protestant cooperation, in 1903 the Presbyterian Pastor Erasmo Braga pioneered the organization of the Evangelical Alliance and Christian Effort. Both institutions aimed at promoting unity among different Protestant groups and cooperation in evangelism and education. These organizations also committed themselves to uphold the republican principle of religious equality.

The 1916 Congress of Panama¹, dedicated to interdenominational missionary cooperation in Latin America, significantly strengthened these initiatives. Following the Panama Congress, the Brazilian Cooperation Committee was established. It brought together nineteen ecclesial communities, including churches, missionary societies and other evangelical organizations.

In 1934, the Evangelical Confederation of Brazil (CEB) was created in order to promote the ecumenical movement. The CEB later played an important role in promoting the ideals of the World Council of Churches. The churches that participated in the creation of CEB were the Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian churches of Brazil and the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil. They were joined by the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil in 1959, by the Foursquare Gospel Church in 1963, and by the Pentecostal Church Brazil for Christ in 1968.

Mission was an important topic for CEB. This led to the creation of the Council of Interchurch Relations, which had the task of coordinating the missionary work undertaken by different mission bodies so as to avoid the duplication of efforts and competition among different agencies and churches.

¹ The Congress of Panama was held in protest of the International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh (1910), which did not invite mission agencies active in Latin America, as some where proselytizing other Christians in the region. Among the many reviews of this Congress, that of Hans-Jürgen Prien noted that the Congress of Panama marked the end of the most enthusiastic of the Protestant missions in Latin America and propelled a critical reflection of the Protestant mission in an environment which was mostly Roman Catholic (TIEL, 1998, p. 43). From this Congress there were several regional conferences to discuss missionary cooperation in Latin America.

Another well-known dimension of CEB's work² was its circular letters that addressed social issues in Brazil such as the need for land reform, improving education, literacy courses and campaigns in emergencies.

Youth church movements played an important role in this attempt to reflect on the church's social responsibility within the Brazilian context. An important event that helped to strengthen these initiatives was the World Conference of Christian Youth, which occurred in the late 1940s, in Oslo. In that Conference, the young Brazilians had access to new biblical and theological perspectives from Europe and the United States.

The greater involvement of young Brazilians with international Christian youth movements such as the Universal Federation of Student Christian Movements (WSCF) was an important factor in the development of a theology of the Social Gospel and the gradual organization of reading groups and contextualized biblical interpretations, capable of establishing dialogue with the social reality. The churches were forced to confront the issues of social and economic conflict which continued to emerge in these groups.

The context of fermentation was intensified by the influence of the American theologian Richard Shaull, a pioneer in the formulation of a theology of Revolution. Another important influence was the example of French Catholic priests who sought to live alongside the poor and who became an inspiration for many young Christians in Brazil. The challenge was to foster a theology that incorporated both Brazilian culture and the problems of Brazilian society in its reflection.

This experience deepened in 1953, with the creation of the Division of Social Responsibility of the Church in the CEB. The objective of the new division was to study the implications of faith at a national level and to evaluate social work and evangelization with regard to the social and political contexts. As a result, four national conferences were organized to understand the reality of the country and identify prospects from a Protestant perspective.

The topics covered in these four conferences were: Social Responsibility of the Church (1955), Study on the Social Responsibility of the Church (1955), The Church's presence in the Evolution of Nationality (1960) and Jesus Christ and the Brazilian Revolutionary Process (1962). By the third and fourth conferences one

² The CEB participated in the Latin American Evangelical Conferences (CELA), of which the most important was the CELA II, held in Lima, 1961. This conference brought together 220 representatives from 34 Latin American denominations. From the Lima Conference Committee were established the Latin American Evangelical Christian Education Commission (CELADEC) and the Church and Society in Latin America Commission (ISAL), especially the latter was very important to boost ecumenism in Brazil.

begins to see an openness to dialogue with Roman Catholics, who were also meeting to discuss the social and political problems of the country.

The development of the ecumenical movement in the 1950s and 1960s was marked by its critical perspective of the prevailing models of economic development. The concepts of “progress” and “industrialization” were invoked to justify the accumulation of wealth by a few while a many of the population were denied access to either the goods produced or the wealth created. Inspired by the four conferences, the ecumenical focus on mission and social change also reverberated in the Roman Catholic Church. One of its journals published some of the results. The theological reflection on the social responsibility of the Church contributed to the unfolding of the ecumenical movement as a project of unity between the churches which held together evangelism and social engagement.

In the years following the 1964 military coup, the CEB was progressively dismantled. However, the ecumenical work which the Confederation promoted did not entirely disappear. As a result of Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil increasingly opened to dialogue with other Christians and was increasingly aware of the social responsibility of the Church. In the face of political repression, the doctrinal differences which separated the churches were of secondary importance to the pressing social problems faced by the Brazilian people, and this contributed to the reinvigoration of the ecumenical movement.

In the context of military dictatorship, ecumenical groups of Protestants and Roman Catholics, and which also included some non-Christians, started to promote human rights, denounce torture, and to pursue democratic openness. These ecumenical coalitions strengthened other groups and projects that had as their goal the promotion of social values related to human rights. This is the background of the Project *Brasil Nunca Mais* (Brazil Never Again) jointly developed by the World Council of Churches and the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo in the 1980s. Coordinated by Presbyterian Pastor Jaime Wright and the Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns, the project sought to prevent legal papers for political crimes from being destroyed at the end of the military dictatorship, and to gather information about torture practiced by the political repression. It was hoped that the disclosure of violations of human rights committed by the military would fulfil an educational role within Brazilian society.

Particular situations of oppression and human rights issues have remained at the centre of the ecumenical movement in Brazil. In this sense, it is important to highlight the contribution made by theologians from different churches who were identified with the ecumenical movement. For example ecumenical collaboration in Biblical studies has prompted the discussion about the situation of women both in society and in the Church.

Since 1975, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil, the Episcopal Anglican Church, and the Methodist

Church began to envisage together the establishment of a National Council of Churches. Their vision became a reality in 1982, when CONIC was created. For the whole ecumenical movement in Brazil, the National Council of Churches represents the institutional character of ecumenism, which seeks to promote an organic relationship between its member churches. It has, among its many tasks, the challenge of urging the churches to assume an ecumenical dimension in all areas of their pastoral activity.

In the rather complex Brazilian religious context, CONIC seeks to foster dialogue between churches and other religions. Amidst growing religious intolerance, CONIC is involved in several discussion forums that seek to minimize the impact of religious fundamentalism. It has taken a leading role in the debate on the relationship between Church and Society, discussing, in particular, the need for regulation of the relationship between civil society organizations and the State. In relationships and at times in conflict between religious groups and movements identified with the struggle for human rights, CONIC has worked with a view to promote theological reflection on different perspectives and perceptions in society.

One of CONIC's most important activities is the annual celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It has also supported three Lenten campaigns sponsored by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, which were held ecumenically in the years 2000, 2005 and 2010. The fourth ecumenical Lent Campaign will take place in 2016.

It is important to highlight that the Brazilian ecumenical movement includes a wide number of groups and organizations such as the Brazilian section of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), the Centre for Bible Studies (CEBI), the Ecumenical Centre of Service to Evangelization and Popular Education (CESEP), as well as agencies such as the Ecumenical Coordination of Services (CESE) and Koinonia – Ecumenical Presence and Service. These agencies also meet as Act Forum-Brazil, where the main strategies of the national ecumenical movement are discussed and decided. There is also a movement of the Fraternity of Christian Churches (the House of Reconciliation) that promotes meetings and study courses between churches, publishing houses and universities. The testimony of our unity is realized in different experiences in which we seek to transform the structures that cause violence and distance us from the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice and peace (Rom 14:17.).

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Themes 1968-2015

In 1968, materials jointly prepared by the WCC Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were first used.

- 1968 To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:14)
Pour la louange de sa gloire
- 1969 Called to freedom (Galatians 5:13)
Appelés à la liberté
(Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1970 We are fellow workers for God (1 Corinthians 3:9)
Nous sommes les coopérateurs de Dieu
(Preparatory meeting held at the Monastery of Niederaltaich,
Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1971 ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:13)
...et la communion du Saint-Esprit
- 1972 I give you a new commandment (John 13:34)
Je vous donne un commandement nouveau
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1973 Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)
Seigneur, apprends-nous à prier
(Preparatory meeting held at the Abbey of Montserrat, Spain)
- 1974 That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:1-13)
Que tous confessent : Jésus-Christ est Seigneur
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1975 God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-10)
La volonté du Père : Tout réunir sous un seul chef, le Christ
(Material from an Australian group. Preparatory meeting held in Geneva,
Switzerland)
- 1976 We shall be like him (1 John 3:2) or, Called to become what we are
Appelés à devenir ce que nous sommes
(Material from Caribbean Conference of Churches.
Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)

- 1977 Enduring together in hope (Romans 5:1-5)
L'espérance ne déçoit pas
(Material from Lebanon, in the midst of a civil war.
Preparatory meeting held in Geneva)
- 1978 No longer strangers (Ephesians 2:13-22)
Vous n'êtes plus des étrangers
(Material from an ecumenical team in Manchester, England)
- 1979 Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4:7-11)
Soyez au service les uns des autres pour la gloire de Dieu
(Material from Argentina - preparatory meeting held in Geneva,
Switzerland)
- 1980 Your kingdom come (Matthew 6:10)
Que ton règne vienne!
(Material from an ecumenical group in Berlin, German Democratic
Republic -preparatory meeting held in Milan)
- 1981 One Spirit - many gifts - one body (1 Corinthians 12:3b-13)
Un seul esprit - des dons divers - un seul corps
(Material from Graymoor Fathers, USA – preparatory meeting held in
Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1982 May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)
Que tous trouvent leur demeure en Toi, Seigneur
(Material from Kenya - preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)
- 1983 Jesus Christ - the Life of the World (1 John 1:1-4)
Jesus Christ - La Vie du Monde
(Material from an ecumenical group in Ireland - preparatory meeting held
in Céligny (Bossey), Switzerland)
- 1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord (1 Cor 2:2 and Col 1:20)
Appelés à l'unité par la croix de notre Seigneur
(Preparatory meeting held in Venice, Italy)
- 1985 From death to life with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-7)
De la mort à la vie avec le Christ
(Material from Jamaica - preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp,
Switzerland)
- 1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:6-8)
Vous serez mes témoins
(Material from Yugoslavia (Slovenia), preparatory meeting held in
Yugoslavia)

- 1987 United in Christ - a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-6:4a)
 Unis dans le Christ - une nouvelle création
 (Material from England, preparatory meeting held in Taizé, France)
- 1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4:18)
 L'Amour de Dieu bannit la Crainte
 (Material from Italy - preparatory meeting held in Pinerolo, Italy)
- 1989 Building community: one body in Christ (Romans 12:5-6a)
 Bâtir la communauté : Un seul corps en Christ
 (Material from Canada - preparatory meeting held in Whaley Bridge, England)
- 1990 That they all may be one...That the world may believe (John 17)
 Que tous soient un...Afin que le monde croie
 (Material from Spain - preparatory meeting held in Madrid, Spain)
- 1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations! (Psalm 117 and Romans 15:5-13)
 Nations, louez toutes le Seigneur
 (Material from Germany - preparatory meeting held in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1992 I am with you always... Go, therefore (Matthew 28:16-20)
 Je suis avec vous... allez donc
 (Material from Belgium - preparatory meeting held in Bruges, Belgium)
- 1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity (Galatians 5:22-23)
 Pour l'unité : laisser mûrir en nous les fruits de l'Esprit
 (Material from Zaire - preparatory meeting held near Zurich, Switzerland)
- 1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind (Acts 4:23-37)
 La maison de Dieu : Appelés à être un dans le cœur et dans l'esprit
 (Material from Ireland - preparatory meeting held in Dublin, Republic of Ireland)
- 1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another (John 15:1-17)
 La koinonia : communion en Dieu et les uns avec les autres
 (Material from Faith and Order, preparatory meeting held in Bristol, England)
- 1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3:14-22)
 Je me tiens à la porte et je frappe
 (Preparatory material from Portugal, meeting held in Lisbon, Portugal)

- 1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God
(2 Corinthians 5:20)
Au nom du Christ, laissez-vous réconcilier avec Dieu
(Material from Nordic Ecumenical Council, preparatory meeting held in
Stockholm, Sweden)
- 1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:14-27)
L'Esprit aussi vient en aide à notre faiblesse
(Preparatory material from France, meeting held in Paris, France)
- 1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples
(Revelation 21:1-7)
Dieu demeurera avec eux. Ils seront ses peuples
et lui sera le Dieu qui est avec eux
(Preparatory material from Malaysia, meeting held in Monastery of Bose,
Italy)
- 2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)
Béni soit Dieu, qui nous a bénis en Christ
(Preparatory material from the Middle East Council of Churches, meeting
held La Verna, Italy)
- 2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-6)
Je suis le chemin, et la vérité et la vie
(Preparatory material from Romania and meeting held at Vulcan,
Romania)
- 2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:5-9)
Car chez toi est la fontaine de la vie (Psalm 35, 6-10)
(Preparatory material CEEC and CEC, meeting near Augsburg, Germany)
- 2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4:4-18)
Car nous avons ce trésor dans des vases d'argile
(Preparatory material churches in Argentina, meeting at Los Rubios,
Spain)
- 2004 My peace I give to you (John 14:23-31; John 14:27)
Je vous donne ma paix
(Preparatory material from Aleppo, Syria - meeting in Palermo, Sicily)
- 2005 Christ, the one foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:1-23)
Le Christ, unique fondement de l'Eglise
(Preparatory material from Slovakia - meeting in Piestaň, Slovakia)

- 2006 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them (Matthew 18:18-20)
Là où deux ou trois se trouvent réunis en mon nom, je suis au milieu d'eux.
(Preparatory material from Ireland - meeting held in Prosperous, Co. Kildare, Ireland)
- 2007 He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak (Mark 7:31-37)
Il fait entendre les sourds et parler les muets
(Preparatory material from South Africa – meeting held in Faverges, France)
- 2008 Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:(12a) 13b-18)
Priez sans cesse
(Preparatory material from USA – meeting held in Graymoor, Garrison, USA)
- 2009 That they may become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37:15-28)
Ils seront unis dans ta main
(Preparatory material from Korea – meeting held in Marseilles, France)
- 2010 You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:48)
...de tout cela, c'est vous qui êtes les témoins
(Preparatory material from Scotland – meeting held in Glasgow, Scotland)
- 2011 One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer (cf. Acts 2:42)
Unis dans l'enseignement des apôtres, la communion fraternelle, la fraction du pain et la prière
(Preparatory material from Jerusalem – meeting held in Saydnaya, Syria)
- 2012 We will all be Changed by the Victory of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15:51-58)
Tous, nous serons transformés par la victoire de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ
(Preparatory material from Poland – meeting held in Warsaw, Poland)
- 2013 What does God require of us? (cf. Mi 6, 6-8)
Que nous demande le Seigneur ?
(Preparatory material from India – meeting held in Bangalore, India)
- 2014 Has Christ been divided ? (1 Corinthians 1:1-17)
Le Christ est-il divisé ?
(Preparatory material from Canada – meeting held in Montréal, Canada)

- 2015 Jesus said to her: Give me to drink (John 4, 7)
Jésus lui dit : Donne-moi à boire
(Preparatory material from Brazil – meeting held in São Paulo, Brazil)

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

- c. 1740 In Scotland a Pentecostal movement arose, with North American links, whose revivalist message included prayers for and with all churches.
- 1820 The Rev. James Haldane Stewart publishes “Hints for the General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Spirit”.
- 1840 The Rev. Ignatius Spencer, a convert to Roman Catholicism, suggests a “Union of Prayer for Unity”.
- 1867 The First Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops emphasizes prayer for unity in the Preamble to its Resolutions.
- 1894 Pope Leo XIII encourages the practice of a Prayer Octave for Unity in the context of Pentecost.
- 1908 First observance of the “Church Unity Octave” initiated by the Rev. Paul Wattson.
- 1926 The Faith and Order movement begins publishing “Suggestions for an Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity”.
- 1935 Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocates the “Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” on the inclusive basis of prayer for “the unity Christ wills by the means he wills”.
- 1958 Unité Chrétienne (Lyons, France) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches begin co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer.
- 1964 In Jerusalem, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus’ prayer “that they all may be one” (John 17).
- 1964 The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II emphasizes that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement and encourages observance of the Week of Prayer.

- 1966 The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] begin official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material.
- 1968 First official use of Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by Faith and Order and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity).
- 1975 First use of Week of Prayer material based on a draft text prepared by a local ecumenical group. An Australian group was the first to take up this plan in preparing the 1975 initial draft.
- 1988 Week of Prayer materials were used in the inaugural worship for The Christian Federation of Malaysia, which links the major Christian groupings in that country.
- 1994 International group preparing text for 1996 included representatives from YMCA and YWCA.
- 2004 Agreement reached that resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church).
- 2008 Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (Its predecessor, the Church Unity Octave, was first observed in 1908).