



**INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIP**

**S U R V E Y**  
**of current evidence of ecumenism**

**Answers of the IEF - membership**  
**from 10 European countries**

Edited by Organising Committee of the 35th Conference of IEF  
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*Our thanks are due to Kate Davson for attempting correction of the  
English language*

## INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of and prior to the 35th international IEF conference (Budapest, August 4-11, 2003) the leadership authorised us to conduct a survey with the members of the Fellowship in order to obtain information on a few questions.

Firstly, we tried to find out to what extent the theme of the conference (John 13,35) was put into practice, not by individuals but between Christian denominations which all profess to be Christ's followers. To this end we distributed a paper containing four questions among the participants of the 34th international conference, at Swanwick in 2002. The questions were as follow:

- Do the various Christian denominations and their members love each other?
- Do they behave as disciples of the same Jesus Christ?
- Will the process of ecumenism come to a halt because there is no progress either in terms of theological unity or organisational unity? Or is unity in love (as in John 13,35) discernible already? Is that a major step on the road of ecumenism?
- What is your experience, dear Friend, in your own environment? What do you see as giving cause for joy, what do you view as a hindrance or a bitter experience?

The answers received soon led us to the conclusion that we might try and ask our IEF members in the 10 European countries about actual/current evidence of ecumenism, in order to get a more accurate picture of the situation. We worked out a 24-part questionnaire which was e-mailed or posted to IEF members and our young friends [the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE)] and was also published on the IEF internet homepage for several months. (See Appendix 1. for the questionnaire.)

In our experience, the answers to the questions on the conference theme (cf. the chapter "**Reflections on the Basic Conference Theme**") and those given in response to the so-called Budapest-Survey (cf. the chapter "**Statistically processable opinions and data**") complemented each other very well. The former allowed expression of opinions at length, whereas the latter was easier to process statistically and to represent graphically, which in turn contributed to clarity.

The survey was very timely. 17 of the essay-type answers and 184 of the answers to the questionnaire were evaluated, from Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom. The fact that all respondents found some kind of evidence indicating the presence of ecumenism shows that we were able to achieve a snapshot of the process spread throughout individual countries.

It must be stressed this is not scientific research. It is IEF's contribution to Europe's better self-knowledge. On behalf of those devising and evaluating the survey, we ask you to take it as a first attempt by the ecumenical movement to hold a mirror up to Europe's Christian communities helping them see what progress has been made in ecumenism by the year 2003.

Budapest, the Ecumenical Month, i.e. January 2004.

Kolonits Veronika  
President of the Conference Organizing Committee

## What came out of the Budapest Questionnaire?

Dr Karl Adolf Bauer reports

Just 190 forms from eight countries were completed and returned to Budapest. These were evaluated by members of an Ecumenical Institute. *During the conference these evaluations were the subject of discussions in six workshops which met in language groups. One workshop considered the question of the future of ecumenism on the basis of the results of the questionnaire. On August 9, 2003 in a plenary session organised specifically for this purpose, the reports of the workshops were presented and offered for discussion.*

The following is a **resumé of the most important results of the reports together with the most significant remarks from the discussion.** Where necessary differences conditioned by regional considerations are specifically highlighted.

1. On the level of individual countries, regular meetings between bishops/church leaders or those responsible in the governing body of the various churches are firmly established. Nevertheless, it was made clear that local ecumenism everywhere is, to a great degree, dependent on the readiness of the clergy to engage in ecumenical co-operation. Even a change of bishop or local clergy can have an appreciable effect on regional or local ecumenism, both positive and negative! Where clergy communicate spiritually with one another this usually has immediate, positive effects on the ecumenical cooperation of congregations of the different denominations and their members.

2. The ecumenical situation in a country or region is usually influenced by the numerical balance between the churches. Above all, smaller churches (particularly the 'free churches') can easily be overshadowed and even dominated by the majority or mainline churches. This demands of the latter a particular sensitivity in their dealings with minority churches.

3. In individual countries, congregations of different denominations have regulated their ecumenical cooperation with a contract-like covenanted partnership of congregations, in which it is laid down what they do together and what they still do separately.

4. Meanwhile, in almost all countries there are -even if only occasionally at present- churches and parish community centres built and used in common. In their building, ecumenical aspects played a role side by side with economic motives.

5. Secular society expects cooperation between the churches and hardly pays attention any longer to doctrinal differences. Clearly contemporary secular society is more impressed by what binds Christians of different churches together than what still divides them.

6. At the level of local ecumenism, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is mentioned in the responses as by far the greatest 'bond of unity' between the different churches and congregations. Correspondingly, in most responses, prayer is mentioned as the only answer to the question of what can be done to move the Christian unity process forward. After that, with slight variations in order, there follow replies such as: official and unofficial meetings with members of different churches; membership of an ecumenical group; common social and charitable work; common services and/or participation in the services of other churches; study of agreed texts or other theological publications. -[Taking into account the opinion of the IEF-group in Bratislava too, the order changed between 'prayer' and 'meetings' in the first and second places. -Remark of the editor.]

**In reports on the questionnaire from the workshops and in the plenary discussion at the conference, clear signs of ecumenical problems emerged:**

1. From Eastern Europe it was reported that the majority of believers were reserved about, or even opposed to or disapproving of ecumenism -an attitude which has its effect on church leaders and clergy and is understandable against the background of decades of obstruction and persecution by the Communist regime as an expression of a struggle for their own endangered identity. In this connection Romanian members of IEF were critical of the

fact that many of their bishops were not active enough in expressing their opinion in favour of ecumenism, and even on papal visits only a few minutes are devoted to ecumenism, whereas, in this context, precisely from the side of church leaders, a more conscious defence of ecumenism should be pronounced, in Pope John Paul II's words, "an ecumenism of conversion to Christ".

2. The question of eucharistic hospitality turns out to be urgently in need of settlement. From the responses it emerged that many non-Catholic Christians receive communion on special occasions (ecumenical meetings, inter-church weddings) and vice versa, Roman Catholic Christians receive the Lord's Supper in the Reformed Churches. The official ruling, recently repeated in the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, cannot be reconciled on the one hand factually with the pastoral situation, and on the other hand with the agreements already recognised in the consensus documents. It is expected that bishops' conferences will follow the example of Archbishop Eichinger at Strasbourg and the bishops' conferences in Canada and Zimbabwe, in which eucharistic hospitality, according to possible rulings of church law, could be agreed in order to facilitate a pastoral and ecumenical solution for local priests.

3. It is felt to be unsatisfactory and frustrating that consensus texts (following dialogue between the churches) still have not been officially accepted by many churches in order to provide a recognised accepted position or attitude of individual churches to the teaching of their members. Above all, for ecumenically committed Christians and for those engaged in theological discussion, this fact can lead to tensions with their own church and a disassociation from their own church fellowships. There is an urgent demand for the church leadership to recognise their responsibility in this connection and actively to contribute to the acceptance and development of the spiritual and theological advance in knowledge contained in these consensus documents, and to demonstrate this advance to the best advantage for the promotion of the faith and life and fellowship of the churches and Christians with one another.

4. In the face of the current ecumenical situation, one workshop reminded us to consider the theological alignment of IEF and to formulate it anew with a view to ecumenical challenges.

**Following from their own ecumenical experiences, the following points were expressed in workshops and in the plenary discussion:**

- \* The discrepancy between official declarations of the churches in ecumenical matters and their unofficial practice.
- \* This discrepancy raises doubts as to whether and to what extent the alignment of individual churches is really 'irrevocably ecumenical'.
- \* In many places the ecumenical situation seems aggravated by a parochial immobility (imprisoned in the past and in unconsciously carried forward traditions, e.g. the ban on receiving communion in the hand in many regions, etc.)
- \* Church institutions and structures often acts as a 'brake on the Holy Spirit'.
- \* In many cases the ecumenical situation is burdened by a striking lack of ecumenical education among clergy.
- \* The relationship of the church to Israel, in ecumenical questions, does not play the part it should, based on the testimony of Holy Scripture.
- \* In many places there arises, often on the basis of prevailing denominational numerical majority relations, the danger of an 'ecclesiastical church egoism/arrogance' on the part of the Roman Catholic church, corresponding to an uneasy 'inferiority complex' on the part of the Protestants.

As already mentioned, one workshop, comprising three national regions, put **the future of ecumenism** at the centre of their reflections.

Following the conclusion that criticism is necessary, but not yet the ground on which ecumenical hope can grow and flourish, they came to the insight that, for the future of

ecumenism, we must become "Pro-testants" in the original sense of the word, i.e. people who bear witness to the unity 'long since given us in Christ', (long before all our ecumenical efforts!) -all too often we stand in the way of this unity. From this reflection, and based upon it, **there arose two leading questions and, for each, a series of points of view relating to them.**

### **1. What do we expect of the Holy Spirit in the light of the current ecumenical situation?**

\* Surprise! (Reference was made to the celebration of the Eucharist in Lincoln Cathedral in 2002 at which church boundaries were broken asunder.)

\* An introduction to the truth of the Gospel and knowledge of the will of God for us today -and in such a way that we are touched in head and heart by it. (The adoption of the Common declaration of the Doctrine of Justification 1999 in Augsburg was mentioned as an example).

\* A world-wide working of the Holy Spirit, even outside the churches; there are in existence what might be called 'outside prophets and prophetesses' -figures from a completely unexpected quarter through whom the Holy Spirit has something special to say to Christians.

\* That the Holy Spirit will prove to be an interpreter, especially of Scripture, one who brings to life the message of faith among us.

\* That the Holy Spirit will raise us up, in all the churches, to testify to the Gospel among the non-believers and lapsed believers of today, without competitiveness and in a way related to real everyday life.

\* The gift of discernment of spirits, for where the Holy Spirit blows, false spirits are often exposed. As examples mention was made of the turning of the Gospel truth into an ideology ('truth without love') and the turning of the Gift of the Spirit into Spirit possession and corresponding exclusive church claims to possession.

### **2. How do we hold ourselves open today to the working of the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit cannot be 'manipulated' or even 'made'. Yet we can prepare ourselves for his working, or hinder him by our laziness. With this assumption the following points of view were offered as an answer to the leading question.

\* By taking time to foster my relationship with God and making space in my life for association with Holy Scripture.

\* With my senses awake to signs and elements of the presence of the Holy Spirit in my own life, in meeting with others and in our churches -watchful, but taking care, in so doing not to overlook inconspicuous effects of the Spirit -the ecumenical Kirchentag in Berlin 2003 was mentioned as an example.

\* By taking time to meet individuals and getting involved unreservedly in their questions and problems, even when we know no solution and are ourselves perplexed.

\* By enduring periods of absence of the Holy Spirit, watching, waiting and praying, instead of rashly fleeing into alternative activities.

\* To oppose resistance in the name of God, in patience, which is prepared to meet harsh realities -even in the sphere of current ecumenism- which we cannot alter ('patience with power').

**To summarise, this questionnaire and discussion within IEF and among friends has brought about a threefold effect:**

*1. it has intensified awareness of the current ecumenical situation;*

*2. it has awakened new thoughtfulness about the ecumenical task of IEF;*

*3. it has encouraged us to be aware of our ecumenical task -'to meet the current headwinds in the ecumenical field'.*

*Dr K.A. Bauer is a Lutheran pastor and theologian, who moderated the discussions at the biggest workshop and the plenary session, is the president of the German Region of IEF.*

## IEF Budapest Survey

### Questionnaire

#### Personal Information

A. What is your *gender*?

Female:                      Male:

B. What is your *age*?

Below 30:                      Between 30-60:                      More than 60:

C. Which *church* or *denomination* do you belong to?

D. What geographical *area* do you live in?

Country:                      Diocese:                      Parish or local community:

#### 1. Theology

1.1 Are there serious efforts for theological *understanding* among different churches and denominations in your area?

1.2 What are the *means* and *methods* for this understanding (Bible study groups, conferences, publications)?

1.3 In what ways do the different denominations present the others in their *catechism*?

1.4 Have the one-sided, biased, caricatured or even exclusive *opinions* and statements already disappeared from the catechisms, or how have they changed?

1.5 Are there any serious efforts to distribute and discuss the highlights of the international ecumenical *dialogues* on the national or local level?

1.6 What kind of ideas do you have on how to bring the two levels (official dialogues and grassroots) together?

#### 2. Congregation

2.1 Are there any *contacts* between the local congregations? On a *permanent* or *occasional* basis? Which kind of fields do they cooperate in (eg. *liturgy* or *pastoral* projects)?

2.2 Does your local congregation participate in the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, each year in January? How many members take part?

#### 3. Ministers

3.1 Are there any *meetings* between the ministers of different denominations? On which level? On an occasional or regular basis?

3.2 Do the ministers *consult* each other concerning the *pastoral care* of ecumenically mixed areas? Do the ministers participate in each other's *ordination* and other important events?

3.3 In case of need, do the ministers of different denominations substitute each other for *pastoral care* for the *old* or the *sick*? Or for *preaching*? Or for *catechism*?

3.4 Do ministers of your church give sufficient *support* and *encouragement* to their faithful in the field of ecumenism? How could they improve their ecumenical responsibilities toward their faithful?

#### 4. Buildings

4.1 Are there any churches built for the *common use* of different denominations in your area?

4.2 In case of need, do the different congregations *host* each other for liturgical celebrations in their own church buildings? On which occasions?

## 5. Eucharist & Wedding

5.1 Are there general or occasional solutions for the *sharing* of the Eucharist among members of different denominations?

5.2 Do you usually *participate* in the Eucharist when in another church?

5.3 Were ecumenical weddings and marriages made *easier* recently in your national or local context? If yes, in what sense?

## 6. Society

6.1 What are the *expectations* of civil/secular society towards the ecumenical attitude of the denominations? *Indifferent? Hostile? Expecting* ecumenical openness?

6.2 Where do ecumenical activities become *visible* in society, outside the church buildings?

6.3 What are the common responsibilities of churches concerning *society* and *political* and *economic issues* in a local, national and international level?

## 7. Future

7.1 Where do you think the *main divisive issues* lie between the denominations nowadays?

7.2 What can we do to *advance* the ecumenical process in these fields?

7.3 What can we *do* as Christians? As *lay people*? As *ministers*? As *intellectuals* or concerned people?

7.4 To which personal level of *ecumenical engagement* do you give priority? Please, make an order of *importance* from the following actions, 1 being of the most importance, and 7 being of the least importance.

Discussing agreed statements or other theological *publications*,

Personal *prayers* for unity,

Attending *worship* services of other Christians,

Participating in *common worship*,

Official or unofficial *meeting* between members of different churches,

Becoming a member of an *ecumenical group*,

Doing *diakonia* or *social work* together with Christians from other churches.

8. Do you have any further **general comments**?

## STATISTICALLY PROCESSABLE OPINIONS and DATA

This category includes 184 completed questionnaires from 8 countries. We received answers from 16 countries; however, only the data from 8 countries could be evaluated statistically. We only received essay-type answers from two countries (see the previous chapter: Romania and Slovakia). We had few answers from the following, non-IEF-member countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden. Their answers fail to be representative because of the limited number.

### I. THE RESPONDENTS' PARTICULARS

The first category of statistically processable data describes the respondents themselves, like

- respondent's denomination (graph 1),
- respondent's country (graph 2),
- respondent's age (graph 3),
- respondent's gender (graph 4).

The data show that **according to denomination** there are Roman Catholics (59.8%), Lutherans (14.7%), Anglicans (8.2%), Calvinist Reformed (5.4%), Dutch Reformed (2.7%), Adventists (1.62 %), Czech Brothers (1.62%), Methodists (1.62%), Baptists (1.1%), Old Catholics (1.1%), United Reformed (0.54%), Presbyterians (0.54%), Orthodox (0,54%), United Free Evangelists (0.54%);

**-according to country** there are Spaniards (40%), Germans (15%), British (14%), Hungarians (13%), Belgians 5%), French (5%), Czechs (4%) and Dutch (4%);

**-according to age** <30 years (8%), 30-60 years (39%), >60 years (53%);

**-according to gender** 45% are men and 55 % are women.

### II. VISIBLE SIGNS OF ECUMENISM

The second group of statistically processable data includes the answers to questions 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 as well as 6.1.

We were able to process the responses statistically by setting up eg. a three-degree scale which allowed us to define any manifestation of ecumenism eg. as *regular*, *occasional* or *not discernible*. The diagrams use different coloured lines to show these.

It was common for respondents to leave some questions unanswered. Since the fact that some questions were answered by a high number of respondents while others were left unanswered also permits drawing conclusions, the diagrams give information in this regard too, concerning each country.

You can find the graphs and their respective questions on the next pages. Although the diagrams do not need any special explanation, we would like to draw attention to some interesting facts:

Investigating the data of participation in *Eucharist in another church* in two groups [I. Catholics+Orthodox] and [II. Protestants], it was clear, that very big differences exist in the practice of the two groups. The occurrences of the participations:

	I. group [Catholics+Orthodox]	II. group [Protestants]
a) regularly	18.0 %	69.9 %
b) rarely	8.1	12.3
c) occasionally	3.6	5.5
d) none	35.15	4.1
e) no answer	35.15	17.8

[We can suppose, that the big occurrence of the protestant visits to other churches is due firstly to the internal movement among different protestant denominations.]

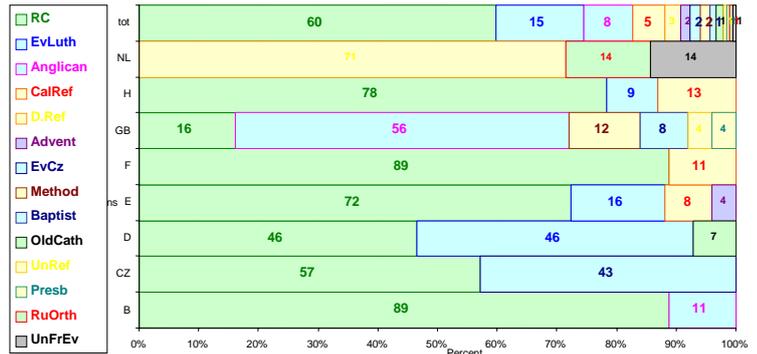
After the graphs we give an evaluation of the answers regarding of every question.

## Graphs based on statistically processable answers

### Graph 1.) Respondent's denomination (%)

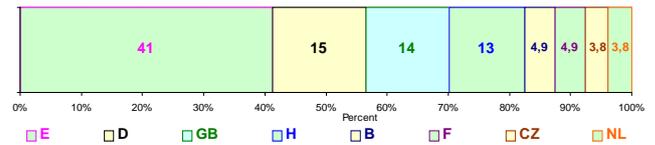
(The colors of the numbers are relevant)

Denominations: RC=Rom.Catholic, EvLuth=Lutheran, Anglican, CalRef=Calvinist, DRef=Reformed (in Germany), Advent=Adventist, EvCz=Czech Evangelical, Method=Methodist, Baptist, OldCath=Old Catholic, UnRef=United Reformed, Presb=Presbiterean, RuOrt=Russian Orthodox, UnFrEv=United Free Evangelical  
tot=percentage in the whole respondent's population



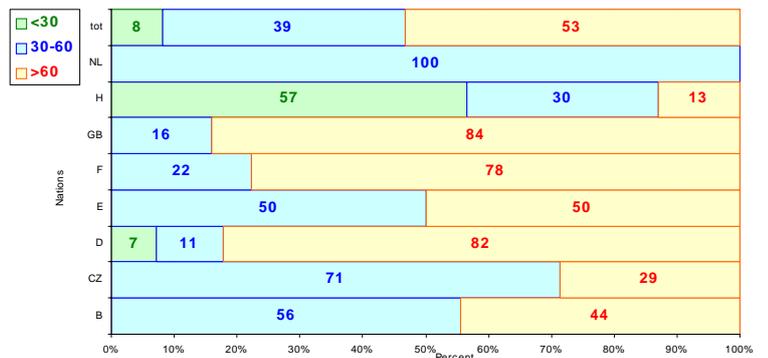
### Graph 2.) The country of the respondents (%)

The countries are: E=Spain, D=Germany, GB=United Kingdom, H=Hungary, B=Belgium, F=France, CZ=Czech Republic, NL=The Netherland

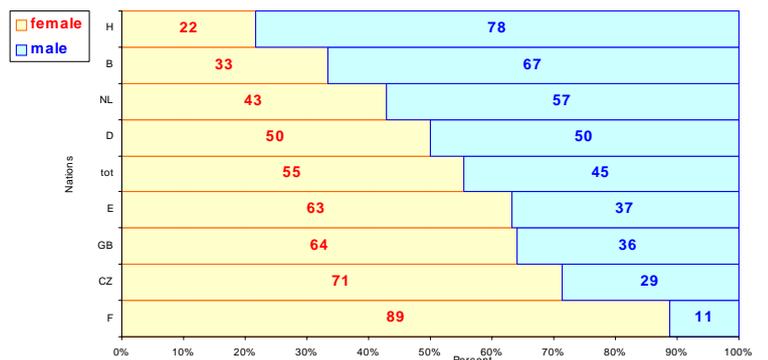


### Graph 3.) Respondent's age-groups (%)

The groups are: <30 , 30-60, >60 year

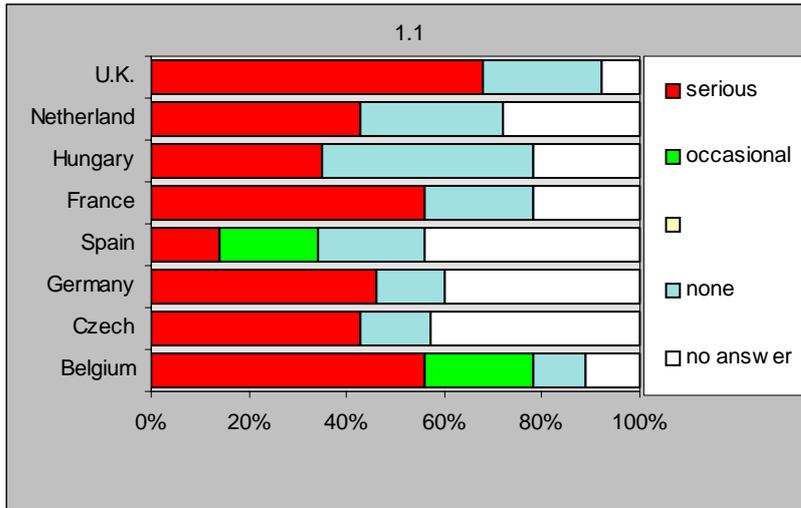


### Graph 4.) Respondent's gender (%)

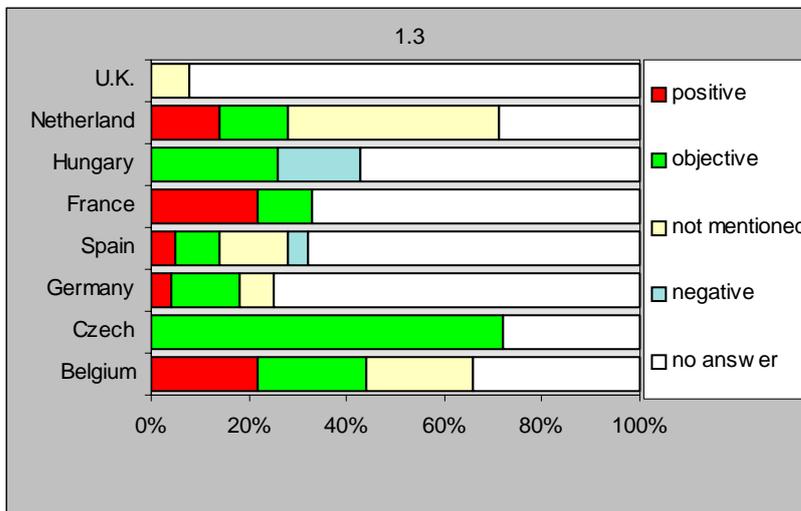


# 1. Theology

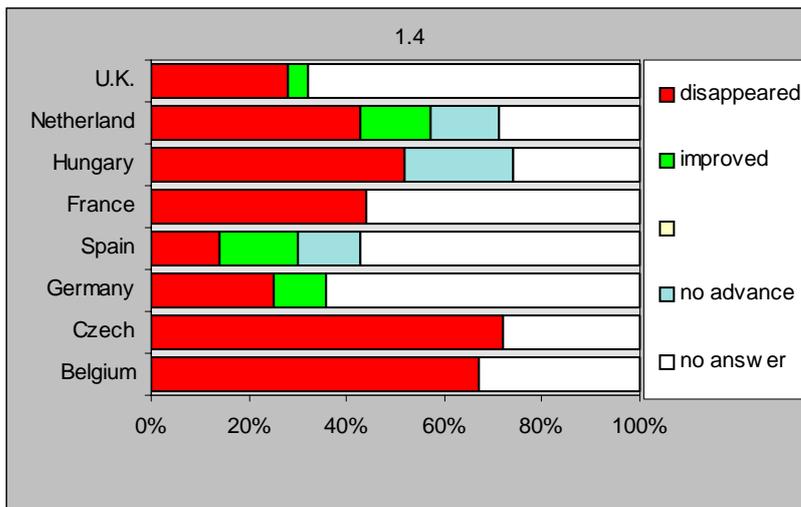
## 1.1. Are there serious efforts for theological understanding among different churches and denominations in your area?



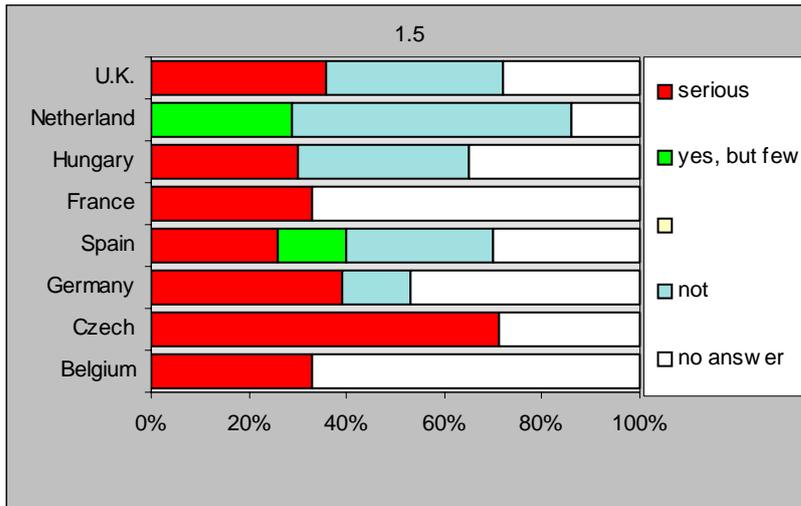
## 1.3. In what ways do the different denominations present the others in their catechism?



## 1.4. Have the one-sided, biased, caricatured or even exclusive opinions and statements already disappeared from catechism, or how have they changed?

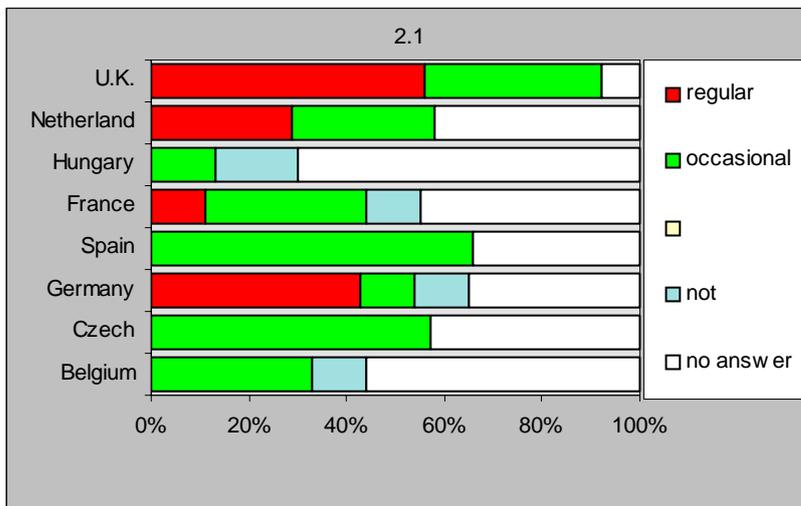


**1.5. Is there any serious effort to distribute and discuss the highlights of the international ecumenical dialogues at national or local level?**

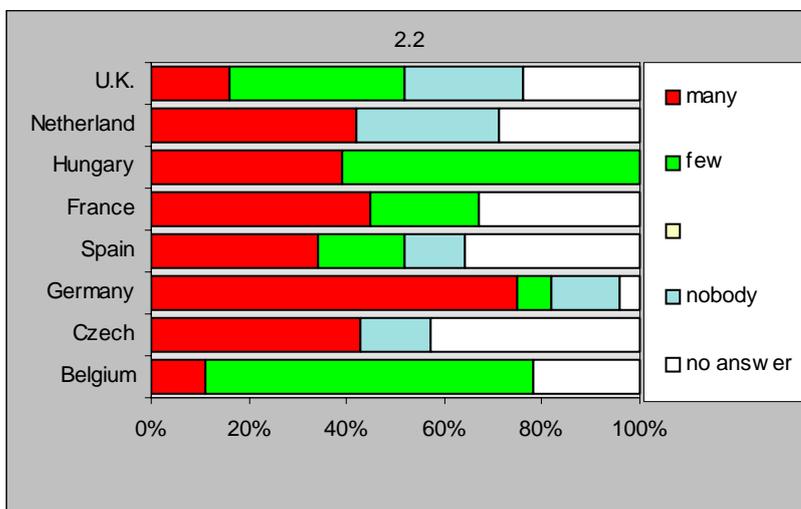


**2. Congregations**

**2.1. Are there any contacts among the local congregations? On a permanent or occasional basis? Which kind of fields do they cooperate in (eg. liturgy or pastoral projects)?**

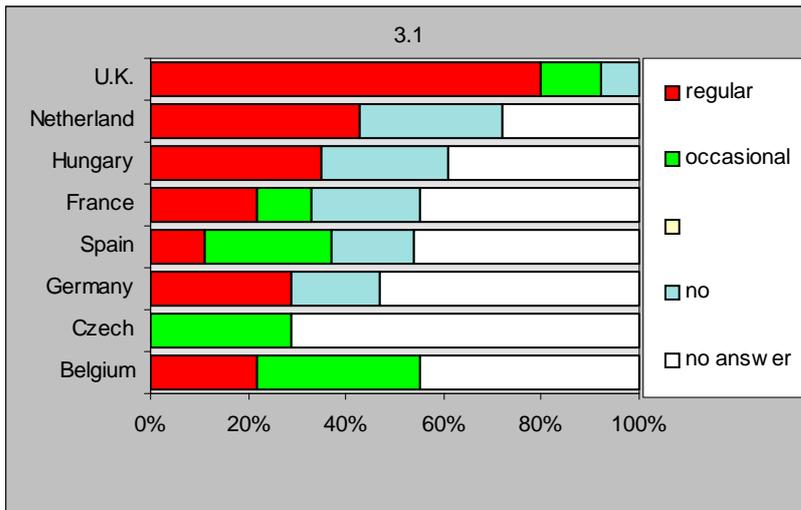


**2.2. Does your local congregation participate in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, each year in January? How many members take part?**

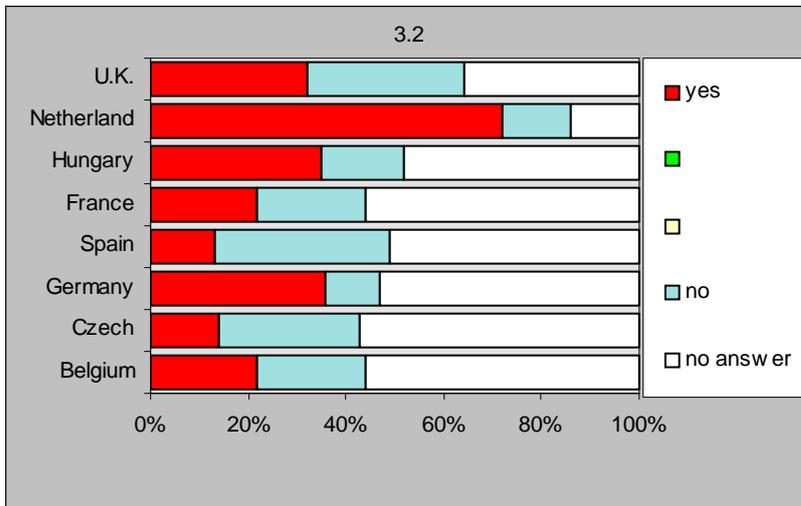


### 3. Ministers

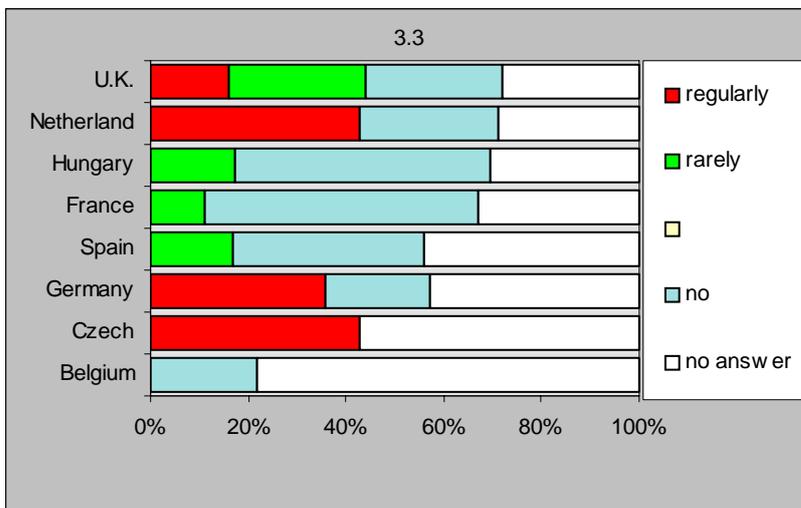
#### 3.1. Are there any meetings between the ministers of different denominations? At which level? On an occasional or regular basis?



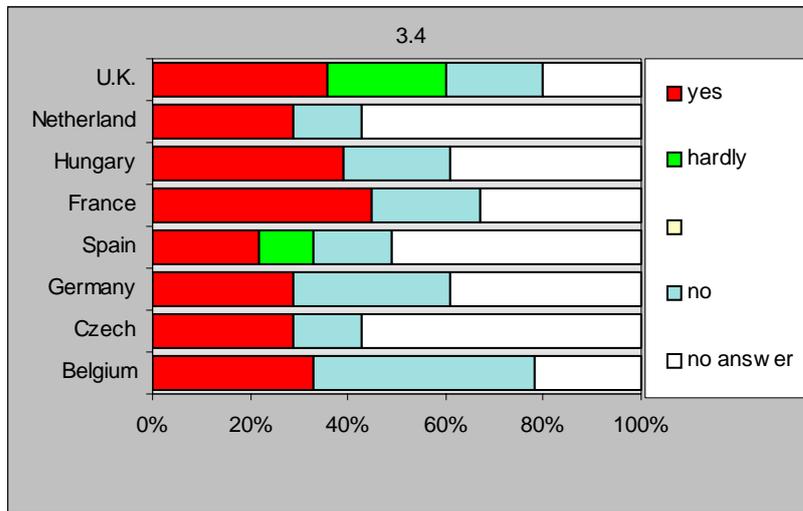
#### 3.2. Do ministers consult each other concerning the pastoral care of ecumenically mixed areas? Do ministers participate in each other's ordination and other important events?



#### 3.3. In case of need, do the ministers of different denominations substitute each other for pastoral care for the old or the sick? Or for preaching? Or for catechism?

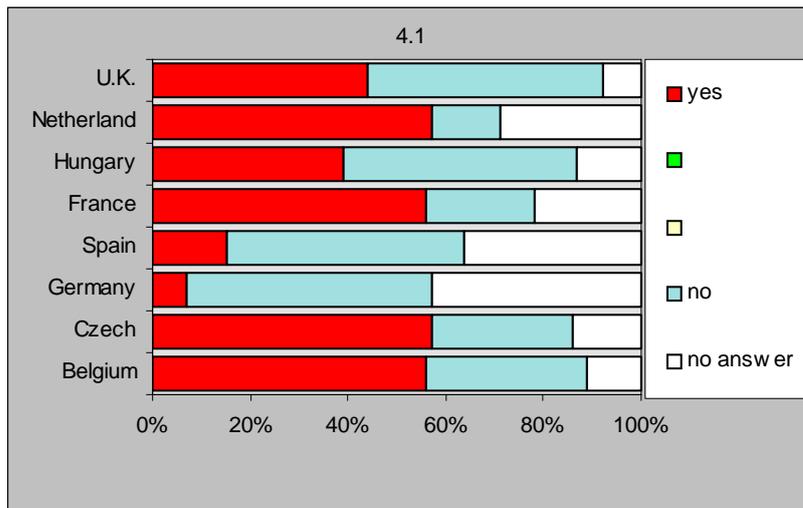


**3.4. Do ministers of your church give sufficient support and encouragement to their faithful in the field of ecumenism? How could they improve their ecumenical responsibilities toward their faithful?**

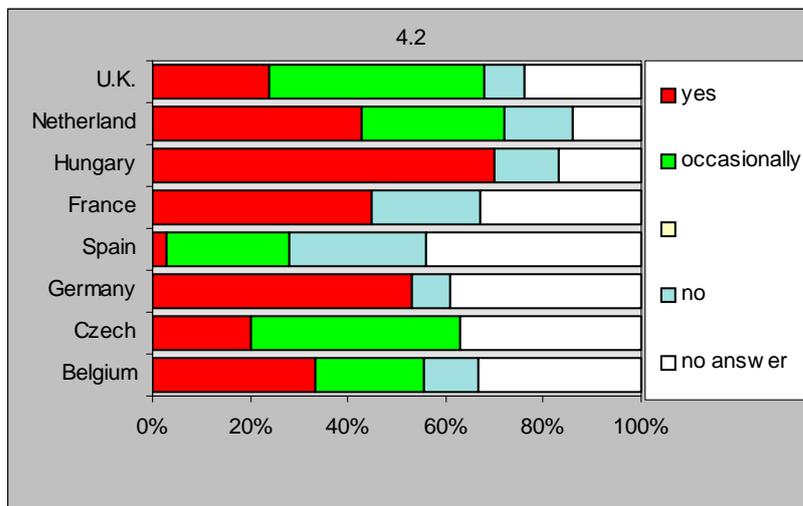


**4. Buildings**

**4.1. Are there any churches built for the common use of different denominations in your area?**

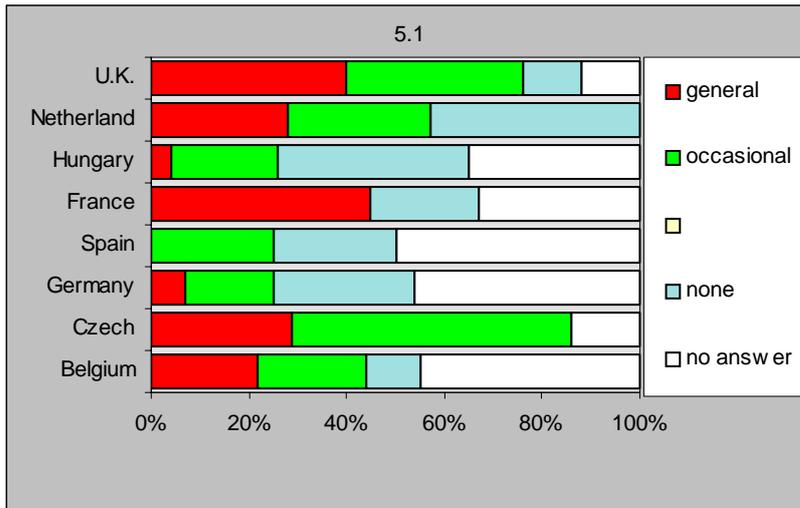


**4.2. In the case of need, do the different congregations host each other for liturgical celebrations in their own church building? On which occasions?**

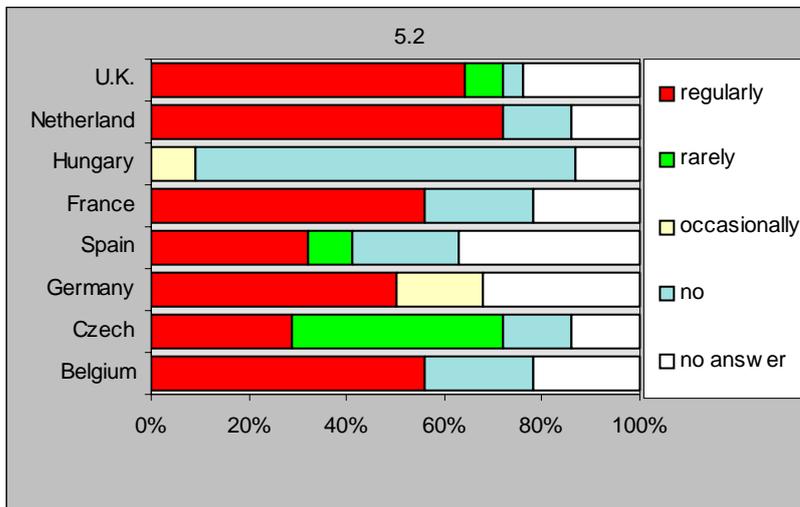


## 5. Eucharist & Wedding

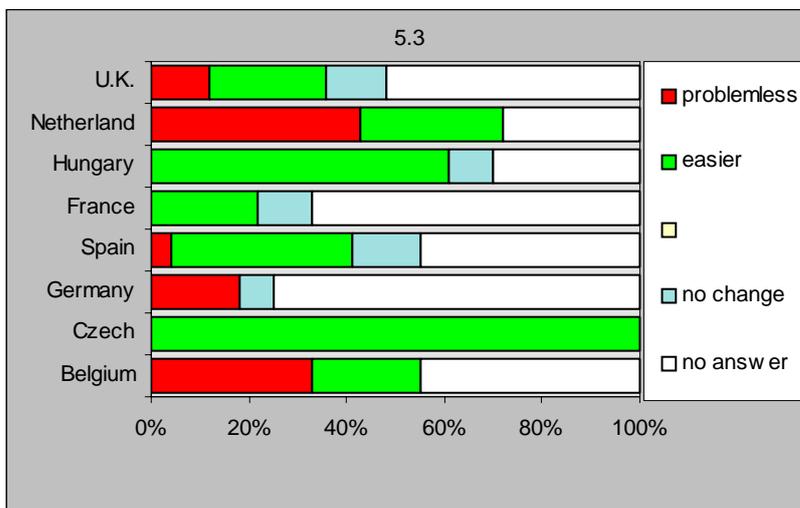
### 5.1. Are there general or occasional solutions for the sharing of the Eucharist among members of different denominations?



### 5.2. Do you usually participate in the Eucharist when you are in another Church? [These data were not divided into I.(Catholics+Orthodox) and II. (Protestants) groups.]

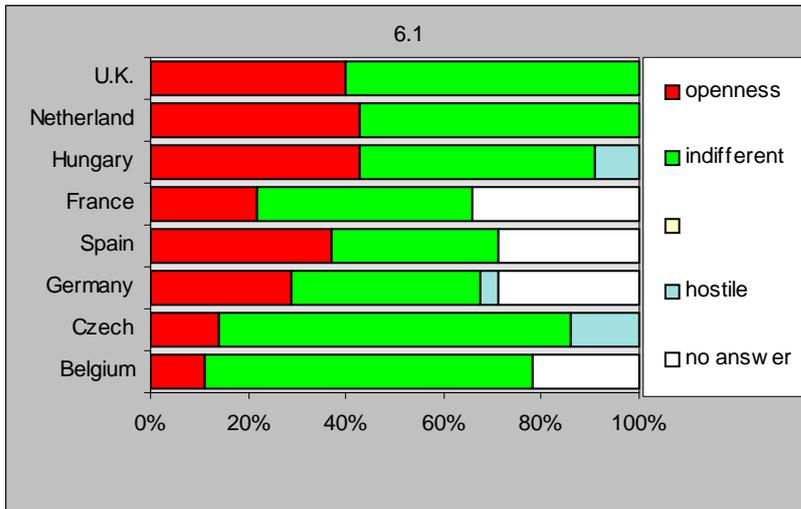


### 5.3. Were ecumenical wedding and marriages made easier recently in your national or local context? If yes, in what sense?



**6. Society**

**6.1. What is the expectation of secular/civil society towards the ecumenical attitude of the denominations? Indifferent? Hostile? Expecting ecumenical openness?**



Szabolcs Nagypál  
(Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute, Pannonhalma, Hungary)

## **Narrative Evaluation of the IEF Budapest Questionnaire**

### **1. Theology**

1.1 Many people say (65) that there are serious efforts for theological understanding among different churches and denominations in their area; others deem it insufficient (17), while a third group is not aware of any such efforts (42). In Spain and Hungary, more people were of the opinion that these real efforts are still lacking, than those who said that many achievements have already been made. The results clearly show that Christians are aware that the ecumenical movement is making progress, but deem the results achieved insufficient. The variety of answers shows that the ecumenical movement is not even in half-way towards full unity of the Church.

1.2 Among the means and methods for ecumenical understanding there are movements and institutions, like the National Councils of Churches and the various levels of Churches Together, the International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF), the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the Student Christian Movements (SCM), the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE), the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth (Syndesmos), ecumenical church buildings, diocesan twinning, covenant relationships, ecumenical sector ministers, university chaplaincies, the Focolare movement, ecumenical centres and institutes, and theological commissions (Groupe des Dombes).

There are also prayers and liturgies: the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, joint prayer meetings (Taizé), Good Friday processions, ecumenical services and commemorations, Bible study and meditation groups, and Lent study groups.

Thirdly, we find conferences and publications: church meetings, Advent and Lent lectures, Alpha courses, dialogues, seminars, ecumenical talks, discussion panels, homilies and sermons, youth gatherings; newsletters and books, ecumenical bookshops, university diplomas on ecumenism, the ecumenical training for ministry in the theological faculties.

Finally, there are common actions: demonstrations, joint protests (against war), joint industrial and higher educational mission, charity and cultural associations, invitations, Lent lunches and family gatherings.

1.3 In many places, the other denominations are not mentioned at all in the catechisms (20). Elsewhere, the denominations present the others in a positive (respectful) way (10) or in an objective (informative) way (26), sometimes even with the denomination's own words. In some places children are taught to pray for the unity of the Church. There are still examples, though, of negative (biased) representations (7).

It is heartening to see that some countries already have their own ecumenical catechism. On the other hand, there is in general a lot of uncertainty and taciturnity on this count. It is essential that something should happen at international level (Conference of European Churches and the Council of European Bishop's Conferences) so that young people are soundly taught.

1.4 Many people see that the one-sided, biased, caricatured or even exclusive opinions and statements have completely disappeared from the catechisms (55), and quite a number of them report some advance (17), but there are cases where these are still present (16). So there is a lot still to do in this respect as well.

1.5 On the national level there is much serious efforts to distribute and discuss the highlights of the international ecumenical dialogues, especially via publications (books and journals) that cover ecumenical developments, the media, Churches Together, conferences, meetings, the Catholic News Agency, free ecumenical circles (like the International Ecumenical Fellowship), or Thinkers Together. The document *Dominus Iesus* was frequently and fervently discussed at many levels. Environmental and peace issues are also highly discussed. Half of the people who answered (58) are aware of such developments, the other half says it is not visible (47) or not sufficient (13).

1.6 We should do as many things together as possible. There can be many kinds of ideas on how to bring the two levels (official dialogues and grassroots) together, like prayer, spiritual encounters, joint choirs and ecumenical services, the interchange of pulpits, guest invitations in catechesis and guest speakers, the inclusion of ecumenism as a topic in sermons, and joint events.

Other kinds of ideas can be of a theological nature: conferences, dialogues, meetings, lectures and discussions, publications, study and working groups, leadership consultation with the grassroots, learning from each other, reception of official documents and putting Charta \_cumenica into practice, the education of ministers and post-ordination training, publications and articles, like a children's book on the differences between the denominations.

Then there are ideas to build community: sharing of good examples, the International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF), ecumenical Kirchentag, ecumenical discussion groups, living ecumenism, visits and personal contacts, and in all these, respect.

Fourthly, we can cooperate in the field of culture: communication and information sharing, joint appearance in media, in education, in politics, exhibitions, church music, constant education and exchange, or ecumenical news on television and radio.

Finally, there is the chance for solidarity: social activities, Action of Christians against Torture and Death Penalty (ACAT), Action of Churches Together, social work and various forms of jointly organised charity.

## 2. Congregations

2.1 Usually there are contacts between the local congregations on an occasional basis (77). It is seldom that we find regular contacts (29). Often there is no such cooperation (9) or at least people are not aware of them. In Great Britain ecumenical relationships are good and institutionalised at all levels, as well as in Germany. In many other countries regular contact is still in its infancy.

The denominations cooperate in liturgy: the Week of Prayer for Unity, united services, the Tenebræ service in Holy Week, public march of witness behind the cross on Good Friday, open air services, musical events, songs of praise, ecumenical choirs and pulpit exchanges, women's prayer day, youth and children Bible day, Taizé meetings, joint pastoral care, youth programmes and Reformation Day, dancing events, concerts and theatre, social events and feasts.

The congregations might also come together around theology: examples can be various conferences, pastoral projects, evangelism, excursions and discussions, Bible studies and Bible Society events.

Solidarity is also an area in which to cooperate: during the times of elections, Christian Aid, training and social actions, justice issues, lunches for elderly, area partnerships, joint councils and village projects, charitable activities and exhibitions, peace prayers, diakonia, charity, social engagement and pastoral care of ecumenical families, information sharing, scouts, excursions, joint educational programmes, welcoming new inhabitants in the newly-built areas of the suburbs, or the Peace Week.

2.2 Usually a great number of people from the local congregation who actually participate in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, each year in January (71). In quite a number of other places (47), only a small proportion of people attend. There are some places, though, where virtually nobody participates (22). Unfortunately, the Evangelical Alliance celebrates this event on another week.

## 3. Ministers

3.1 The barriers between ministers of different denominations have started to fall down, but real cooperation is rarely known. A third (31) of those who provided an answer told of regular meetings between ministers of different denominations, being manifested in fraternal breakfasts, twinned dioceses, interdenominational staff team, Churches Together, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, ecumenical groups, presentations of the denominations, ecumenical liturgies, joint pastoral care, hospital chaplaincies, Christmas celebrations and joint evangelism. Another third (26) was of the opinion that these meetings are occasional. The last third (32) said that in some places there is no such cooperation at all (32).

3.2 In half of the cases (46) the ministers consult each other regularly, or at least occasionally, concerning the pastoral care of ecumenically mixed areas, for example in schools, hospitals, prison and in the army, and participate in each other's ordination and other important events. In the other half of the cases they actually never consult (49).

3.3 In general we can say that the ministers of different denominations do not substitute each other in many places (64), even in case of need. But for emergency pastoral care for the old or the sick, for preaching, for funerals or in prison chaplaincy, they can regularly (20) make exceptions (25).

3.4 Some ministers give sufficient support and encouragement to their faithful in the field of ecumenism (54), some in a more reserved way (14), others not at all (39). Some report that ministers support ecumenism but that is not universal yet. It is important to make unity a more central concern by more enthusiasm, but sometimes it is the congregation which is less ecumenical. We should follow Jesus Christ and understand the necessity for ecumenism. It would be important to invite people to ecumenical services and Bible studies, to cooperate in teaching, catechesis, the propagation of ecumenical events, Taizé meetings, aid projects, scout movements, Christian cultural associations or Christian film festivals, just to give a few good examples.

#### **4. Buildings**

4.1 There are examples of churches, chapels or community rooms built for common liturgical, cultural and charity use by different denominations (50). The reasons can be practical (hospitals or in tourist areas), financial (lack of resources), historical (a denomination uses the former church of another denomination), or national (one minority uses a church, regardless of their denomination). 81 persons, though, were not aware of such cases.

There are positive examples, on the other hand, of theological or ecumenical reasons: ecumenical institutes, centres and chapels, integrated local parishes where the building is owned by a foundation, one denomination hosts the others in an area, or different denominations use a church together.

4.2 Where necessary, the different congregations do host each other for liturgical celebrations in their own church buildings, in cases of reconstruction or alteration (57); in cases of wedding, baptism or funeral; the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Taizé meetings, ecumenical group gatherings, healing services, meditations and harvest festivals, national or regional interdenominational events, the visits of leaders; Bible studies, prayers, agape meals, remembrance days, joint Remembrance Sunday, Pentecost, Advent, Ash Wednesday, Christmas and Easter celebrations, joint services on racial justice or world development; and neighbourhood-linked occasions, big cultural or communitarian meetings (31). 32 persons, though, were not aware of such cases. In summary we can say that we rarely find churches built for common use, but in such cases, they are often special. It is only regular in hospitals, prisons, the army, at airports or other special places of tourism; in necessity, however, they host each other's congregations.

#### **5. Eucharist and Wedding**

5.1 There are some general solutions (23) for the sharing of the Eucharist among members of different denominations, like pastoral reasons, ecumenical weddings and marriages, requiem masses and funeral services, ecumenical conferences, covenanted Eucharist or in Pentecost. There can be occasional solutions as well (46). For most people (45) such solutions are missing. In most Protestant churches, though, there is a general invitation, and the Eucharist is open for all Christians.

5.2 Most people (71) participate in the Eucharist when in the church of another denomination. Many people (42), on the other hand, never participate on such occasions. Others take part rarely (12) or only occasionally (7), when it is allowed, permitted, available,

in an inter-church family context, when the celebrant is in agreement, if officially invited, if it does not cause a scandal or irritate anyone, and if the denomination is of the same theological understanding.

In Germany, the majority was in favour of participating in the Eucharist when in the church of another denomination. In Hungary, the vast majority was against participating in the Eucharist. Orthodox and Roman Catholics participate much less frequently in the Eucharist of another denomination, than Protestants. It was surprising to see the high number of responses to such a sensitive question.

5.3 Ecumenical weddings and marriages became easier recently in the national or local context (61) in many parts of Europe. As a general rule, there is an agreement between the denominations. Some people even feel that there is no problem any more in this field (17). Others (20), however, are not aware of any changes.

What remains problematic is the pastoral care of ecumenical couples, including the denomination of the children, but the atmosphere became more ecumenical recently. Some people are of the opinion that there is no such thing as ecumenical wedding, since the couple has to be registered in one of the churches. It is surprising to see how many people did not answer this question.

## 6. Society

6.1 The expectation of secular society towards the denominations' ecumenical attitude is usually indifferent (82) or expecting ecumenical openness (63). Hostility is very rare (4). A high level of eagerness to answer was perceptible with regard to the expectations of secular society. Fortunately, only few feel hostility around them; on the other hand, the majority sees society as indifferent to ecumenism.

6.2 Ecumenical activities become visible in society, outside the church buildings in different church-related organisations: the International Ecumenical Fellowship-IEF, the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the Student Christian Movements (SCM), the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE), the Focolare movement, Pax Christi, Christian Aid, Millennium Ecumenical Gift of St. John's Gospel, Well Trust, National Councils of Churches, partnerships, luncheon clubs, the Christian Academy's department of ecology, Kirchentag, Caritas and Diakonia, missionary activities (Salvation Army), Taizé, Inter-Church Aid, ecumenical study centres and institutes such as the Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÖI).

Ecumenism is also visible in public liturgies: Whit Sunday and Good Friday marches of witness, church to church walks, Christmas and Easter celebrations, public Bible readings, folk festival services, outdoor Passion plays, carol singing, blessing the crib, lighting the Christmas tree, Remembrance Day services, war memorials, ecumenical services connected to a catastrophe, ecumenical weddings, school lunchtime witnesses, Lent visits, joint services for the underprivileged, national celebrations, New Year's services, royal weddings, and various other feasts, events, ecumenical services; always remaining critical of church divisions.

Ecumenism penetrates the field of culture as well: the media, television and radio broadcasts that are organised ecumenically, exhibitions and Christian film festivals, lectures, art, meetings and conferences, travels and visits, ecumenical families, education, publications, scouts, youth gatherings and movements, and in our whole way of living.

Finally, society encounters the ecumenical movement in the field of social work and political action: at the European level with the special commissions, in common activities and meetings with Muslims, Jews, people of other faith and all people of goodwill, multi-religious fora and inter-religious dialogue, in social and political actions, in Jubilee 2000, in charity, prison, army, airport and hospital chaplaincies, in service to old peoples' homes, in schools, telephone and railway station pastoral care, protests against torture, demonstrations, Christian Democratic political stance, peace building, pro-life movement, peace protests, distributing meals for our neighbours, humanitarian work, joint protests against shops being open on Sundays or against the deportation of asylum-seekers, protection of refugees and women, stance against injustice and work for justice and human rights, in general, always helping others in need.

6.3 The common responsibilities of churches concerning society, political and economic issues in a local, national and international level are praying with our whole life: prayers for peace, Corrymeela Community, Churches Together, tolerance and appreciation, respecting human dignity, acceptance, maintaining Christian values, living as Christians ("look how much they love each other"), giving examples of a life in poverty, peace, liberty and dialogue.

We also have responsibilities in education: youth work, involvement in local education, morality and poverty development, raising awareness for human, social and family issues, the representation of the Gospel and our national values, decreasing of the scandal of discord, joint stances, participating in commissions on social and educational issues, giving priority to reconciliation and work together, giving testimony to the Gospel and Jesus Christ, trying to give an evangelistic answer.

Finally, prayer and education must culminate in common action: raising awareness on the Gospel values concerning euthanasia, abortion, immigrants and the elderly, aid for asylum seekers and refugees, Christian Aid, protest actions against world debt, political meetings at election times, participating in Christian Democratic political parties, the common lobbying of politicians, pressure groups, protest against Sunday trading and war (in Iraq, Palestine, Israel or in the Gulf), bishops should speak out; fair trade and justice campaigns, charity and diaconal work, common action plans, diakonia, keeping in mind the third world, working together to bring peace and to fight injustice, coming out together for public demonstrations. In general, we need more action and less advice.

## 7. Future

7.1 Nowadays the main divisive issues between the denominations are partly historical: the sins of the past, counterproductive education, bad routines, cultural habits, generation gap, the divisions are part of the tradition, the socio-cultural realm, the illusion of division and the lack of visible actions.

They are partly theological: cooperation in our salvation, different ways of liturgies and prayers, the role of Mary and the saints, the sacraments and the Eucharist (transubstantiation and the real presence), ministry and the role of laity and women, morality, sexuality and homosexuality, the interpretation of the Bible and the role of Tradition.

Other divisive issues are structural: ecclesiology, authority, apostolic succession, the role of the pope (infallibility) and hierarchy, the understanding of small churches, institutions and canon law, unequal financial possibilities, power and politics. We are organisations instead of being one living organism.

Finally, methodological issues can cause division as well: lack of communication, understanding and dialogue, indifference, superficiality and disinterest, conservatism and inertia, the lack of faith, fundamentalism or radicalism, selfishness and pride, exclusive understanding of truth and the claim to have all truth, relativism and rationalism, ignorance and the lack of knowledge, cold water fear, bad style, lack of common goal, lack of respect and comprehension, mistrust, the lack of capability to sacrifice our own points, lack of acceptance of each other as equals, fear of losing our own identity, lack of openness and humility.

7.2 and 7.3. We must build and live out our unity every day and every hour. We should organise events, getting to know and understand each other. There could be more sharing among theologians as well. In our prayers we should not give up hope, staying positive. We must keep our faith in full and visible unity.

Certain openness to opportunities is needed, in the atmosphere of understanding and communication. We should engage in joint projects, proposing initiatives (meetings, concerts, exhibitions and social care projects). Publications and the teaching and living of Gospel values are important, too. We must understand that following Jesus Christ is a process not a state, we should accept differences.

We should make friends across denominational barriers, getting involved, praying, giving time and effort, being visionary and humble, putting away intellectual pride, social contacts and doing as much together as possible, keeping dialogue open. We should pray that the Holy Spirit enlighten our theologians and church leaders to find ways to unity.

The involvement of the laity, meetings, teaching, sharing and discussions are of crucial importance. Explanations, personal contacts, cooperation and coexistence have to be our way, excluding sectarianism. We are called to give our gifts together and share the world's problems, being living examples ourselves, confirming our love and tolerance. We should also live out common sense ecumenism, listening and understanding each other, in reconciliation, under the signs of unity. It should be natural for denominations to work together.

We should make contacts and visits, work together, have a common practice, be in dialogue, develop the ecumenical formation of pastors, organise youth exchanges, pray together, conduct joint mission and share information. As Christians, as lay people, as ministers, intellectuals or concerned people, we should create many initiatives, going out into the world and speaking up.

We should become children and leave mental burdens.] We should put Tradition after the essential that is Jesus Christ, upholding the vision of where we are going, helping ecumenism by our example and learning, and collaborating unselfishly. We should tell about the joy of being in the International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF), the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the Student Christian Movements (SCM) and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE).

Other important aspects are: joint ecumenical training of clergy, adult education of laity, closer official and formal sharing of ministries and mission, common action. We should stress what we can share and do together, praying, persuading, listening and spreading good experiences, while still being open to change. We are called to get to know each other, loving, working and worshipping together, in acceptance, humility and understanding.

Work with young people is of crucial importance, maintaining an informed interest, developing our respect, rewriting our self-definition, getting to know each other. Points to stress: study and learning, discussion and friendship, common witness, educating ourselves, common projects, prayer groups and the meeting of ministers.

We should tirelessly support local ecumenism, living a more authentic life in dialogue. Personal ways to God, free ecumenical circles, understanding history, mutual respect, inter-church families, explaining the results of ecumenical dialogue should be our leitmotifs.

We should also act locally, in social responsibility, concentrating on what connects us, and supporting various organisations, the sanctity of life, getting rid of prejudices. This leads us to re-interpret our identity, in cooperation and in influence of church leadership. We are challenged to be courageous and encouraging in our Christianity, forming opinions, sending communiqués and statements to be published, taking part in the celebrations of other denominations and sharing the Word. This will be our Christian presence in the society.

We should work from a basis of what unites us, giving testimony and getting converted, giving publicity and study, being bold, because unity is the work of the Holy Spirit, loving as Christ loved us, uniting our voices to establish the common essence of our faith, being self-critical, uniting ourselves, because we have to love each other, in respect and humility.

7.4 People were asked to prioritise the personal levels of ecumenical engagement. Some think that all seven listed activities are important, but not everyone has the opportunity or ability to carry them out. Personal prayer for unity is attainable for everyone. The list is the following:

- official or unofficial meeting among members of different churches,
- personal prayers for unity,
- participating in common worship,
- attending other Christians' worship
- doing diakonia or social work together with Christians from other churches,
- becoming a member of an ecumenical group,
- discussing agreed statements or other theological publications.

**REFLECTIONS on the CONFERENCE THEME**

(John 13:35: "All people will know that you are my disciples if you love each another.")

The reflections of members from different IEF regions :

**United Kingdom**

LINCOLN (Dr Helen W.)

In England the level of ecumenical participation differs from area to area and the personalities involved. Throughout the country there are meetings of "Churches Together in..." where representatives of the various denominations meet 3 monthly to discuss and share what is going on, and to plan possible ecumenical events/services. Their various congregations may participate in these if communication is efficient!

The answers to the questions:

1.) I would say that the denominations do love and care for one another individually and corporately, -but never enough. Apart from a few bigoted groups, there is no bitterness between them.

2.) From outside the churches it may appear that we do not behave as if we are the disciples of the same Jesus Christ. Sadly in our materialistic society we probably are often irrelevant. Although there is a yearning for a spiritual dimension amongst people, the language and ritual of the churches is not understood.

3.) Yes. Ecumenism is being hindered because of the very slow progress theologically and organisationally.

4.) Unification on the basis of love and respect for one another is essential. Sadly it is rarely visible.

The most joyful and heavenly experience for me was the RC Eucharist in Lincoln Cathedral at the Swanwick conference in 2002. This was an achievement because the celebrant was listening to the Holy Spirit and not to the quibbles of the hierarchy. I think it is important to add that, looking back over the last 50 years, the progress in ecumenism in England has been amazing, but at the same time the church seems more irrelevant to the general population with the growth of materialism.

YORK/Haxby (Inge and Revd. Peter D.)

The answers to the questions:

ad 1.) Some do and some do not. Our experience has been that when they are working together, or have a shared use of a church building, there is more possibility of loving relationships developing.

2.) Again some do but others do not. It is not possible to answer this kind of question without first defining what we consider a genuine disciple of Jesus is like.

3.) Yes, both these factors hinder the progress of ecumenism.

4.) Yes, our experience is that where there are shared projects and conferences (e.g. IEF) there are many hopeful signs of unity on the basis of love, without waiting for formal institutional unity to take place. In our former parish in London (St. John's, North Woolwich in London's docklands) and in many parts of Britain there are Local Ecumenical Projects (LEPs) where the process of unification on the basis of love is taking shape.

CANTERBURY (The Revd. Michael F.)

In Canterbury, which is a city of about 50,000 people, there is much respect and warmth between the different denominations. The large, old cathedral offers a welcome to people from all denominations. A number of services are held in which there is ecumenical sharing. Most often the pain of disunity is felt in the city when there is a Eucharist and some people are not able to receive the Sacrament; in this case the division is usually between the Roman Catholics and the others.

Most Christians here stay much more in their own local Church, rather than sharing in ecumenical worship or mission projects. Nevertheless, in various ways people from different Churches do work together as Christians.

YORK/Haxby (The Revd. John C.)

The word "love" is not the authentic one to represent our Lord's intent in John 13:35. We might find it easier to use words like 'care' and 'concern' or 'thoughtfulness' or 'kindness' or 'bother', to describe relationships within and between our Christian communities, rather than the word 'love'.

The ministers and priests of 2 Anglican, one Roman Catholic and one Methodist congregations in Haxby, plus a few lay people, meet together from time to time to arrange ecumenical events. Special united services are held in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christian Aid Week, Good Friday, etc. -The majority of the members of our three congregations would be unaffected by these services. Small ecumenical study groups during Lent; a fortnightly ecumenical Bible study/prayer group and a small group meeting to pray about world events, have seemed to embody some of the marks of love and discipleship of which Jesus speaks, but these are fragmentary and occasional experiences. Our church buildings in this community are mostly full on Sunday, and since there is no clear indication as to where ecumenism might be leading us, locally or more generally, there is no great sense of urgency in ecumenical relationships. The churches here might make common cause with regard to meeting the needs of the wider world and Church, and demonstrating love at a distance through their support of mission and aid agencies, and between CAFOD (Catholic) and Christian Aid, but have not found the will or the way to do this, unitedly.

A LEP -Local Ecumenical Project- Anglican/Methodist, with a church building and joint ministry on a nearby residential/shopping/industrial site has not greatly impinged upon us here.

Roman Catholic, Methodist and Anglican church leaders invited a small group of our people to attend a day of reflection on the scriptures at Ampleforth Abbey (Benedictine), based on lectio divina, reading scriptures in a monastic way. It was an important step on the way of ecumenism, and indeed one which would have been unheard of but a few years ago.

OXFORD/Headington (Jill F.,)

Where she lives, there exists a local organisation of Churches Together, which is an element of the Churches Together hierarchy. They meet once a month for a short worship service of 30 minutes, followed by a cup of tea and an opportunity to chat to everyone.

They meet at a Roman Catholic convent and the sisters are very welcoming. This is a very positive experience. In England there are at present discussions about Anglican/Methodist union, but they are progressing very slowly as there are members in both churches who do not want this union.

CAMBRIDGE (Cynthia H., Methodist minister)

History has left some hot spots of bigotry and hatred, such as some parts of Northern Ireland. There is much more mutual respect and understanding today. As we get to know and understand each other better, so love grows. Some Christians still look inward towards their own kind, convinced that only their beliefs and ways are right. They do not usually hate one another, but often ignore each other or show a very condescending manner. Sometimes a degree of conflict is needed to prevent us from hiding differences which would cause problems later. Talks at the top may fail, but ecumenism is not harmed.

She used to be involved in a Christian Fellowship which included about twenty individual churches. Denominations ranged from Catholic to House church, and included Anglican,

Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Pentecostal. They all supported each other's activities, held joint services on special occasions, worshipping or working together whenever it was appropriate. Her Methodist church and an Anglican church are to be a single worshipping congregation as from October 2002. They maintain strong covenant links with the local Baptist and Catholic Churches. There are other sad cases where churches, or ministers refuse to have anything to do with others. (Particularly bitter has been her experience at the hands of some high Anglican priests, who refuse to accept her call to ministry.)

CAMBRIDGE (The Revd David C.H., Methodist minister, ecumenical officer in Churches Together)

In general terms he thinks that in Britain the denominations at the national level work well together, and encourage their local churches to do likewise. At the local level, however, there is a wide variety, although in most towns there are some churches which are happy to work together. Where things are difficult, it is often because of the attitude of one minister or because two (or more) cannot get on together for reasons of personality. Perhaps one is too dominant; perhaps one doesn't approve of women ministers; perhaps one wants everything on his/her own terms.

In Britain, the organization is in place for unity to go ahead, and a lot happens without any outside organization - sometimes to the alarm of the 'officials', sometimes to their joy! Personally, he has long been a great believer that "Where there is a will there is a way". The four churches (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist) have a joint evening service one Sunday every month, and the three (without the Catholics, who have their mass) also worship together one Sunday morning every month.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE/Haddenham (Dr.Morvenna L.-W.)

In the village there live 5,000 people (Baptist, Methodist, Catholic and Anglican). There is an organisation "Churches Together", in which all work together in harmony and support each other. There are occasions during the year when there are services held ecumenically (Good Friday, Women's World Day of Prayer, for Carol Services at Christmas and some Lenten services.) If one church has a problem the others are supportive. They are welcomed to hold services in another church.

There is a lot of goodwill at local level. But on the whole most people seem to accept things as they are and do not know much about high powered discussions go on among important people with the aim of eventually achieving unity.

SURREY/Hindhead (Elsa W., -the only remaining active founder member of IEF)

Love is a difficult commodity to measure. When people are more prepared to listen to each other, are they animated by the command of Our Lord to love each other, or are they acting to follow the spirit of their time? With more travelling, more contacts, people are less isolated, experience more and that helps towards more understanding, but is it love?

The only real hope of unity that has come in her life, is the development of IEF, and, particularly in the Central European Countries.

St ALBANS/Turvey (the Revd Martin R., co-worker of CEC)

In England there is a national Churches Together (Council of Churches), which since 1990 has included most confessions including Roman Catholics. It is very active and draws together people who have similar responsibilities in the member confessions - from the church leaders (the Archbishop of Canterbury [Anglican] and Westminster [Roman Catholic] and the Moderator of the Free Churches) four times a year - to those responsible for finance, education, spirituality etc.

At diocesan/regional level virtually every part of the country has a County Churches Together (there are currently 56 of them) where the church leaders and others meet regularly to discuss the churches mission in their area. Some, of course, are more effective than others. At local level in almost all areas where there are several local churches working (in the small

village in which we live there is only one parish church) there are Local Churches Together which draw together the local church and lay leaders. Again some of these are more effective than others. In 860 local areas the churches have committed themselves to working together much more actively, in many worshipping together regularly (in some places every Sunday) and sharing resources (in a few places having a shared bank account).

At international level, Anglicans are now in full communion with the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches. Progress with the Reformed Churches has been less advanced, especially because of differences over episcopacy. Anglican-Roman Catholic relations have led to considerable proposed theological agreements, but these have not been officially endorsed on the Roman Catholic side. This is at present being tackled by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission (IARCCUM).

## **Spain**

MADRID (Gunnar Carlos C., son of a German-Danish couple)

He is a member of the German-speaking Lutheran congregation in Madrid. In Madrid there is also a German-speaking Catholic congregation. Every other week there is an ecumenical Bible class and an ecumenical workshop. Twice a year the leadership of the two congregations meet up as Christ's Council to schedule excursions. The Catholic congregation has got a patch of land in the mountains where a festive occasion including a religious service was celebrated last summer. The event was concelebrated by an Italian Pater, a Russian Orthodox priest, a priest from the German-speaking Catholics and a pastor from the German-speaking Lutheran congregation. On 19 October there was a day for women. During this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity there is an ecumenical service in the Lutheran church with the Ecumenical Choir. The sermon will be given by a Catholic. On three evenings there will be ecumenical Bible study. In his view ecumenism is active in German circles. Unfortunately, that does not apply to Spanish circles, where in fact each congregation lives its own life and only rarely do they attend events during the ecumenical Week of Prayer.

## **Czech Republic**

The collective answers of the whole Czech Region:

1.) *Do the Christian denominations and their followers love each other?*

- Sometimes ecumenical contacts seem to be more an attempt to win the others over to your point of view.
- There is certainly what I would call a polite ecumenism. In the past even that didn't exist.
- There is quite a lot of diplomacy at church leadership level that is not sincere.
- I know several marriages where the partners come from different denominations and they certainly do love each other. But I also know cases where different denominations look askance at each other.
- The Christian denominations are not monolithic. There are many internal differences - sometimes Christians don't even love each other within their own denomination!
- There are signs of progress that help us to know each other better. For example, activities organised around the Czech Ecumenical Council of Churches. People are no longer trying to play tricks on each other. Then there are the grass-roots group meetings in people's homes, ecumenical prayers and ecumenical Bible-studies. There is now a basic respect for the others.

2.) *Do they behave as disciples of the same Jesus Christ?*

- Not yet, but they are working on it.
- Different denominations have different emphases, but the basics cannot be changed.

3.) *Is ecumenism being hindered because neither theological nor organisational unity is going ahead?*

- Full organisational and theological unity is something that is the final aim at the end of a process. We cannot expect it at this stage.

- In some cases ecumenism is hindered because of the visible failure to make progress on these issues, e.g. intercommunion.
- The church is not an organisation but an organism. Organisational matters are not the most important.
- Ecumenism is something much wider than theology and organisation.
- Agreement has been reached on some things, but on other issues there are new divisions, often within individual denominations.
- There has been some progress reached on specific theological and organisational issues. For example, mutual recognition of the ministries of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church and the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, or more favourable guidelines on mixed marriages on the part of the Roman Catholic Church, or the mutual recognition of baptisms by the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Roman Catholic Church.
- Movement always comes into being first in an informal way. Organisational structures are only established later. It would be a mistake to create something artificially if it doesn't come from below.

4.) *Or is the process of unification on the basis of love (like John 13;35) already visible? Is this an important step on the way of ecumenism?*

- I think things are definitely moving forward on this basis.
- The wonderful experience that we had at Swanwick and the love we felt there is something that would not have been possible 20 years ago.
- It is an interesting example of God's humour that under the communist regime the threat to the church brought us together and we organised, for example, ecumenical groups in people's homes, in spite of the risks. In fact, the danger seemed to bring us closer together than now, when we have freedom. People react to freedom by trying to show what they can do on their own, rather than by trying to work together.
- If we are praying together, then we cannot be arguing.
- One problem is the lack of information about the different things that are going on.
- We must try and pass on to other people, for example, what we experienced in Swanwick and the materials and ideas we got from there.

PRAGUE (Magda)

The answers to the 4 questions:

- 1.) Yes. In my narrow "church people community".
- 2.) According to the last meeting\*: yes. -I have no experiences with the Orthodox church.
- 3.) No, in no way.
- 4.) Yes, it is. The process and the important step were visible during the most recent meeting.\*

\* She means the 34th International Conference of IEF in Swanwick.

## Germany

TRIER (Karl-Adolf B., on behalf of a group)

The questions and the answers:

1.) *Do the Christian denominations and their followers love each other?*

Yes, they love each other where they have had an opportunity to get to know each other personally and to talk to each other about their faith and to discover how deeply they are already bonded in Christ

2.) *Do they behave like they are all disciples of the same Jesus Christ?*

Yes, on the same condition that was mentioned in the answer to Question 1. However, time and again, there is also rivalry, misunderstanding and lack of love, unfortunately. As I see it,

that usually happens when ecumenically minded faithful are influenced by representatives of their churches who are trying to preserve the traditional relations between the churches or assume that their own church possesses more of the truth than others. In many churches, unfortunately, there has been a tendency for more self-assertion and less openness over the past few years. Often a change in the bishop's office is enough to paralyse the promotion of ecumenism!

3.) *Is ecumenism being hindered because neither theological nor organisational unity is going ahead?*

Over the past decades there has been more theological progress as regards the understanding of unity than during the four hundred years before. On the other hand, Christians devoted to ecumenism suffer from the fact that such theological insights are not sufficiently appreciated in their own churches and that the churches have difficulty drawing the necessary conclusions from them. One thing is clear: no church can stay as it is. The core of ecumenism is always conversion to Jesus Christ, which includes a readiness to learn from other churches as well as being jointly led to a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is then disappointing to see that at organisational level no actual conclusions are drawn from the theological advances. In the long run, that could lead to a decrease in the ecumenical involvement of many or even to the danger of their abandoning not only ecumenism but also the Christian faith altogether, which threatens to lose credibility through the self-assertive behaviour of the churches. There is also the possibility of ecumenism developing outside the churches, which would deprive the churches of the dedication of those, which ought to be important to them because of their mission! For the deepening of unity in love will only be possible in suffering on account of the churches that are not ready to repent!

TRIER /Merzig -(Cornelia W.)

Answers to the questions for our IEF conference in Budapest:

- 1.) In our bishopric Tier the denominations usually work separately and get on alongside each other.
- 2.) The behaviour is terrifying. Sham regulations. Teachers holding a state contract get more pay at religious schools than those at the same schools with a contract with the bishopric. They teach the same curriculum.
- 3.) In our predominantly Catholic area ecumenism is making little progress.
- 4.) It is difficult to see unification on the basis of love. Few women come to the Week of Prayer for Unity, maybe around 100-200 in a town with 16,000 inhabitants. You hardly ever see men.

I see little enthusiasm for ecumenism in my environment.

SOLINGEN (Magdalena G.)

I find the question about sisterly love between churches very important. 1 Cor 13-17 indicates the right direction. About 50 years ago I participated in ecumenical building camps. It was a painful realisation for me at the time how different we are in terms of theology and how we lack unity. And I suppose these differences are to stay there until the end.

Also, it must not and cannot be overcome through "organisation". On the other hand, I have always experienced unity at ecumenical missions (eg. overseas service and in a conciliation centre in Belfast) whenever we act together, particularly outside the church walls, and whenever we pray together or quietly meditate.

I would be happy to see meditation (quietness) and action linked more closely, eg. through visits paid by small IEF groups to local congregations. Thus we could learn where "the shoe pinches" and pray and act for their goals.

(Last year I was glad that the unplanned reports from Jerusalem and Zimbabwe were accepted and we opened a window on the world's suffering.)

## **Romania**

CLUJ-NAPOCA/Fenes (Vasile F.)

Ecumenism in Transylvania

For over twenty years he has lived as parish priest at the Orthodox parish church in Szászfenes (Floresti), only a few kilometres away from Cluj, the intellectual centre of Transylvania.

Cluj is a home for Romanians as well as Hungarians, gypsies, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Greeks, Arabs, Africans and Chinese. There are various denominations too: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Reformed, Baptist, Unitarian, Adventist, Pentecostal churches and Muslims.

Is ecumenism at a local level possible here? Of course. All prerequisites are present. What is needed is a will and sincerity.

Cluj is also the seat of several bishoprics and dean's offices:

- an Orthodox bishopric
- a Greek Catholic bishopric
- a Reformed bishopric
- a Hungarian Lutheran bishopric
- a Roman Catholic deanery.

In addition, Cluj houses a number of theological institutes at secondary and university level:

Secondary theological schools:

- Romanian Orthodox
- Romanian Greek Catholic
- Hungarian Greek Catholic
- Reformed (Hungarian)
- Unitarian (Hungarian)
- Baptist (with a Hungarian and Romanian faculty)

University level:

- Orthodox theology with four faculties
- Roman Catholic didactic theology
- Greek Catholic theology
- a Protestant theological institute (Reformed, Lutheran and Unitarian), with a pastoral and a didactic faculty
- Baptist theological institute (in Romanian and Hungarian)

Relations are good between the leaders, teachers and students of the various institutions as well as the priests and pastors serving in Cluj. So there really is ecumenism at local level.

Szászfenes, the village at whose parish he serves, has a mixed population of 5530: Romanians, Hungarians and gypsies. As regards its denominations: there are Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Reformed, Baptist, Pentecostal, Unitarian, Adventist, Lutheran and Muslim people.

In the village there are 3 Orthodox churches (the parish church, the monastic and the military church), a Roman Catholic and a Greek Catholic parish church as well as 3 houses of prayer: Reformed, Baptist and Pentecostal. The various priests and pastors have good relations, they mutually pay visits to one another, they co-operate. The same applies to the believers in the village who often go to each other's services on festive occasions.

## **Belgium**

OSTEND (Elisabeth L.-F.)

An ecumenical landscape of the surroundings of Ostend

Lectures and discussions are organized by the West Flanders Ecumenical Study and Work Group (clergy and lay people of different denominations). Through the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the World Day of Prayer etc. there are various chances for contact. Sometimes there are ecumenical events at the local Protestant Church and an annual Baptist

Church "Songs of Praise". There are joint ceremonies with Roman Catholics around November 11th and other memorial services and occasionally ecumenical weddings at the Anglican Church.

No regular meetings between clergy of Ostend, but there are in Bruges, due to twinning with diocese of Lincoln (Anglican) in U.K. and the Roman Catholic Bishopric of Bruges.

Roman Catholic chaplains in local hospitals will notify pastors of other denominations about patients of other churches. The faithful are encouraged to take part as much as possible in ecumenical events but interest tends to be limited to a small minority.

An important initiative is the annual visit to the Anglican Church in Ostend of classes from Roman Catholic Schools in Turnhout or Roeselare (local towns) who are following religious education, and who are encouraged by the new Roman Catholic School syllabus to learn about other confessions and faiths. The pupils (17-18 y.) spend a day in Ostend visiting other Christian denominations, the synagogue and Humanist Centre. At our church they are told about the Anglican communion and her role in ecumenism. We also receive fairly regular groups of Roman Catholic teachers of religion for similar talks about Anglicanism and Church Unity.

In Bruges there is an ecumenical chapel. In Ostend our Anglican church is beginning to become such a place in practice if not in name, owing to our "bridge" position between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The World Day of Prayer is celebrated here annually. Those taking part are Roman Catholics, Baptists, Pentecostals and members of our own (Anglican) congregation. When our church roof was being repaired, hospitality for our services was provided by the Roman Catholic Church close by. In Bruges we Anglicans share a church with the United Protestant Church.

When I know the celebrant at another church would be in agreement I usually feel I can take Communion. Most Roman Catholic clergy seem in favour of Intercommunion in Belgium despite official rulings.

Cooperation between clergy of different denominations for inter-church wedding services is excellent in our local setting.

There is generally more indifference than hostility to ecumenism. The general public is made aware of our different churches striving for unity by the now annual MARCH FOR JESUS, which takes place in autumn in Ostend.

What are the chief differences? I think the difficulty of being officially excluded from Roman Catholic and Orthodox Eucharists. I find the majority of church-goers (whatever their tradition) believe we should have Intercommunion *before* official reunion. It is Jesus who invites us to His supper. He does not want us to stay away. The Anglican Church welcomes all to Communion who are communicants in their own churches. Frequent Roman Catholic visitors to our services accept this invitation. More and more the ordinary Christian is crossing frontiers.

## **Slovakia**

BRATISLAVA (a group of IEF members)

They are ten women and four men, generally aged 30-60, Roman Catholics and Free Evangelicals. -The events organised by them are also attended by Greek Catholics, Lutherans and Old Catholics. Unfortunately, the members of other Protestant churches do not seem to be interested in the work done by the IEF Region.

In theology the first major achievement was the mutual acknowledgement of baptisms by the Roman Catholic and Lutheran (according to the Augsburg confession) churches in Slovakia. The Catholic church always declares that it calls and welcomes people of other denominations.

Every church has its own periodical; however, it is not usual for church members to read the periodicals of other churches. There are only sporadic meetings.. There is very poor mutual knowledge of each other. What really gives reason for joy is that Christians always speak ecumenically in the media. The style of confrontation has disappeared from catechisms. On the other hand, very little is written about other Christians in the catechisms for primary

schools. Whilst they do not talk about heretics they do not always seriously adopt Pope John XXIII's famous sentence. Dialogue at the official level is mere formality. On the Catholic side the situation has worsened as ecumenical meetings at parish level need permission from the bishop's office. As they see it the so-called big churches display neither interest in nor understanding of ecumenical dialogue. Their situation is best described as passive tolerance.

The situation is better at college level. Students often come together quite spontaneously to celebrate services jointly at the UPC (University Pastoral Centre). It is easier to pray together in a hospital or old people's home. It is also easier to share a chapel there. It is rather the exception than the rule to find a common chapel at parishes. Other priests cannot play the same roles in the Catholic and Orthodox church (the leader of the liturgy cannot be from a Protestant church). Equality of priests from other churches in sermon and service has already become a reality in Protestant churches. The priests are hardly involved in ecumenical issues. The people are not very much interested in this issue either. For that reason no one is interested in using churches jointly. The priests only meet in a church on special festive occasions and then it seems very formal. Only occasionally do people take communion and they do not dare to take communion in other churches. Those actively involved in ecumenism no more have these fears.

At present, ecumenical weddings are not possible either in the Catholic or the Orthodox church. The situation is quite different in Protestant churches.

Society at large does not expect much from the ecumenical movement: usually only in the field of charity and the promotion of better understanding between people of different views. There are no problems arising from denominational differences at work or in the family or with friends.

The churches are aware of their responsibility in society as regards moral issues, justice and human rights. Dividing issues (between Christians) are the question of loyalty to one's own tradition, open theological questions, indifference and caution as well as the lack of intercommunion and insufficient activity on behalf of official leaders.

In order to accelerate the ecumenical process they wish more information, better education and prayer. They want to contribute to ecumenical meeting by searching for new ways. Priests can encourage people to more ecumenical activity. All devoted people should be open to others, they should destroy barriers and establish friendly relationships.

## **Hungary**

BUDAPEST (Veronika K.)

Hungary is a multi-denominational country. Around 63% of those baptised are Catholics, 20% are Reformed and 4% are Lutherans. The Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Adventist and Orthodox (5 kinds: Greek, Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian and Serbian) churches have about 20-40,000 members, and so has the Congregation of Faith. Jews and the adherents of other non-Christian religions (Buddhists, Muslims) account for less than 1% of the population.

Apart from the Congregation of Faith, there is no religious conflict on the surface. The secularised part of society expects the churches to co-exist peacefully side by side. This peaceful co-existence is there at the highest level; however, within the individual churches, there are "fundamentalist" groups, which still judge other churches in the spirit of the religious controversies of the 16th and 17th centuries. Beneath the surface there is a Catholic-non-Catholic division, but also one between Western and Eastern churches.

Love for other denominations today mainly means mutual acceptance, appreciation and love of our neighbour. In addition, and depending on the current state of society, there is also a sort of alliance in the battle to defend Christian values and Christian institutions. In this sense they all call themselves the disciples of Christ and accept this designation in connection with each other. However, their various communities only come together during the January Ecumenical Week of Prayer. In very small villages they are able to help each other in numerous ways (e.g. to construct and restore churches, to maintain denominational schools and nursery schools). On the other hand, bigger communities in cities have no contact other than through their leaders and members of the intelligentsia and none at grass roots level.

Congregations expect the resolution of conflict in teaching to come from above.

Differences in teaching are painful for many. Also it is painful if such conflicts are revived by the 'Scribes'. Often it is well-educated lay Christians who instigate discussion as regards the differing interpretations of the common sources. There is a well-functioning Ecumenical Study Centre, a Christian Ecumenical Fellowship and various smaller ecumenical groups of Christian professionals. There is ÖKUMENÉ, a quarterly, as well as its shorter German version. There is freedom of opinion and of those having an opinion, and *we can still hope to be able to resolve the cramp preserving traditions without making the Ancestors' faith ridiculous, without any denomination wanting to triumph over the others but aiming to come as near to the justice and love expressed in Christ as possible. The joy over that should be enough to make up for the omission of certain things from our own tradition and adopt some of the others'. We know that happy are those who search for justice.*

*There is no need to fear a certain amount of difference. Differences are not the same as conflicts. Differences enrich us whereas conflicts weaken us. The Spirit is the same, the gifts vary. Thus differences are a gift by the Spirit while conflicts among Christians are not in accordance with Christ's will. He wants His disciples to love one another. (John 13:35)*

Nowadays different Christian denominations are already capable of jointly representing Christianity in schools, in the army, in hospitals, among university students and in prisons. They can make joint statements in defence of Christian values and society. They co-operate in pro-life movements. Denominational schools, even seminaries, liaise with each other. We have a common ecumenical wedding ceremony. Church leaders are endeavouring to give religious instruction an ecumenical spirit. Our charities still operate separately, maybe because they lean heavily on their international parent organisations which still operate separately too.

BUDAPEST (Géza R., from Christian Ecumenical Fellowship - KÖT)

Those who are interested in ecumenism in Hungary and have a chance, opportunity and the ability to promote this cause do their best. Let us see a few examples:

- Naturally, every year there is an Ecumenical Week of Prayer.
  - October 31 is the Day of Reformation, which is only celebrated jointly by Protestants. Catholics do not know what they are allowed and what they ought to celebrate on this anniversary of schism.
  - We have a common ecumenical Lord's Prayer and Creed. There is already a common Protestant translation of the Bible. Nevertheless, many Protestants still stick to the old translation, and there is no common translation with Catholics.
  - Ten years after the publication of the catechism of the Catholic church a Small Catechism for children (young people) came out too. Of its 317 questions there is only one - No.87 - referring to ecumenism. That isn't much but still better than Article 80 of The Small Heidelberg Catechism, still in force, saying (without any modern explication) that a Catholic mass is idolatry and is to be condemned.
  - Hungarian Catholics listen to the Holy See: some of them abide by its teaching, others in order to criticise it. When Pope John Paul II was in Hungary he laid a wreath on the monument to the Protestant preachers who were sold as galley slaves in the 17th century. In return, some Protestant members of KÖT organised a pilgrimage to the tomb of Catholic priests killed by Protestant soldiers also in the second half of the 17th century.
- The unofficial forerunner of KÖT was founded 20 years ago by Catholics and Protestants. It was legalised in 1989. What does the Fellowship do?

- There is a regular meeting on the first Monday of every month where there are professional lectures on what 'links' us and what 'divides' us. At least once a year it holds

- a two and-a half-day conference. Four times a year it publishes its quarterly ÖKUMENÉ (600 copies), first of
- all to make the lectures available to a broader public. This periodical also comprises an account of the activities of IEF.
- We have celebrated the production of the Catholic-Lutheran joint declaration on justification.
- We have published the common Anglican-Roman Catholic document on Peter's service and church hierarchy entitled 'The Gift of Authority'.
- We have organised an ecumenical conference in connection with a publication of the Hungarian Catholic church (For Happier Families) as well as on 20th century Christian martyrs.
- We have held an ecumenical conference on the interpretation of the Catholic encyclical 'Ut unum sint...'
- The 2002 conference centred around the new ecumenical order of inter-church wedding ceremonies and mixed -marriages in general.

In addition to KÖT there are some other ecumenical groups, communities and organisations such as the Christian Ecumenical Students' Alliance. To most young people denominational problems are inexplicable. They believe in God, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit and don't care about sophisticated theological discussion.

GÖDÖLLÖ (Judit B., member of KÖT)

To my mind, the cause of ecumenism is in the doldrums and I don't think I am the only one to believe that we can't expect any serious change.

We are trying to gather under the same flag in areas where we can never become one community. I mean a community in terms of liturgy, faith and parochial, organisational unity. There are things which we can do happily and effectively together owing to our common moral foundations, primarily charity and protest against television programmes and the destruction of nature, etc. (Our mystics too are aware that the wise speak the same; however, their path is too steep for most of us and we cannot make everyone walk along it.

Our liturgies, our teachings and the organisational structure of our churches are very different, their emergence is closely related to the historical situation and determined by culture. All churches cherish these and justly so. For if they prove to be lenient on these counts they will risk losing their own identity.

As regards teaching, there could be rapprochement. However, that is hindered by the fact that none of us quite understands Jesus' deeds, teaching, environment or the state of the church in the beginning. Thus we read in the New Testament what we want to see and fail to read what we don't want to see. As to the Old Testament, we say that it is negligible after all. Put another way, we share a lack of adequate knowledge of the roots of our religion, the faith of Israel.

I think we have two roads ahead of us: one is indicated by the sign 'Unity in diversity'. That means we must realise and accept that we are different. No one should leave their own faith but no one should try to convert others either. Let's not rummage through the past. Let's live side by side in love and do what we can all accept. As for problems, let them rest in peace.

The sign pointing towards the other road says: 'Let's dig deep.' If we are to understand what we have in common we must search for our common root. This is a difficult road and in my experience hardly anyone has the courage to walk along it. There are not many signs to show the way. Today's Judaism can be a reliable cue. Its faith and religious practice are not quite the same as they were 2000 years ago; even so, it has more in common with historical Jesus than our blue-eyed altar pictures.

If we choose the first road we must give up our pangs of conscience. This is what can be achieved and that's all. If we wish to embark upon the second road, we will have to discard our prejudices and a lot of what we consider obvious and unquestionable.

I would like to walk on the second road. I hope I still have enough years to live to be able to get a few metres down it.

BUDAPEST (Klára K.),-announcements in the Hungarian media (for characterising the ecumenical environment in Hungary):

\* Retired Reformed Bishop Dr K. Tóth, -[The author is the President of the Ecumenical Study Centre. The following excerpt is taken from his report to their General Assembly]:

Christian identity consists in faith in Jesus Christ. Basic Christian identity is manifested in the following of Christ. Denominational identity is a way of everyday reality, of Christian faith shaped through history. It is a special form in which every church experiences its spiritual individuality. Thus confessional identity is constituted of certain positive and negative elements which display features of man's sinful and fallible character. *Excessive emphasis on the denominational features can lead to a conflict with Christian identity.*

Missionary activity demands that all denominational identity should remain Christian identity. St Paul made this clear in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1,1-13) Martin Luther admonished his followers: 'Don't say my name and don't call yourselves Lutherans but Christians because I wasn't crucified for anyone.' (Martin Luther: *Treue Vermahnung für allen Christen*, 1522)

*Indubitably, actual Christian identity today is only possible as denominational identity. The ecumenical character does not involve denominational negation or uncertainty, but it requires a change in attitude which manifests its character with regard to other denominations. In this spirit anti-Catholicism or anti-Protestantism is nonsense as it conflicts with the spirit of the message of the Gospel.*

But where will it all lead? If one party considers itself absolute and the other tends to acknowledge historical relativism then no progress can be expected. *If, however, it becomes clear that all denominational identity has to point towards a common Christian identity then there is hope for progress down the road towards ecumenism. Those wishing to be true Christians are willing to change their historical set of values.* Christian existence is a special road where Christ's resurrection and glorification are preceded by His crucifixion, i.e. Christianity cannot mean the search for power, influence or glory in this world.

Primarily we are not concerned with inner ecumenism (i.e. the relations between Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist and Methodist churches) but chiefly with our relations with Catholics who form a majority both in Hungary and worldwide (regarding the Christian denominations) as well as the Orthodox majorities in countries east of Hungary. That is why we turn towards both of them with more attention.

After sharp criticism by Protestants of the encyclical *Dominus Iesus* published in 2000 by the Congregation of Doctrine, a statement entitled 'Perspectives in the Future' came out - also in Hungarian, signed and published by Cardinal W. Kasper, President of the Papal Council of Christian Unity. This document can be regarded as an answer to the criticism of *Dominus Iesus*. It can be viewed as a counterbalance to the much talked-about Vatican manifesto. ...I am going to quote its major theses, which in my view truly reflect ecumenism as seen by the Catholic Church...

Basically, there are two opposing ecclesiastical self-definitions both in ecumenical relations with Roman Catholics and in those with the Orthodox churches: the self definition of those who identify themselves "with the only holy Catholic Church and that of those who consider themselves as "belonging to the universal church as the part", as stated in a creed of the Reformed Church: "The church fighting (*Ecclesia militans*) on earth consists of many parts..."

- Lutheran theologian (A.-Reuss) said in connection with the Augsburg declaration on justification how good it was that the two churches lined up behind the joint declaration. However, first of all we should talk about what Jesus Christ's life means

us. Then we would not need to renounce differences and differing traditions but should look for what we have in common instead.

\* Budapest university pastors said on ecumenism in the common closing liturgy of the Ecumenical Week of Prayers:

-there is no need to blur differences but we need agreement on the most basic things - that is our aim,

-older members lock themselves up in their own denominational congregations, younger people on the other hand follow their own choices,

-an ecumenical meeting like this has a new identity: to seek Jesus' truth together; in everyday life we need mercy, love and authentic lives.

An other declaration on the same things says: there are some who view ecumenism as a blurring of differences, syncretism, a big mixture, or pluralism. This opinion is represented at the highest church level, among the clergy and the congregations. We are going to pray that their opinion might change.

\* At a church-media meeting for Hungarian speakers in the whole Carpathian basin a Lutheran theologian (K.Hafenscher) pointed out: the churches must acknowledge that they have made mistakes. Pope John Paul II. had the courage to do so, let the other churches have enough courage too.

\* Catholic and Protestant church leaders participated in a joint celebration marking the anniversary of the liberation of the 17th century Protestant preachers who were sold to galley slaves. The Reformed church bishop (G.Bölskei) said: "We have come to give thanks. It is not rivalry but agreement that matters." The Chairman of the Catholic Bishops' Conference answered: "We respect the preachers as men true to their faith."

\* Would be Reformed church seminarians and their rector and biblical professor visited the Archbishop's Seminary in Esztergom. The Reformed rector said: "We have all been assigned an apostolic task by the Spirit...When talking about the search for unity we go back to the age of the Apostles...".Mention was made of the document Dominus Iesus. It was pointed out unambiguously: the hostility in dogmatic approaches could have been due to differences in notions and interpretation. That means that it all comes down to theological concepts.

\* Statement by renowned preacher Reformed Church pastor (K. Cseri): "The Holy Church is not a denomination but the spiritual unity of those standing on the common foundations, regardless of denomination. There is no need to strive for this unity: it exists already. And there is no need for any other unity...According to the beautiful declaration of the II. Helvetian Creed: "If anyone teaches us in a better way on the basis of the Bible we accept that and are grateful for it."

\* A conference for ecumenically minded religious teachers was held under the leadership of Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran bishops (in Veszprém). At the same time another ecumenical meeting for pastors was organized in Budapest. The 65 participants included pastors of the Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist as well as the Roman and Greek Catholic churches. The meeting was instigated by priests related to the Focolare movement and devoted to ecumenism. At the meeting Catholic and protestant pastors called ecumenism vital and said that it should become a way of existence. They pointed out what already connects the Christians of different denominations. In the discussions after the lectures, they talked about the ecumenical pastoral and missionary initiatives in various parts of the country. The papal nuncio arrived for the prayer concluding the day.. He emphasised that it was impossible to maintain Christianity in isolation and went on to explain: "Only together can we represent Christ and the Gospel to the world."

\* A Reformed Church pastor, now bishop (I. Szabó), said the following about the Dominus Iesus: "True enough, there is nothing new in D.I. but that's what the problem is about. I should have expected some discriminating, patronizing sentences to be left out."

\* A Hungarian Jesuit living in USA (L. Örsy) wrote about D.I. in an editorial in AMERICA, the American Jesuits' periodical: "it was the general tone of the document that upset most of our partners. They didn't feel as if they were treated with respect or as equals. True enough, theological accuracy is an essential part of any ecumenical dialogue or any dialogue between religions; however, consideration is at least as important as that. Those who speak after experiencing God's grace...should show respect towards God's gifts in others. Dominus Iesus can be read as a summary of certain Catholic dogmas but does it convey to Christians and people of other religions that love and respect which was shown by St. Paul?" He (L.Örsy) wrote the following about the divisions: "Schism can be interpreted in a way to mean that if a limb is separated from the body it does not belong to it any more. Thus the concept of 'complete unity' is associated with the concept of a 'complete separation'. That concept prevailed until the 2nd Vatican Council. Since then, however, the churches have mutually acknowledged connection with each other that they have internal unity through God's Spirit".

\* In an ecumenical roundtable discussion on the radio a Reformed pastor and theologian (F.Bajusz) said in connection with Intercommunion that ecumenical Communion was not general among Protestants either. At some major international Protestant ecumenical meetings he had seen that e.g. Anglicans were only willing to take Communion with Northern European Lutherans because only with them was there Apostolic continuity present. The Reformed Church is also divided in this respect, what's more, Lutherans used to have two sides too. However the matter had been resolved by the time of the Lutheran World Meeting. In the same radio-discussion mention was also made of the prevailing practice in the Ortodox churches in Hungary as regards those baptised by another denomination. They are not baptised again but they are taken as a member of the Ortodox church only after a so-called ceremony of conversion.

\* An archbishop, leader of the Ecumenical Committee of the Hungarian Catholic Church (B.Bábel) made a phone-in contribution to the above roundtable discussion on the radio: "Ecumenism is aiming at unity of faith, for we are to love even our enemies. Huge results were achieved in the 20th and 21st century, but there are still many things to clarify. If Christ's teaching is to be represented by a circle, then the sum of the different denominations can be represented by a polygon. A suitable polygon can come near to the perfection of a circle." A Lutheran pastor also taking part in the discussion used another simile, one taken from music: homophonic and polyphonic music. All the parts should be seen as valuable and harmony should be aimed at. The ecumenical roundtable reached the conclusion that it is important to clarify the common ground, but it is even more important to have Christians whose personality makes "Christ's blurred face shine anew."

\* The Reformed Churches held an international conference in Hungary entitled "Our Church Today", where the participants represented Reformed Church members of 21 European countries. Host and organizer reformed Church bishop (G.Bölcskei) launched the conference with the following questions:

Do we know each other?

Do we recognise each other?

Do we see the brothers and sisters in each other?

What can we say to each other?

What can we confess together?

He thought it was justifiable to ask these questions of the other Reformed Church members because -as he explained- there are different trends of devotion within their churches, and their existence defines their ecumenical relationships too.

\* A well known figure of the Hungarian Reformed Church (E.A.Sipos) said in a TV programme that the Dutch, Scottish, Irish and American Presbyterian churches were against ecumenism and so was he.

BUDAPEST (Veronika)-Vatican utterances (as reflected in the Hungarian press):

\* As a sign of unity the Pope conceded one of the oldest churches of Rome, St. Theodore's, built in the 5th century, to the Greek Orthodox Christians. On that occasion he wrote to Patriarch Bartolomaios I. that he wished to continue the "dialogue of justice and love" between the two churches.

\* A joint communiqué of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and the Presbyterian Church of the USA said: since the Vatican Council II. many national and international meetings have taken place between the two churches. The meeting was about petrine service. They pointed out that they have differing views on the nature of the church. The prevailing ecumenical atmosphere makes it possible for them to revise the existing differences. Further question: how should the Reformed churches participate in the agreement on justification? Can they mutually acknowledge the validity of baptism? What could have been the reason for the division in the 16th-17th centuries? They pointed out that neither party associates itself with the despairing statements of the past.

\* Vienna Orthodox metropolitan Michael said in answer to journalists' questions about a possible union of Roman Catholic and the Orthodox churches: "Since they have a common origin, this process could be defined theologically as "UNITY in DIVERSITY".

\* The Pope's ecumenical "ars poetica" becomes apparent in the following speech: On his visit to Athens the Pope spoke about efforts for unity when talking to the Roman Catholic bishops in Greece: "In accordance with the principles set forth by the Vatican Council II. the efforts for unity must be continued, and a more secure foundation for agreement with other churches must be laid within the Catholic church itself. At the same time we must be fully aware of the fact that the process of ripening and clever approach takes a long time and calls for open, continuous dialogue. All that requires the practice of patient love so that both lay Christians and priests will be able to accept gradually the necessary changes. The Holy Spirit wishes us to employ new methods or old ones that have been rediscovered, -but it must be assured that the deposit of FAITH (the sum of the truths of our creed entrusted to the church by God) may not in the least be lost or even overshadowed.

\* .On the occasion of the ecumenical prayer week in 2003 the Pope said: "In fact, the unity of all those baptized is a gift that can only come from God. What I mean is that -when coming together- Christians look at each other as brothers and sisters....We are suffering from being divided and there are still many barriers separating us. Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us pray that our Lord may increase unity among Christians until the fullness of JUSTICE and LOVE. Let this be our common prayer."

## SUMMARY

**In sum, it can be established that there are partly or completely positive answers to all questions, which means that a majority of respondents have already experienced some visible signs of ecumenism.**

On the basis of that, we can claim that the survey was not conducted too soon, since we have managed to map and record an intermediate stage of the spread of ecumenism.

We have recognised, that the respondents were (mostly) very active in expressing of their opinions, remarks, experiences and ideas. We have the impression, that they awaited an occasion articulate their reflections to a public forum.

What was revealed by the data from individual countries is, that there are major differences between them. These differences are strongly determined by the denominational structure of each country or even certain regions -like the Strasbourg area in France, where the numerous intermarriage couples managed to obtain special treatment, or the ecumenical possibilities and practice in large Spanish cities and centres of tourism, which contrast sharply with traditional Spanish regions.

A big difference between the Catholics (and Orthodox) and Protestants in the question of the Eucharist became visible [explained at the 5.2 question in the chapter "Statistically processable opinions and data"].

During the conference, the reflections and answers of the respondents were the subject of discussions in workshops. Another workshop (the biggest) considered the question of the future of ecumenism based on the results of the survey. In a plenary session organised specifically for this purpose, the reports of the workshops were presented and offered for discussion. These explained: existing ecumenical problems, the ideas of the participants regarding the future of ecumenism and the tasks of IEF. (See the moderator's report.)

It is clear that there is still a long way to go in furthering the development from a current relationship which is mostly fair and friendly, to a loving and cooperative one between denominations. We would like to hope for a continuing increase of that loving attitude. That was also the theme of the 35th IEF conference in Budapest: UNITY in LOVE, -that means: Christian unity based on love so that Jesus' expectation expressed at the Last Supper from his disciples may be fulfilled:

"All people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.." (John 13:35).

May I attract your attention to an additional short resumé of the Budapest - SURVEY?!

*Nobody cry, nobody cry,  
Ecumenism is spreading !  
Be satisfied or be sceptical:  
The coach once pushed is rolling !*

The editor

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**INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIP****SURVEY**  
of actual evidence of ecumenism**CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION	P. 1.
"What came out of the Budapest Questionnaire?"	2.
Budapest Questionnaire	5.
STATISTICALLY PROCESSABLE DATA and other OPINIONS	7.
GRAPHS	8.
Narrative Evaluation of the IEF Budapest Questionnaire	15.
REFLECTIONS on the CONFERENCE THEME	21.
SUMMARY	36.