

Pacific church leaders' consultation statement

Pacific Theological College, Jovili Meo Mission Centre, Fiji 18 to 21 September, 2006

We, the leaders of the member churches of the World Council of Churches in the Pacific, the Pacific Conference of Churches, The Pacific Theological College and the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools; representing the Body of Christ in this Pacific Leaders Consultation, after a week-long reflection on the prophetic role of the Church as Mediator and Intercessor and deliberation on the process of practicing church unity and cooperation for the good of all God's people, which manifests itself in the form of the ecumenical movement, resolve the following:

1. That the role of the Church is as a mediator and intercessor. We draw inspiration from Psalm 72:1-4: *Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.* (NIV)

As the mediator and intercessor, the Church:

- i. stands before God to present the problem of the people whom he or she represents;
- ii. stands before the political leaders to ask them to take into account the plight of the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed; and
- iii. stands before God to ask for God's justice to be put into the leaders' hearts.

2. That as a mediator and intercessor, we are committed to a paradigm shift towards a new form of ecumenical cooperation in our 'liquid continent' in order to serve God's people and revitalise the awareness of common witness in Christ for churches in the Pacific.

In order for cooperation, complementarity and coherence to be realised by all the churches we recognise that the structural integration of our Regional Ecumenical Organisations, namely the Pacific Conference of Churches, the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools and the Pacific Theological College, is essential.

In this regard, we have agreed in principle for the establishment of a single Ecumenical Council to govern and coordinate the activities of these three Regional Ecumenical Organisations.

In order to facilitate this process, we have agreed to commission a group of representatives of Pacific Churches and Regional Ecumenical Organisations to prepare a detailed feasibility study for a Pacific Ecumenical Council, examining the challenges, benefits and options for Pacific Churches.

The results of this feasibility study for proposal of this new Pacific Ecumenical Council will be presented for endorsement at the executive committees and/ or council meetings of the Pacific Conference of Churches, South Pacific Association of Theological Schools and the

Pacific Theological College, before being presented for adoption at the Pacific Conference of Churches 9th Assembly in Pago Pago, American Samoa in 2007.

3. As God's own creation continues to face the brunt of Climate Change, we recognise that rising sea levels pose a direct threat to the way of life and possibly the very existence of many Pacific Island peoples.

We therefore recommit ourselves to the 2004 *Otin Taai Declaration on Climate Change* and stand in solidarity to accept and address the moral and ethical challenge of Climate Change. We shall continue to engage in responsible stewardship of God's creation with an emphasis on the effects of Climate Change in the region focussing on linking disaster preparedness, emergency relief, rehabilitation and development.