

A HANDBOOK OF COUNCILS
AND CHURCHES
PROFILES OF ECUMENICAL
RELATIONSHIPS

World Council of Churches

Table of Contents

Foreword	vii
Introduction	ix
Part I Global	
World Council of Churches.	3
Member churches of the World Council of Churches (list).	6
Member churches by church family.	14
Member churches by region	14
Global Christian Forum	15
Christian World Communions	17
Churches, Christian World Communions and Groupings of Churches	20
Anglican churches	20
Anglican consultative council	21
Member churches and provinces of the Anglican Communion	22
Baptist churches	23
Baptist World Alliance	23
Member churches of the Baptist World Alliance	24
The Catholic Church.	29
Disciples of Christ / Churches of Christ	32
Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council	33
Member churches of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative	
Council	34
World Convention of Churches of Christ	33
Evangelical churches.	34
World Evangelical Alliance	35
National member fellowships of the World Evangelical Alliance	36
Friends (Quakers)	39
Friends World Committee for Consultation	40
Member yearly meetings of the Friends World Committee	
for Consultation	40
Holiness churches	41
Member churches of the Christian Holiness Partnership	43
Lutheran churches.	43
Lutheran World Federation	44
Member churches of the Lutheran World Federation.	45
International Lutheran Council	45
Member churches of the International Lutheran Council. . . .	48
Mennonite churches.	49
Mennonite World Conference	50
Member churches of the Mennonite World Conference	50

IV A HANDBOOK OF CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

Methodist churches	53
World Methodist Council	53
Member churches of the World Methodist Council	54
Moravian churches	56
Moravian Unity Board	56
Member churches of the Moravian Unity Board	57
Old-Catholic churches	57
International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference	58
Member churches of the International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference	58
Orthodox Church (Eastern)	59
Eastern Orthodox churches	60
Orthodox churches (Oriental)	61
Churches belonging to the Oriental Orthodox family.	62
Pentecostal churches	63
Pentecostal World Fellowship	64
Reformed churches	65
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	66
Member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches	67
Reformed Ecumenical Council	66
Member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Council	72
Salvation Army.	73
Territories and Commands of the Salvation Army.	74
Seventh-day Adventist Church	75
United and Uniting churches	76
List of United and Uniting churches	78
Comparative Table I Christian World Communions / World Council of Churches	80
Comparative Table II Christian World Communions / World Council of Churches	81
Global Mission Communions.	82
Community of Churches in Mission - Cevaa	82
Member churches of Cevaa	83
Council for World Mission.	84
Member churches of the Council for World Mission	85
United Evangelical Mission	86
Member churches of the United Evangelical Mission	87

Part II Regional and National

Regional and National Councils and Conferences of Churches	91
Africa	97
Map of Africa	98

All Africa Conference of Churches	99
Member churches of the All Africa Conference of Churches. . .	100
Organization of African Instituted Churches	103
Member churches of the Organization of African Instituted Churches	104
Sub-regional Fellowships of Councils and Churches	109
Countries – Councils of churches – WCC member churches in Africa	110
Asia	223
Map of Asia	224
Christian Conference of Asia	225
Member churches of the Christian Conference of Asia.	226
South Asian Council of Churches.	228
Countries – Councils of churches – WCC member churches in Asia .	228
Caribbean	313
Map of the Caribbean.	314
Caribbean Conference of Churches	315
Member churches of the Caribbean Conference of Churches .	316
Countries – Councils of churches – WCC member churches in the Caribbean.	317
Europe	339
Map of Europe.	340
Conference of European Churches	341
Member churches of the Conference of European Churches .	342
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - Leuvenberg Fellowship	345
Member churches of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe	346
Council of Christian Churches of an African Approach in Europe. . .	348
Member churches of the Council of Christian Churches of an African Approach in Europe	349
Conference of Protestant Churches in Latin Countries of Europe . . .	351
Conference of Churches on the Rhine	351
Countries – Councils of churches – WCC member churches in Europe	352
Latin America	481
Map of Latin America	482
Latin American Council of Churches	483
Member churches of the Latin American Council of Churches.	484
Latin American Evangelical Pentecostal Commission.	487
Member churches of the Latin American Evangelical Pentecostal Commission	488
Countries – Councils of churches – WCC member churches in Latin America	489

VI A HANDBOOK OF CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

Middle East	523
Map of the Middle East	524
Middle East Council of Churches	525
Member churches of the Middle East Council of Churches	526
Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches	527
Member churches of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches	528
Countries – WCC member churches in the Middle East	528
North America	545
Map of North America	546
Countries – Councils of churches – WCC member churches in North America	547
Pacific	581
Map of the Pacific	582
Pacific Conference of Churches	583
Member churches of the Pacific Conference of Churches	584
Countries – Councils of churches – WCC member churches in the Pacific	585
Alphabetical Index of Part I	611
Index of Countries and Territories	612
Index of National / Christian / Ecumenical Councils / Federations of Churches	614
Index of Sub-regional Fellowships / Conferences / Councils	617
Index of Regional Ecumenical Organizations / Church Bodies	618
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	619

Foreword

It has often been said – and rightly so – that the World Council of Churches is first and foremost a fellowship of churches. This book, *A Handbook of Churches and Councils – Profiles of Ecumenical Relationships*, is a vivid illustration of that reality. The descriptions, lists, statistical data and other information presented in these pages give a striking picture of the extent and diversity of this community whose members are united by the confession that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and Saviour and by the resolve to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (in the words of the Basis of the WCC). The fellowship ranges from the smallest church – the Disciples of Christ in Argentina, with 700 faithful – to the largest – the Russian Orthodox Church, with 164 million members. It encompasses a Christian population of some 590 million people, in close to 150 countries in all regions of the world. It is comprised of over 520,000 local congregations served by some 493,000 pastors and priests, as well as countless elders, teachers, members of parish councils and others who take part daily in building the Body of Christ and in witnessing to the world, locally and globally.

The book that is before you is not simply a handbook of the member churches of the WCC. The Council is not a fellowship standing on its own. At all levels – global, regional and sub-regional, national and local – member churches interact with other churches which, for various reasons, are not formally part of the Council's membership. The closer one comes to the local context of the churches, the broader this range becomes. The Catholic Church, which is not a member of the WCC, and Pentecostal churches making up less than 1 percent of membership within the WCC, participate – respectively – in 60 percent and close to 40 percent of existing national councils of churches. Many other churches that take part in the ecumenical movement without being members of the WCC appear on the lists of member churches of national councils and regional ecumenical organizations presented in this book. By combining in one volume all the conciliar and confessional bodies and their membership, *A Handbook of Churches and Councils – Profiles of Ecumenical Relationships* demonstrates concretely the reach of the ecumenical movement and also shows how much broader it is than the WCC alone. It serves to remind us that ownership of the movement rests not only with the WCC but with all the partners, and ultimately with God.

We are pleased that this book becomes available just before the Ninth Assembly of the WCC, in the midst of reflection on ecumenism in the 21st century, discussion on reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement, and the process of building up the Global Christian Forum. Together with the report *Mapping the Oikoumene* and the *Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, a comprehensive resource is at our disposal for the task ahead of us. Significantly, the survey of churches in ecumenical relationships fully confirms the conclusion of the mapping study that the greatest participation and membership in ecumenical structures is at the national level. It would seem that the national level is also the place where the greatest potential exists for moving beyond the present boundaries of the ecumenical movement.

VIII A HANDBOOK OF CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

I hope that this book will be used widely, and that it will contribute to nurturing, strengthening and expanding the relationships that bind us together, for the sake of our common participation in God's mission.

Samuel Kobia
General Secretary, World Council of Churches

Introduction

The purpose of this book is primarily to provide a comprehensive reference and source of information for those who labour daily in the churches and organizations that make up the ecumenical movement. It is hoped that, beyond that circle, the book will also serve all who have a passion for, or an interest in the movement. *A Handbook of Churches and Councils – Profiles of Ecumenical Relationships* replaces two earlier publications: the Handbook of WCC Member Churches, and the Directory of Christian Councils, both dating back to 1985.

The scope

The ecumenical movement has become much more complex than it was fifty, or even twenty, years ago. For this reason, the first matter to be considered when the project was launched in September 2004 was to define the scope of the book.

Firstly, it is a guide to churches, and to the conciliar and confessional bodies which are constituted by churches, nationally, regionally, and globally and with which the WCC is related. The latter implies that the book extends to a wider fellowship, beyond the constitutional membership of the WCC. On the other hand, it also means that a range of ecumenical organizations which are constituted otherwise than by churches, are not included. The decision to limit the content of the book is by no means a judgment on the role and importance of these other organizations in the ecumenical movement.

Secondly, addresses of churches and organizations, and names of persons holding leadership positions, have been left out. This information, which changes frequently, is available in the annually updated WCC Directory. Website addresses, on the other hand, are indicated, because they can provide rapid access to complementary information.

Thirdly, descriptive profiles are presented of the WCC member churches, and of the global and regional bodies, churches and groupings of churches. For reasons of space, the profiles of the sub-regional and national councils of churches are limited to the year of foundation, the basis of membership, and the list of member churches and organizations.

Fourthly, brief profiles have been included of the countries and territories where WCC member churches are located, but not of all countries where member churches may be present through their diaspora, migrant communities, or otherwise.

WCC membership

Membership in the World Council of Churches is by *church*, not by confession or country or any other consideration. Normally the member churches of the WCC are listed in alphabetical order according to their names in the English language. For pragmatic reasons, the listing is done per region in the eight geographical regions which are commonly used in the ecumenical movement: Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America and the Pacific. The presentation of the WCC member churches in this book follows the same regional division. In order to be able to combine the presentation of the churches with that of the national councils of churches (or similar national ecumenical

bodies) and the country profiles in one volume, the format of sub-division per country (in some cases territory) has been chosen for this publication. It offers the advantage of clarity and is consistent with the distinction between the global, the regional (and sub-regional), national, and local levels of the ecumenical movement. This presentation does not imply any political judgment on the part of the WCC.

The number of WCC member churches at the time of publication of this book was 348¹. This number includes eight of the territorial churches in Germany, which upon their request were granted membership in their own right by the central committee of the WCC in 1950, alongside the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which is a founding member. These eight churches, all Lutheran, are still counted separately. In practice, all the 23 territorial churches are equally represented in the WCC by the EKD; their profiles are presented in this book. Other examples of membership through one national body are the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, with 24 cantonal and two other churches, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India, with 11 churches spread over the country, and the Moravian Church in Tanzania with four provinces. Several member churches represent two in one, e.g. the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria which is composed of a Lutheran and a Reformed church, the Reformed Church in Romania, which is formed by two autonomous districts, the Moravian Church in America with two provinces, etc. The latest case in 2005 was that of the British and the European Continental provinces of the Moravian church, which applied for, and were granted joint membership as Moravian Church British Province and EFBU (these two have still their individual profiles in this book). The WCC encourages joint or grouped membership.

The number of countries and territories in which WCC member churches were located in 2005 is 121. This number is based on the addresses of the head offices of the churches. On the basis of the information surveyed for this book, it can be estimated that WCC member churches are present in close to 150 countries.

Two Parts

The book is made up of two parts: Part I, which contains information on global church bodies and major ecclesial traditions and groupings of churches; and Part II, in which regional church bodies, sub-regional fellowships or councils of churches, national councils of churches (or similar national bodies), and WCC member churches, are presented per region and per country or territory within the region. The description of each conciliar or confessional church body is followed by the list of its member churches (and where applicable, member organizations). Within these lists, the churches that are member churches of the WCC or indirectly part of the WCC membership, are indicated in *italics*. By indirect membership is meant churches which belong to a wider ecclesial or denominational structure, which is a member of the WCC, and is headquartered in a country different from the country where the church in question is located. Examples are the Orthodox dioceses or archdioceses in the diaspora, Anglican dioceses in some countries, the United Methodist churches in several countries other than the USA, etc.; the list is longer than these cases only. WCC member churches marked with an asterisk were associate member churches at the time of publication of this book. National coun-

¹ Of these, 36 were associate member churches according to the Rules of the WCC at the time when this book was published. Proposed amendments to the Rules which would eliminate associate membership and create a new category are to be decided upon by the Ninth Assembly in February 2006.

cils of churches (or similar national bodies) preceded by an asterisk are councils in association with the WCC, a status which may be granted by the central committee of the WCC if applied for by a national council or similar body.

Descriptions and data

As far as possible, the descriptions of the churches and the regional and global bodies are those offered and/or reviewed by these churches and organizations themselves. A simple and same format was proposed to all. Many of the profiles are entirely new, others are revised or updated versions of the descriptions in the 1985 Handbook. Descriptions that were too long have been summarized in order not to exceed one page; others have been supplemented with information taken from additional sources, e.g. websites or handbooks of Christian World Communions. This explains to some extent the variations in length and nature of the profiles. Some of the descriptions may reflect differing views of the history and life of the churches, e.g. between churches of the same tradition or in the same country, or between churches that have had a missionary relationship.

Statistics of church membership, number of churches, congregations, pastors, etc., are those given by the churches and organizations, unless otherwise indicated. WCC member churches have various ways of defining their membership: state churches in which virtually every citizen is baptized and thus counted as a member, churches which include in their membership persons who are baptized but not actively participating, churches in which only adult baptized or communicant members are counted, etc. No attempt has been made to classify the membership figures in such categories, because agreed upon indicators to do so do not exist. Where available, information on international membership of churches which are present in more than one country or continent has been added.

The information on sub-regional and national conciliar church bodies has also been collected from the organizations concerned, supplemented in some cases with data from other sources. Not all councils of churches have a theologically formulated membership basis. Where applicable, it is therefore replaced by a mission statement or short summary of objectives. There is no precise record of all the national councils of churches and equivalent bodies in the world, nor a definition that would make it possible to establish such a list. The number of 122 recorded in this book does not prejudice the existence of several more which could be included. The same applies to the seven sub-regional fellowships, conferences and councils.

Country profiles and statistics

The country profiles are intended to provide some background and context for the descriptions of the churches. They are all more or less of the same format, comprised of a few statistical data, some historical and factual information, and some church-related indications. These profiles should be read in conjunction with those of the churches in the country.

The following sources for the statistics have been used throughout, unless mentioned otherwise:

Population	World Christian Database (projections for 2005)
Gross National Income per capita in US \$	World Bank Atlas Method (2004)
Classification	United Nations World Economic and Social Survey, 2004
Religions	WCC Prayer Cycle
Christianity	World Christian Database (projections for 2005).

XII A HANDBOOK OF CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

The WCC does not endorse any particular source of statistical information. The statistics of the World Christian Database (WCD) may in some cases not correspond with the membership figures provided by the churches, or with statistical information that may be obtained from other sources. Most of the queries received during the survey for the book suggested that the projections tended to be high. For reasons of consistency, the option has been to use this one source rather than several. The WCD is probably the most comprehensive global statistical resource on Christianity presently available². It groups churches and affiliated Christians in six "mega-blocks": Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Independent and Marginal. Pentecostals and Evangelicals are included under Protestant if they are organized in denominations, under Independent if they are non-denominational. The classification of the WCD takes into account the occurrence of double affiliation, particularly in countries where there is one large majority church.

Evangelical and Pentecostal relations.

At the early stage of the project of this book there was an expectation that it might comprise also information on Pentecostal and Evangelical relations. The survey has proven that more time and research would be required to achieve such a purpose, and it may well be that the time was not yet ripe for it. However, the book does contain a number of indications. In the country profiles there is, where applicable, a mention of the national evangelical body affiliated with the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). The full list of national affiliates of the WEA, and information on Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and their global organizations, are provided in Part I. The lists of member churches of national and regional councils and conferences show a significant number of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches involved in ecumenical relationships. A paragraph in the opening section of Part II highlights some data illustrating this phenomenon.

How to use this book

The Table of Contents provides an overall view of the mass of information contained in the book, and the way it is presented.

To look up a particular member church of the WCC of which the user knows the name in English, the quickest is to consult the list of member churches in Part I and refer to the page as indicated. If the precise name is not known, but the user knows the country, the quickest is to look up the page in the index of countries and territories in the final section of the book, and go through the descriptions listed under that country.

The same applies for national councils of churches and equivalent bodies. The index of national / Christian / ecumenical councils and federations / fellowships of churches is placed in the final section of the book. An index of regional ecumenical organizations / church bodies, and another one of sub-regional fellowships / conferences / councils, provides for easy reference to these categories.

For general information on global church bodies / groupings of churches / confessional families, Christian World Communions, and global mission communions, Part I should be consulted. An alphabetical index of Part I is available in the final section of the book.

² The World Christian Database is the online and updated version of the 2001 World Christian Encyclopedia of Barrett, Kurian and Johnson.

Maps

At the beginning of each regional section there is a map of the region concerned. In addition, maps are also included of Germany and Indonesia, to facilitate the geographical location of the member churches in these two countries.

Tables

In Part I, two tables on page 14 present the distribution of WCC member churches by church family and by region. On pages 80 and 81, two comparative tables provide some statistical insight on the overlap of membership between the World Council of Churches and Christian World Communions.

* * *

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the cooperation of a great number of people in the churches, councils and other church bodies related to the World Council of Churches. They are too many to be mentioned here by name, and I would run the risk of momentarily neglecting some of them. My sincere thanks go to all who have contributed to making available the necessary information and data. It has been an exciting exercise, but also time-consuming, and at times a difficult and frustrating one, not only for me but certainly also for those on whom I depended to get the descriptions, statistics, lists etc. My frequent and insistent reminders may have exasperated more than one of them. In some cases, there was no other way than to solicit the assistance of an intermediary whom I knew and who could establish the necessary contact. In expressing my gratitude to all these friends who responded to my calls for help, I would like to name two in particular: Mr Toesmoyo of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia who was extremely efficient in helping to reach the churches in the remote areas of his country, and Ms Angharad Malama Toma of the WCC office in Suva, Fiji, who collected precious information on the churches and councils in the Pacific.

The process of producing this book has shown once more the paramount importance of a reliable address system for the churches and councils. Many of the difficulties encountered were due to the fact that telephone and fax numbers, email addresses and names of persons in offices were not correct or not up-to-date. One can only guess how much harm this causes to communication between the WCC and its constituency. It is essential that the churches and councils inform the WCC promptly of changes in their addresses and leadership, and that the WCC ensure the up-to-date recording of these data. Another lesson to be drawn is the potential of email and internet for the exchange of information and communication. More than 90 percent of the correspondence in preparation for the book has been by email, and a considerable amount of information has been gathered from the web. This would seem to indicate that a more immediate and direct form of communication between the leadership of the WCC and of the churches, councils and other church bodies is now within reach.

Besides offering basic information, another purpose of this book has been to provide the user with a concise overview of the main ecclesial traditions that make

up contemporary Christianity, as well as a summary of the history and development of national and regional councils and conferences of churches. I would like to acknowledge with much appreciation the cooperation of the secretaries of the Christian World Communions, who have responded readily to the request for a presentation of their respective church families and organizations. May I be allowed to mention in particular the Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi for his assistance with the introduction to the Christian World Communions, Bishop Brian Farrell for the article on the Catholic Church, Rev. Fr Benedict Ioannou and Dr Despina Prassas for the presentation of the Eastern Orthodox Church, His Holiness Aram I for permitting me to use one of his books for the description of the Oriental Orthodox churches, Dr Gilbert Stafford of the Church of God (Anderson) University for the contribution on the Holiness tradition, Dr Cecil M. Robeck of Fuller Theological Seminary for the article on Pentecostal churches, and Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director of the World Evangelical Alliance for his help with the presentation of Evangelical churches. My deep appreciation goes also to Dr Diane Kessler who wrote part of the introduction on regional and national councils, and helped to review this chapter. I would also like to express my thanks to the general secretaries of the Regional Ecumenical Organizations, who reviewed the profiles of their respective organizations.

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It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with the WCC communication staff: Alexander Belopopsky and Yannick Provost who have supported and accompanied the project from the beginning, Joan Cambitsis and Theodore Gill who have provided their technical know-how, and not to forget Libby Visinand who has done all the proofreading. My thanks also go to the colleagues in the office of Church and Ecumenical Relations, Teny Pirri-Simonian and Luzia Wehrle, who among other things helped to make much-needed funds available. The editing of this book has been for me a particularly gratifying enterprise. It has been an opportunity to pay back my debt to the WCC, which has enabled me over more than a quarter of a century to benefit from a wealth of personal relationships with churches in all parts of the world. There could have been no better way to use and share it. I hope it will be for the benefit of many.

Huibert van Beek

Part I

GLOBAL

World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is to promote a united Christian voice and witness in the world.

Purpose

The WCC understands itself as a fellowship of churches, and from the outset the search for the visible unity of the churches has been at the heart of the WCC. The constitutional purpose of the fellowship of churches in WCC is "to call one another to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe."

At the founding assembly of the WCC in 1948 a brief Basis was accepted, stating the ground on which the churches were able to join and stay together in the WCC. The Basis was later extended to include references to the scriptures, the Trinity and the common calling of the churches. Since 1961 it reads:

"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

Member churches

As a council of churches, the WCC is a body made up of autonomous member churches, most of them organized at the national level of their country, which have made a free choice to join the Council. The WCC has no authority over its member churches and can make no decision that is binding for them. In the words of Archbishop Temple, one of the ecumenical pioneers, "any authority that it may have will consist in the weight it carries with the churches by its wisdom".

In 2005, the WCC had a membership of 348 member churches which together claimed 592 million Christian members in more than 120 countries. WCC member churches include nearly all the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches; Anglicans; diverse Protestant churches, including Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist, and a broad representation of united and independent churches. While most of the WCC's founding churches were European and North American, today the majority are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific.

The largest Christian church, the Catholic Church, is not a member of the WCC, but has worked closely with the Council for decades and sends observers to all major WCC meetings. A Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC has been functioning since 1965. It celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2005. The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity nominates twelve members to the WCC's Faith and Order Commission as full members. Catholic missionary organizations are represented on the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. A Catholic staff person is assigned to the WCC team on Mission and Ecumenical Formation, and a Catholic teacher is on

the staff of the Ecumenical Institute Bossey; both are appointed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

History and origins

Historically, the origins of the modern ecumenical movement can be traced back to the world missionary conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Out of this event grew the “Faith and Order” and “Life and Work” movements which were inspired by individuals who had a vision of unity and cooperation. In 1920 the Patriarch of Constantinople issued an encyclical calling upon all the churches in the world to join in a League of Christian Churches. In the 1930s the leaders of Faith and Order and Life and Work together developed the plan to form a world body for Christian unity.

The founding assembly of the WCC was initially planned for 1941 but had to be postponed because of the war. In 1948 the representatives of 147 churches came together in Amsterdam and founded the WCC.

Other bodies subsequently merged with WCC: the International Missionary Council in 1961, and the World Council of Christian Education, with its roots in the 18th-century Sunday School movement, in 1971.

Programmatic activity

The WCC works with its member churches in a variety of programme initiatives, ranging from theological study to ecumenical education, from conflict resolution to inter-religious dialogue and communication.

For its member churches, the WCC is a unique space: one in which they can reflect, speak, act, worship and work together, challenge and support each other, share and debate with each other. As members of this fellowship, WCC member churches:

- are called to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship;
- promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism;
- engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation; and
- foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service.

Organization

Delegates sent by the member churches meet every seven years in an assembly, which elects a presidium of eight presidents, and a 150-member central committee that governs between assemblies. A smaller executive committee, and a moderator and two vice-moderators are elected by the central committee. A variety of other advisory bodies and commissions report to the central committee.

From its inception, the WCC has celebrated the following assemblies, each one under a specific theme reflecting the ecumenical thinking of the time:

Amsterdam (Netherlands)	1948	<i>Man's Disorder and God's Design</i>
Evanston (USA)	1954	<i>Christ – the Hope of the World</i>
New Delhi (India)	1961	<i>Jesus Christ – the Light of the World</i>
Uppsala (Sweden)	1968	<i>Behold, I make all things new</i>
Nairobi (Kenya)	1975	<i>Jesus Christ Frees and Unites</i>
Vancouver (Canada)	1983	<i>Jesus Christ – the Life of the World</i>
Canberra (Australia)	1991	<i>Come Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation</i>

Harare (Zimbabwe)	1998	<i>Turn to God – Rejoice in Hope</i>
Porto Alegre (Brazil)	2006	<i>God, in your Grace, Transform the World</i>

New perspectives

Both the Christian world and the WCC are changing. The majority of Christians are now located in the global South. New forms of ecumenical commitment and spirituality are emerging; young people are finding their own expressions of ecumenism and church; amidst the multiplicity of ecumenical bodies, the WCC is redirecting its energies to doing what it does best and is uniquely equipped to do.

The WCC shares the legacy of the one ecumenical movement and the responsibility to keep it alive. The Council's role is to address global ecumenical issues and act as a trustee for the inner coherence of the movement.

The churches that make up the World Council live in remarkably different social conditions. Their members speak an array of languages. Their distinctive histories produce different styles of worship and forms of organization and governance. It is this diversity that makes the WCC an exciting and challenging forum. Historic tensions and differences sometimes persist – and new difficulties can come to the surface – yet the fundamental commitment remains to build unity and cooperation among the churches, "that the world may believe".

The WCC maintains its headquarters in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. It has an office in New York, and a few programmatic offices in other regions.

Website: www.wcc-coe.org

Member churches of the World Council of Churches

Africa

Africa Inland Church – Sudan	203
African Christian Church and Schools, Kenya	156
African Church of the Holy Spirit*, Kenya	157
African Israel Nineveh Church, Kenya	157
African Protestant Church*, Cameroon	121
Anglican Church of Kenya	158
Anglican Church of Tanzania	207
Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda	186
Association of Reformed Evangelical Churches of Burkina Faso*.	118
Church of Christ – Harrist Mission (Harrist Church), Côte d'Ivoire	153
Church of Christ – Light of the Holy Spirit, DRC.	134
Church of Christ in Congo – Anglican Community of Congo, DRC	128
Church of Christ in Congo – Baptist Community of Congo, DRC	129
Church of Christ in Congo – Community of Disciples of Christ, DRC	129
Church of Christ in Congo – Evangelical Community of Congo, DRC	130
Church of Christ in Congo – Mennonite Community in Congo, DRC	131
Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Congo, DRC	131
Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, DRC	132
Church of Christ in Congo – Protestant Baptist Church in Africa / Episcopal Baptist Community in Africa, DRC	133
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar	168
Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by his Messenger Simon Kimbangu, DRC.	135
Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).	179
Church of the Brethren in Nigeria	180
Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide, Nigeria	180
Church of the Province of Central Africa, Malawi	171
Church of the Province of Southern Africa, South Africa	193
Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean, Madagascar	167
Church of the Province of Uganda	213
Church of the Province of West Africa, Ghana	146
Council of African Instituted Churches, South Africa	193
Episcopal Church of the Sudan.	204
Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church	139
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	140
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church	142
Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola	113
Evangelical Church of Cameroon	122
Evangelical Church of Gabon.	143
Evangelical Church of the Congo, Republic of Congo	126
Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola.	113
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo, DRC	136
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia.	176
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, South Africa	194
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	208
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia	177
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe	218
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana	147

Evangelical Pentecostal Mission of Angola.	114
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa.	195
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo.	211
Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana.	148
Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola.	115
Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church*	159
Lesotho Evangelical Church	163
Lutheran Church in Liberia	165
Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar	169
Methodist Church in Kenya	160
Methodist Church in Zimbabwe	219
Methodist Church Nigeria	181
Methodist Church of Southern Africa, South Africa.	196
Methodist Church of Togo	211
Methodist Church Sierra Leone	190
Methodist Church, Ghana	149
Moravian Church in South Africa	197
Moravian Church in Tanzania.	209
Native Baptist Church of Cameroon	123
Nigerian Baptist Convention	182
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon	124
Presbyterian Church in Rwanda	187
Presbyterian Church of Africa, South Africa	198
Presbyterian Church of Cameroon	124
Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya	161
Presbyterian Church of Ghana	150
Presbyterian Church of Liberia*	165
Presbyterian Church of Mozambique*	174
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria	183
Presbyterian Church of the Sudan	204
Protestant Church of Algeria*	111
Protestant Evangelical Church of Guinea	151
Protestant Methodist Church of Benin.	116
Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi.	120
Province of the Episcopal Church in Rwanda	188
Reformed Church in Zambia	215
Reformed Church in Zimbabwe	220
Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria	184
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea*	138
The African Church, Nigeria	184
Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon	125
United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe	220
United Church of Zambia.	216
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, South Africa.	199
United Evangelical Church " Anglican Communion in Angola", Angola ¹	115
United Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire.	153
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, South Africa	200
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, South Africa.	200

¹ This church has become the Angola Diocese of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa.

Asia

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia	229
Anglican Church in Japan	280
Anglican Church of Australia	235
Anglican Church of Korea	284
Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand	230
Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha	239
Baptist Union of New Zealand	231
Batak Christian Community Church (GPKB)*, Indonesia	260
Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention*, India	250
China Christian Council	242
Christian Church of Central Sulawesi (GKST), Indonesia	261
Christian Church of Sumba (GKS), Indonesia	261
Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM), Indonesia	261
Christian Evangelical Church in Sangihe Talaud (GMIST), Indonesia	262
Christian Protestant Angkola Church (GKPA), Indonesia	263
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI)	264
Church of Bangladesh*	240
Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka	307
Church of Christ in Thailand	309
Church of North India	250
Church of Pakistan	296
Church of South India	251
Church of the Province of Myanmar	292
Churches of Christ in Australia	236
Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches	299
East Java Christian Church (GKJW), Indonesia	264
Episcopal Church in the Philippines	300
Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera, Indonesia	265
Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua, Indonesia	266
Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines	300
Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China	244
Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)	267
Indonesian Christian Church (HKI)	267
Javanese Christian Churches (GKJ), Indonesia	268
Kalimantan Evangelical Church (GKE), Indonesia	268
Karo Batak Protestant Church (GBKP), Indonesia	269
Korean Christian Church in Japan*	281
Korean Methodist Church	284
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India	251
Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, India	253
Mara Evangelical Church*, Myanmar	292
Methodist Church in India	254
Methodist Church in Indonesia	270
Methodist Church in Malaysia	289
Methodist Church in Singapore*	305
Methodist Church of New Zealand	232
Methodist Church Sri Lanka	308
Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar	293
Myanmar Baptist Convention	293

Nias Protestant Christian Church (BNKP), Indonesia	271
Orthodox Church in Japan	281
Pasundan Christian Church (GKP), Indonesia	272
Philippine Independent Church	301
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan	246
Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea	285
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand	233
Presbyterian Church of Korea	287
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan	297
Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP), Indonesia	272
Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB)*, Indonesia	273
Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI)	274
Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS), Malaysia	290
Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi, Indonesia	275
Protestant Church in the Moluccas (GPM), Indonesia	275
Protestant Church in Timor Lorosa'e	311
Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB)	276
Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT), Indonesia	277
Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches, India	255
Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS), Indonesia	277
Toraja Church, Indonesia	278
United Church of Christ in Japan	282
United Church of Christ in the Philippines	302
United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India	255
UELCI – Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church	
UELCI – Arcot Lutheran Church	
UELCI – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh	
UELCI – Evangelical Lutheran Church in The Himalayan States	
UELCI – Good Samaritan Evangelical Lutheran Church	
UELCI – Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur	
UELCI – India Evangelical Lutheran Church	
UELCI – Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church	
UELCI – Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	
UELCI – South Andhra Lutheran Church	
UELCI – Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church	
Uniting Church in Australia	237
Caribbean	
Baptist Convention of Haiti	327
Church in the Province of the West Indies	320
Jamaica Baptist Union	329
Methodist Church in Cuba*	323
Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas	318
Methodist Church of Porto Rico*	334
Moravian Church in Jamaica	330
Moravian Church in Suriname	336
Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province	318
Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago	338
Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba*	324
United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands	330

United Protestant Church*, Netherlands Antilles	333
Europe	
Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Etchmiadzin)	354
Baptist Union of Denmark	367
Baptist Union of Great Britain	468
Baptist Union of Hungary	405
Catholic Diocese of the Old-Catholics in Germany	383
Church in Wales	475
Church of England	470
Church of Greece	401
Church of Ireland	411
Church of Norway	427
Church of Scotland	478
Church of Sweden	457
Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine , France	377
Czechoslovak Hussite Church	363
Ecumenical Patriarchate, Turkey	468
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church	370
Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy*	413
Evangelical Church in Germany	385
EKD – Bremen Evangelical Church	386
EKD – Church of Lippe	387
EKD – Evangelical Church in Baden	387
EKD – Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz .	388
EKD – Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau	389
EKD – Evangelical Church in Rhineland	389
EKD – Evangelical Church of Anhalt	390
EKD – Evangelical Church of Kurhessen Waldeck	390
EKD – Evangelical Church of the Palatinate	391
EKD – Evangelical Church of the Province of Saxony (see below)	397
EKD – Evangelical Church of Westphalia	391
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	392
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick	392
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg	393
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia (see below)	397
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg	393
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover	394
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg	395
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony	395
EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe	396
EKD – Evangelical Reformed Church in Northwestern Germany	396
EKD – North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church	398
EKD – Pomeranian Evangelical Church	399
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren	364
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria . .	357
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland	430
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania	439
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia	449

These two churches form together the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Middle Germany

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark	368
Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania	438
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	373
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France	378
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland	408
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia	417
Evangelical Methodist Church of Italy	414
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal*	435
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches	460
Greek Evangelical Church	403
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad, Germany.	
Lusitanian Church of Portugal*	436
Lutheran Church in Hungary	405
Mennonite Church in Germany	400
Mennonite Church in the Netherlands.	422
Methodist Church, UK	472
Methodist Church in Ireland	412
Mission Covenant Church of Sweden	458
Moravian Church British Province and EFBU	384 and 469
Old-Catholic Church of Austria.	358
Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland	462
Old-Catholic Church of the Netherlands.	423
Old-Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland	431
Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania	353
Orthodox Church of Finland	374
Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia	450
Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland	431
Polish Catholic Church in Poland.	433
Presbyterian Church of Wales	476
Protestant Church in the Netherlands	424
Reformed Christian Church in Serbia and Montenegro	445
Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia	451
Reformed Church in Hungary	406
Reformed Church in Romania	440
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine, France	379
Reformed Church of France	379
Remonstrant Brotherhood, Netherlands	425
Romanian Orthodox Church	441
Russian Orthodox Church	443
Scottish Episcopal Church	479
Serbian Orthodox Church	446
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic	365
Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia & Montenegro	447
Spanish Evangelical Church.	453
Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church*	454
Union of Welsh Independents, UK	477
United Free Church of Scotland	480
United Protestant Church of Belgium	360

United Reformed Church, UK	473
Waldensian Church, Italy	415

Latin America

Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America	492
Association The Church of God*, Argentina	492
Baptist Association of El Salvador*	512
Baptist Convention of Nicaragua	515
Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church*	498
Christian Biblical Church*, Argentina	493
Christian Reformed Church of Brazil	501
Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil	501
Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil	502
Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ in Argentina*	494
Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Argentina	494
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile	506
Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia*	499
Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina	496
Free Pentecostal Missions Church of Chile	507
Methodist Church in Brazil	503
Methodist Church in Uruguay*	521
Methodist Church of Chile*	507
Methodist Church of Mexico	514
Methodist Church of Peru*	519
Moravian Church in Nicaragua	516
Pentecostal Church of Chile	508
Pentecostal Mission Church, Chile	509
Presbyterian Church of Colombia*	511
Salvadorean Lutheran Synod*	513
United Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Argentina	496
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil*	504

Middle East

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)	538
Church of Cyprus	529
Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt	530
Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East	536
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran	534
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile	532
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa	533
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East	541
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem	535
National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon	539
Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East	542
Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East	540

North America

African Methodist Episcopal Church	555
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	556
American Baptist Churches in the USA	557
Anglican Church of Canada	548

Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends	549
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA	558
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada.	549
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, USA	559
Church of the Brethren, USA	560
Episcopal Church in the USA	561
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad, Canada.	550
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	562
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	550
Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East	563
Hungarian Reformed Church in America	565
International Council of Community Churches, USA	565
International Evangelical Church, USA	566
Moravian Church in America	567
National Baptist Convention of America	567
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.	569
Orthodox Church in America	570
Polish National Catholic Church, USA	571
Presbyterian Church (USA)	572
Presbyterian Church in Canada.	551
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., USA	573
Reformed Church in America.	575
Religious Society of Friends – Friends General Conference, USA	576
Religious Society of Friends – Friends United Meeting, USA	576
United Church of Canada	552
United Church of Christ, USA	577
United Methodist Church, USA	578
Pacific	
Church of Melanesia	603
Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa	586
Congregational Christian Church in Samoa	600
Congregational Christian Church of Niue	596
Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu	607
Cook Islands Christian Church	587
Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles	594
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea.	598
Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga)	606
Kiribati Protestant Church	592
Maohi Protestant Church	591
Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma	589
Methodist Church of Samoa	602
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu	609
United Church in Papua New Guinea	599
United Church in Solomon Islands	604
United Church of Christ – Congregational in the Marshall Islands	593

WCC member churches by church family*

Church family	Total member churches	Number of member churches %	Number of member membership	Total church membership %
African Instituted	9	2,6%	26,703,129	4,5%
Anglican	32	9,2%	78,003,190	13,2%
Baptist	25	7,2%	22,969,780	3,9%
Disciples	6	1,7%	1,518,306	<1%
Free church	17	4,9%	1,546,063	<1%
Lutheran	54	15,5%	59,656,695	10,1%
Methodist	38	10,9%	24,716,554	4,2%
Old Catholic	5	1,4%	82,621	<1%
Orthodox (Eastern)	15	4,3%	214,204,830	36,2%
Orthodox (Oriental)	7	2%	65,694,642	11,1%
Pentecostal	7	2%	281,600	<1%
Reformed	97	27,8%	40,444,865	6,8%
United & Uniting	28	8%	32,811,114	5,5%

Churches which are not included in any of the above families:

Assyrian	1	<1%	323,300	<1%
Hussite	1	<1%	102,000	<1%
Independent	3	<1%	6,059,000	1%
Mar Thoma	1	<1%	1,061,940	<1%
Non-denominational	1	<1%	108,806	<1%
Post-denominational	1	<1%	16,000,000	2,7%
Total	348	100%	592,288,435	100%

*Based on the statistics provided by the member churches for the purpose of this book.

WCC member churches by region*

Region	Total member churches	Number of member churches %	Total church membership	Total church membership %
Africa	93	27%	165,628,446	28%
Asia	74	21%	60,380,595	10%
Caribbean	13	4%	1,359,172	<1%
Europe	81	23%	292,094,184	49%
Latin America	27	8%	4,436,083	<1%
Middle East	12	3%	15,315,800	3%
North America	31	9%	50,570,380	8%
Pacific	17	5%	2,503,775	<1%
Total	348	100%	592,288,435	100%

*Based on the statistics provided by the member churches for the purpose of this book.

Note: the statistics per region include the international membership of churches which have their head office (Patriarchate for the Orthodox churches) in another region inasmuch as such data have been made available by the churches (e.g. the statistics for Latin America include the diaspora of five Orthodox churches, and dioceses of the Episcopal Church USA).

Global Christian Forum

The proposal for a Global Christian Forum emerged in 1998 in the context of the process of reflection on the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC. The Global Christian Forum seeks to offer new opportunities for broadening and deepening encounters. It is especially intended to promote new relationships between and among Christian constituencies which have not been in conversation with one another. The range of Christian churches and organizations invited to participate in the Global Christian Forum includes both those who have engaged in existing ecumenical relationships, and those that are part of evangelical, pentecostal, and other constituencies. The Global Christian Forum aims at bringing together the widest possible range of Christian traditions.

The provisional purpose statement of the Global Christian Forum reads: *"To create an open space wherein representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and interchurch organizations, which confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as perfect in His divinity and humanity, can gather to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges."*

In the spirit of John 17:21 "that all of them may be one so that the world may believe that you have sent me" and because of our faith in a reconciling God (2 Cor. 5:18-21) a forum could pursue the following:

- Deepen our commitment to God's word and mission in the world;*
- Enhance our understanding of contemporary expressions of Christian mission;*
- Pursue principles and practices that enable us to deal freely, responsibly and peaceably with our Christian differences and distinctive qualities;*
- Engage in theological reflection in areas of mutual concern;*
- Strengthen the wholeness of the church by encouraging communication and cooperation; and*
- Foster relationships that may lead to common witness."*

The first meeting on the Forum proposal took place in 1998, at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, near Geneva, Switzerland. Further meetings have been held in 2000 and 2002, at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, USA, in 2004 in Hong Kong, China SAR (Asia Consultation), and in 2005 in Lusaka, Zambia (Africa Consultation). Two more regional meetings have been scheduled to take place in 2006 (Europe and Latin America). The process of consultation will lead to a global Forum "event" which is scheduled to take place in the second half of 2007. This event should include all the main traditions of the Christian family, and be representative of leadership at a significant level. It should promote Christian unity.

The consultation process of the Global Christian Forum is under the responsibility of a continuation committee composed of representatives of various Christian traditions and organizations. The Global Christian Forum is not meant to become another international Christian institution. There is no organizational structure except for a small secretariat, based near Geneva, Switzerland.

The Global Christian Forum is not a membership organization. Participants in the process are churches from many Christian traditions: African Instituted, Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Disciples, Evangelical, Friends (Quakers), Holiness, Lutheran,

Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian, Non- and Post-denominational, Old-Catholic, Orthodox (Eastern and Oriental), Pentecostal, Reformed, Salvation Army, Seventh-day Adventist, United and Uniting (through organized Christian World Communions where applicable); regional and national councils of churches, evangelical fellowships or associations, pentecostal organizations; international ecumenical and para-church organizations; World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Roman Catholic Church), World Evangelical Alliance, etc.

Christian World Communions

"Christian World Communions" (CWCs) is the term commonly used to describe the globally organized churches or groupings (families) of churches with common theological and historical roots, confessions, or structure. This definition itself demonstrates the fact that there are different kinds of Christian world communions. The term came into common use only around 1979. Other terms used in the past to name these groupings were even less adequate in describing the families of church groupings. They include "world confessional church groups", "world confessional groups", "world confessional bodies" and "world confessional families".

Each Christian world communion consists of churches belonging to the same tradition and held together by a common heritage; they are conscious of living in the same universal fellowship and give to this consciousness at least some structured visible expression. They may or may not be tied to particular creeds or confessions. The forms of "structured visible expressions" of confessional organizations vary greatly. One Christian world communion has many employees and a large annual budget. Several have small staffs and moderate budgets. Some have origins which precede the modern ecumenical movement by several decades. Others were formed or assumed their present level of activities since the World Council of Churches was officially founded in 1948. Their fields of interest can be quite varied. However, they form linkages that strengthen the common witness in their churches in areas such as mission and evangelism, justice and service and promoting Christian unity.

Since 1957, with a few exceptions (1960, 1961, and 1975), the conference of secretaries of Christian world communions has met annually. It usually gathers the general secretaries of these bodies for fellowship and comparing notes together. In some years, they have also been able to discuss various mutual concerns including bilateral dialogues, the relationships between Bible societies and the CWCs, religious liberty and human rights, and the CWCs' commitment to the future of the ecumenical movement.

The annual meetings usually gather representatives of the following: The Anglican Communion, Baptist World Alliance, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, The Ecumenical Patriarchate (Eastern Orthodox), General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference, Lutheran World Federation, Mennonite World Conference, Moravian Church Worldwide Unity Board, The Moscow Patriarchate (Eastern Orthodox), Pentecostals, The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church), Reformed Ecumenical Council, The Salvation Army, Friends World Committee for Consultation, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, World Convention of Churches of Christ, World Evangelical Fellowship, and the World Methodist Council. The World Council of Churches is usually represented at the meetings.

Even in their totality, the Christian world communions do not represent all branches of Christianity. At least three groups of churches in particular exist outside a worldwide Christian world communions framework: the Oriental Orthodox churches, the independent or indigenous churches, especially in Africa, the united and uniting churches which came into existence from the 1920s onwards.

Varied as they are in their structure and purpose, the Christian world communions are very much alive and must be seen in their relationship with the ecumenical movement. In their beginnings they were in fact the principal existing forms of the ecumenical movement, giving the members of their churches a new consciousness of universality through an understanding of the worldwide dimensions of their own fellowships. Many of their leaders participated in the formation of the World Council of Churches and from 1948 until today have held positions of leadership in it.

In the past, in some quarters, Christian world communions have been viewed as antithetical to ecumenical engagement. Often this has been done by labelling Christian world communions as promoting confessionalism or denominationalism at the expense of promoting Christian unity. This is rather shortsighted. In fact, many Christian world communions are key ecumenical organs and have supported the World Council of Churches in its role as the privileged ecumenical organization. This was recognized as early as the second assembly of WCC in 1954 where, in a report to the assembly in Evanston, Illinois, USA, the then central committee stated: "It may be noted with satisfaction that almost all world confessional associations have gone on record wishing to support the ecumenical movement, and it is suggested that the General Secretary shall arrange for informal consultations from time to time with three or four representatives from each association, to discuss the implementation of that desire and other common problems."²

Almost thirty years later, the sixth assembly of the WCC (Vancouver, 1983) recognized the ecumenical importance of the CWCs and of the conference of secretaries of CWCs as partners in the quest for the full visible unity of the church, and encouraged the development of closer collaboration between the WCC and the CWCs. It recommended that both should pursue the task of seeking clarity as to the goal of the unity which Christians seek within the one ecumenical movement, and in identifying steps and possibilities in achieving that goal. It also expressed the hope that a new series of ad hoc meetings of the Forum on Bilateral Conversations would be held, and made the specific request that attention be given to the reception of the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* text and to its relations to the bilateral dialogues among CWCs. The question of the relationship between the three concepts of unity – "organic unity", "conciliar fellowship" and "reconciled diversity" – remains crucial.

These 1983 affirmations built upon earlier efforts to address some questions which were beginning to emerge vis-à-vis the relationship between the WCC and Christian world communions as well as questions related to how younger churches in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific could move beyond denominationalism to ecumenical engagement. The Nairobi WCC assembly (1975), for example, made a number of proposals aimed at both the WCC and CWCs finding "a constructive and complementary way of contributing to the advance of the ecumenical movement".³

A major contribution of Christian world communions to Christian unity has been the theological bilateral dialogues. Several CWCs have come to some significant agreed statements that have removed some historical suspicions and condemnations. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches for example has developed close relations with Lutherans and Disciples of Christ, and come to some significant

² The Evanston Report, 1954, pp. 184-85.

³ Breaking Barriers: Nairobi 1975. Geneva, WCC, pp. 196-98.

agreed positions with Roman Catholics and Anabaptists as a result of these dialogues. The Joint Declaration on Justification signed by Lutherans and Roman Catholics is a major result of such bilateral dialogues.

In 1974, the Christian world communions conference of secretaries welcomed an initiative of the WCC Faith and Order commission to hold forums to reflect on the dialogues. This was confirmed by the 1975 WCC assembly in Nairobi. Eight such forums were held between 1978 and 2001 with the participation of representatives of Christian world communions. Such forums have provided space for reflection on results and reception of the dialogues at national, regional and global levels and helped to assess their impact on the quest for Christian unity.

As the ecumenical family searches for new models of ecumenical engagement and inter-church collaboration, Christian world communions have often worked within different processes to further this cause. Since 1997, they have been actively engaged in the global Christian forum process. In recent years CWCs have also discussed among themselves and participated in processes related to the call for a reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement.

Churches, Christian World Communions, and Groupings of Churches

In the following pages, brief informative descriptions are presented of the major ecclesial traditions and groupings of churches which exist within Christianity. Most of these, but not all, are part of the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions. Where applicable, information is added on the global organization of the grouping of churches concerned, as well as the list of member churches of the organization. The descriptions are in alphabetical order. In the words of the Toronto Statement⁴: “this presentation is not based on any one particular conception of the Church. It does not prejudice the ecclesiological problem.”

Anglican churches

Deriving from the ancient Celtic and Saxon churches of the British Isles, Anglicanism found its distinctive identity in the 16th- and 17th-century Reformation, when the separate Church of England, Church of Ireland and Scottish Episcopal Church came into being. At the time of the American revolution, an independent Episcopal church was founded in the United States, and later Anglican or Episcopal churches were founded across the globe as a result of the missionary movements of the 18th and 19th centuries. Many of these were given autonomy as provinces in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. In South Asia, the United churches, formed between Anglican and several Protestant traditions, also joined the Anglican communion, as did smaller churches elsewhere such as the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church and the Lusitanian Church of Portugal.

Anglican and Episcopal churches uphold and proclaim the Catholic and Apostolic faith, proclaimed in the scriptures, interpreted in the light of tradition and reason. Following the teachings of Jesus Christ, Anglicans and Episcopalians are committed to the proclamation of the good news of the gospel to all creation. The faith and ministry have been expressed through the Book of Common Prayer, received and adapted by local churches, in the services of ordination (the ordinal), and in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, expounded at the missionary conference in Chicago in 1886, and adopted by the Lambeth conference of 1888. The quadrilateral sets out four essential elements of the Christian faith:

1. The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as “containing all things necessary to salvation”, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
2. The Apostles’ Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
3. The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – baptism and the supper of the Lord – ministered with the unfailing use of Christ’s words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him;
4. The historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his church.

Central to Anglican worship is the celebration of the holy eucharist (also called the holy communion, the Lord’s supper or the mass). In this offering of prayer and

⁴ *The Church, the Churches, and the World Council of Churches*. WCC Central Committee, Toronto, 1950.

praise, the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ are made a present reality through the proclamation of the word, and the celebration of the sacrament. Anglicans and Episcopalians celebrate the sacrament of baptism, with water, in the name of the Trinity, as the rite of entry into the Christian church, and celebrate other sacramental rites, including confirmation, reconciliation, marriage, anointing of the sick and ordination. Common worship is at the heart of Anglicanism. The various books of common prayer give expression to a comprehensiveness found within the churches, which seek to chart a *via media* in relation to other Christian traditions.

The churches of the Anglican Communion are held together by bonds of affection and common loyalty, expressed through links with the "instruments of communion":

The Archbishop of Canterbury

They are all in communion with the see of Canterbury, and thus the archbishop of Canterbury, in person and ministry, is the unique focus of Anglican unity. The archbishop calls the Lambeth conference, and primates' meeting, and is president of the Anglican Consultative Council, the three conciliar instruments of communion. The 104th archbishop of Canterbury in succession to Saint Augustine, Dr Rowan Williams, was enthroned in February 2003.

The Lambeth conference

Every ten years or so, the archbishop of Canterbury invites the bishops of the Anglican Communion to join with him in prayer, study and discernment. At the last Lambeth conference in 1998, over 700 bishops were welcomed to the conference which was held in Canterbury.

The Primates' meeting

Since 1979, the archbishop of Canterbury has also invited the senior bishop, archbishop or moderator (the primates) of each of the thirty-four provinces and four united churches, to join him in regular meetings for consultation, prayer and reflection on theological, social and international matters. These meetings take place approximately every eighteen months to two years.

The Anglican Consultative Council

In 1968, the bishops of the Lambeth conference requested the establishment of a body representative of all sections (bishops, clergy and laity) of the churches, which could coordinate aspects of international Anglican ecumenical and mission work. With the consent of the legislative bodies of all the provinces, the Anglican Consultative Council was established in 1969, and has met regularly since.

The Anglican Communion consists of an estimated 80 million Christians who are members of 44 different churches. These make up 34 provinces, four united churches, and six smaller churches, spread across the globe. Of these, 29 provinces and 7 churches are members of the WCC. The Anglican Consultative Council has a permanent secretariat, the Anglican Communion office, based in London, which also serves the other instruments of communion. The secretariat is responsible for organizing all meetings of the conciliar instruments of communion, as well as the commissions and networks of the communion.

Periodical: *Anglican Episcopal World*

Website: www.anglicancommunion.org

Member provinces and churches of the Anglican Communion

Africa

Anglican Church of Kenya
Anglican Church of Tanzania
Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Church of the Province of Central Africa
Church of the Province of Southern Africa
Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean
Church of the Province of West Africa
Church of the Province of Uganda
Episcopal Church of the Sudan
Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi
Province of the Anglican Church of Congo
Province of the Episcopal Church in Rwanda

Asia

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia
Anglican Church in Japan
Anglican Church of Australia
Anglican Church of Korea
Church of Bangladesh (United)
Church of Ceylon (E-P to the Archbishop of Canterbury)
Church of North India (United)
Church of Pakistan (United)
Church of South India (United)
Church of the Province of Myanmar
Church of the Province of South East Asia
Episcopal Church in the Philippines
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

Caribbean

Church in the Province of the West Indies
Episcopal Church of Cuba

Europe

Church in Wales
Church of England
Church of Ireland
Falkland Islands (E-P to Canterbury)
Lusitanian Church (E-P to the Archbishop of Canterbury)
Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain (E-P to the Archbishop of Canterbury)
Scottish Episcopal Church

Latin America

Anglican Church of Central America
Anglican Church of Mexico
Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America
Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil

Middle East

Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East

North America

Anglican Church of Canada

Bermuda (E-P to Canterbury)

Episcopal Church in the USA

Pacific

Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea

Church of the Province of Melanesia

Note: E-P: Extra-Provincial

In addition to the above listed churches which are in communion with the see of Canterbury, there are a number of other smaller churches which derive from the same heritage, but which, for a variety of reasons usually originating in doctrinal dispute, are not members of the Anglican Communion, but which describe themselves as "Anglican" or "Episcopal". These may either be limited to one locality, such as the "Church of England in South Africa", or may be a global fellowship, such as the "Traditional Anglican Communion".

Baptist churches

The modern Baptist Church was founded in The Netherlands in 1609 by John Smyth, a clergyman who had broken away from the Church of England. He maintained that the church should receive its members by baptism after they had consciously acknowledged their faith and, since a child is unable to do this, he opposed infant baptism. Some of his followers established a Baptist church in London in 1612, its pastor being Thomas Helwys, who believed in religious toleration for all men and women, including atheists and pagans as well as Christians.

The spread of Baptist churches was greatly influenced by the revival movements during the following two centuries. In 1891 the General and the Particular Baptists were united in the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. The Baptists are the largest denomination in the USA. There are significant Baptist communities in India, Myanmar, Brazil, Nigeria, Great Britain, Romania and the Ukraine. But it is a world church, and Baptists witness in many other countries of the world as well.

Interpreting the New Testament, Baptists stress that the church as the body of Christ is a communion of the faithful who have personally and voluntarily made a decision for Christ, and because of their personal confession of faith become, through baptism, members of Christ's church. Baptists recognize only the Bible (no creed) as binding authority. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit each church may interpret the scriptures and design the life of its community. The pronounced congregational constitution does not allow for a centralized church structure but promotes unions and conventions of individual churches.

The **Baptist World Alliance** is a voluntary association among Baptists in unions and conventions of churches. The preamble of its constitution reads: "The Baptist World Alliance, extending over every part of the world, exists as an expression of the essential oneness of Baptist people in the Lord Jesus Christ, to impart inspiration to the brotherhood, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and cooperation among its members; but this Alliance may in no way interfere with the independence of the churches or assume the administrative functions of existing organizations."

The first Baptist world congress was held in London in 1905. The BWA holds a world congress every five years. The BWA celebrated its centennial and 19th con-

gress in Birmingham, England in July, 2005. An annual meeting of the general council governs the Alliance between congresses. The Baptist World Alliance is supported by its member conventions and unions, as well as local churches and individuals. The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest and more conservative Baptist group in the world, withdrew from the BWA in 2004 and does not participate in ecumenical organizations. Its 16 million adult members constitute the largest Protestant church in the USA. There are other Baptists who belong to churches which are not members of the Alliance. On the other hand, there are four African American Baptist conventions totalling about 15 million, three of which are members of the WCC and ecumenical participants.

The BWA has study commissions working on various concerns, themes and programmes. Religious freedom and human rights are great concerns of the BWA. The decade, 2000-2010, has been designated "Decade for Racial and Ethnic Harmony". The majority of African Americans is Baptist and has included outstanding leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. The BWA offices are in Falls Church, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, DC.

The BWA is organized in six regional fellowships: the All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF), the Asian Baptist Federation (ABF), the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF), the European Baptist Federation (EBF), the North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF), and the Union of Baptists in Latin America (UBLA).

The Baptist World Alliance has 211 member conventions/unions, with a total membership of 35 million baptized believers, representing a worshipping community of over 100 million Christians (Baptists do not count children as members). Twenty-five of the 211 member bodies are members of the WCC, which represents a total of 60 percent of the BWA constituency.

Periodical: *Baptist World Magazine*

Website: www.bwanet.org

Member churches of the Baptist World Alliance

Africa

Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola

Baptist Convention of Angola

Free Baptist Church in Angola

Union of Protestant Baptist Churches in Benin

Baptist Convention of Botswana

Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Burkina Faso

Union of Baptist Churches in Burundi

Cameroon Baptist Convention

Native Baptist Church of Cameroon

Baptist Church of Cameroon

Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon

Association of Baptist Churches of the Central African Republic

Fraternal Union of Baptist Churches (CAR)

Community of United Baptist Churches (DRC)

Baptist Community of the Congo River (DRC)

Baptist Community of Western Congo (DRC)

Baptist Community in the Centre of Africa (DRC)

Autonomous Baptist Community Wamba-Bakali (DRC)

Community of Baptist Churches in Eastern Congo (DRC)

Community of Baptist Churches in North Congo (DRC)
 Community of United Baptist Churches (DRC)
 Union of Baptist Churches in Congo (DRC)
 Southern Evangelical Churches (Côte d'Ivoire)
 Baptist Evangelical Association of Ethiopia
 Baptist Union in the Gambia
 Ghana Baptist Convention
 Baptist Convention of Kenya
 Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Inc.
 Association of Bible Baptist Churches in Madagascar
 African Baptist Assembly, Malawi, Inc.
 Baptist Convention of Malawi
 Evangelical Baptist Church of Malawi
 Baptist Convention of Mozambique
 Baptist Convention of Namibia
 Mambilla Baptist Convention (Nigeria)
Nigerian Baptist Convention
Association of Baptist Churches of Rwanda
 Union of Baptist Churches of Rwanda
 Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone
 Baptist Association of South Africa
 Baptist Convention of South Africa
 Baptist Mission of South Africa
 Baptist Union of Southern Africa
 Sudan Interior Church
 Sudan Interior Church, South
 Baptist Convention of Tanzania
 Togo Baptist Convention
 Baptist Union of Uganda
 Baptist Convention of Zambia
 Baptist Union of Zambia
 Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe
 Baptist Union of Zimbabwe
 National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe
 United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe

Asia

Baptist Union of Australia
Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha
 Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship
 Garo Baptist Convention (Bangladesh)
 Cambodia (Khmer) Baptist Convention
 Baptist Convention of Hong Kong
 Assam Baptist Convention (India)
 Baptist Church of Mizoram (India)
 Baptist Union of North India
 Bengal Baptist Union (India)
 Bengal Orissa Bihar Baptist Churches Association (India)
Bengal Orissa Bihar Baptist Convention (India)
 Convention of Baptist Churches of the Northern Circars (India)

Council of Baptist Churches in Northern India
 Evangelical Baptist Convention of India
 Garo Baptist Convention (India)
 India Association of General Baptists
 Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention (India)
 Karnataka Baptist Convention (India)
 Lower Assam Baptist Union (India)
 Maharastra Baptist Society (India)
 Manipur Baptist Convention (India)
 Nagaland Baptist Church Council (India)
 North Bank Baptist Christian Association (India)
 Orissa Baptist Evangelical Crusade (India)
Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches (India)
 Tripura Baptist Christian Union of India
 Convention of Indonesian Baptist Churches
 Fellowship of Baptist Churches in Irian Jaya
 Union of Indonesian Baptist Churches
 Japan Baptist Conference
 Japan Baptist Convention
 Japan Baptist Union
 Okinawa Baptist Convention (Japan)
 Korea Baptist Convention
 Macau Baptist Association
 Malaysia Baptist Convention
Myanmar Baptist Convention
 Self Supporting Kayin Baptist Mission Society (Myanmar)
 Nepal Baptist Church Council
Baptist Union of New Zealand
 Baptist Conference of the Philippines, Inc.
Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc
 Convention of Visayas and Mindanao of Southern Baptist Churches (Philippines)
 General Baptist Church of the Philippines, Inc.
 Luzon Convention of Southern Baptist Churches, Inc.
 Singapore Baptist Convention
 Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya (Union)
 Chinese Baptist Convention (Taiwan)
12th Pakh (District) Church of Christ in Thailand
 Thailand Baptist Convention
 Thailand Karen Baptist Convention
 Thailand Lahu Baptist Convention

Caribbean

Antigua Barbuda Baptist Association
 National Baptist Missionary & Education Convention (Bahamas)
 Barbados Baptist Convention
 Baptist Association of Belize
 Bermuda Baptist Fellowship
 Baptist Convention of Western Cuba
 Baptist Convention of Eastern Cuba
 Fellowship of Baptist Churches in Cuba

Free Baptist Convention of Cuba
 Dominican Baptist Convention
 Baptist Convention of Guyana
Baptist Convention of Haiti
 Baptist Haiti Mission
Jamaica Baptist Union
 Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago

Europe

Union of Evangelical Christians – Baptists of Armenia
 Baptist Union of Austria
 Union of Evangelical Christians – Baptists of Azerbaijan
 Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists in the Republic of Belarus
 Union of Baptists in Belgium
 Baptist Church in Bosnia/Herzegovina
 Baptist Union of Bulgaria
 Baptist Union of Croatia
 Baptist Union in the Czech Republic
Baptist Union of Denmark
 Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia
 Finland Swedish Baptist Union
 Finnish Baptist Union (Finnish speaking)
 Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches of France
 Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia
 International Baptist Convention (English speaking) (Germany)
 Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany (Baptists)
Baptist Union of Hungary
Baptist Evangelical Christian Union of Italy
 Union of Evangelical Christians Baptists in Kazakhstan
 Union of Evangelical Christians Baptists of Kyrgyzstan
 Union of Baptist Churches in Latvia
 Baptist Union of Lithuania
 Union of Christian Evangelical Baptist Churches of Moldova
 Union of Baptist Churches in the Netherlands
 Baptist Union of Norway
 Baptist Union of Poland
 Portuguese Baptist Convention
 Baptist Union of R.S. Romania
 Convention of the Hungarian Baptist Churches of Romania
 Euro-Asiatic Federation of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists
 Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Russia
 Baptist Union of Serbia and Montenegro
 Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists in Serbia and Montenegro
 Baptist Union of Slovakia
 Union of Baptist Churches in Slovenia
 Spanish Evangelical Baptist Union
 Baptist Union of Sweden
 Union of Baptist Churches in Switzerland
 All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christian Baptists
 Brotherhood of Independent Baptist Churches and Ministries of Ukraine

Baptist Union of Great Britain

Baptist Union of Scotland

Baptist Union of Wales

Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Middle Asia (Uzbekistan)

Latin America

Argentina Evangelical Baptist Convention

Baptist Convention of Bolivia

Bolivian Baptist Union

Brazilian Baptist Convention

National Baptist Convention (Brazil)

Convention of Baptist Churches of the Chilean Mission

Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile

Colombian Baptist Denomination

Baptist Convention of Costa Rica

National Union of Baptist Churches (Costa Rica)

Baptist Convention of Ecuador

Baptist Association of El Salvador

Federation of Baptists in El Salvador

Convention of Baptist Churches in Guatemala

National Convention of Baptist Churches in Honduras

National Baptist Convention of Mexico

Baptist Convention of Nicaragua

Baptist Convention of Panama

Evangelical Baptist Convention of Paraguay

Baptist Evangelical Convention of Peru

Baptist Evangelical Convention of Uruguay

National Baptist Convention of Venezuela

Middle East

Egyptian Baptist Convention

Association of Baptist Churches in Israel

Jordan Baptist Convention

Lebanese Baptist Convention

Baptist Convention of Syria

North America

Canadian Baptist Ministries

Canadian Convention of Southern Baptist Churches

American Baptist Churches USA

Baptist General Conference (USA)

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (USA)

Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of the USA and Canada

General Association of General Baptists USA)

Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, USA

National Baptist Convention of America (USA)

National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

National Missionary Baptist Convention of America

North American Baptist Conference

Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc (USA)

Russian-Ukraine Evangelical Baptist Union, USA, Inc.

Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, USA and Canada
 Union of Latvian Baptists in America

Pacific

Fiji Baptist Convention

Baptist Union of Papua New Guinea

The Catholic Church

Catholics believe that the church was founded by Jesus Christ as part of the Father's plan for the salvation of the world. Christ's proclamation and inauguration of the kingdom of God led to the gathering of disciples. His death, resurrection and sending of the Holy Spirit definitively established the church, with which he promised to remain until the end of time (cf. Matt. 28:20). Jesus entrusted to this community the mission of preaching the gospel and of "making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

Because the church is, in God's hands, a means of bringing about the communion of all those who, with the help of God's grace, would accept the proclamation of the good news, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) taught that the church "is in the nature of a sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, paragraph 1). This constitution goes on to affirm that the whole community has an active role to play in proclaiming and handing on God's word, in worshipping and celebrating the sacraments and in serving the mission Jesus entrusted to it. As such, the church is a prophetic, priestly and kingly people (cf. *Lumen gentium* 9-13). Her source and summit are found in the celebration of the banquet of the kingdom, the eucharist (cf. *Lumen gentium* 10), which Jesus entrusted to his disciples at the last supper on the evening before his death. In the eucharist, through the power of the Holy Spirit the one sacrifice of Christ is made present, and the community is transformed into Christ's Body and is enabled to continue his saving mission.

Thus while Catholics see the church as deeply rooted in the will and saving action of God, guided by the Holy Spirit and led by Jesus Christ her head, they also recognize that the community of the faithful is marked by shadows and failures, as is shown by the many efforts at reform which have regularly arisen in the history of the church. Reforms have been initiated by church leaders at various levels of ecclesial order, even at the highest levels, such as in ecumenical councils; they have also been inspired by charismatic individuals or groups whom the Holy Spirit raised up within the church to promote deeper conversion throughout the community as a whole.

The word "catholic" is one of the four qualities attributed to the church in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. It suggests a certain "inclusiveness", a holding together of communities, traits or ideas which need not and should not be separated because they are rooted in one and the same apostolic faith. Catholicity implies that diversity is not only to be tolerated but to be welcomed as a gift of God's abundant goodness. One expression of this within the Catholic Church is the variety of states of life and vocations in which the baptized laity, the ordained ministers and those persons who have professed the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, all in their respective ways, are called to discipleship (cf. *Lumen gentium*

18-38 and 43-47). The call to holiness is universal and common to all; at the same time it can take innumerable forms within the specific conditions of each individual life (cf. *Lumen gentium* 39-42).

This impetus to embrace the whole characterizes too the church's interaction with cultures; the languages, art and music of various peoples are considered ground into which the seed of the gospel is sown. The Catholic view of ecclesial communion maintains that, ultimately, no cultural, linguistic, historical, racial or other similar factor is of such importance that it should break the bonds of communion which hold together the body of Christ.

What are these bonds? They may be briefly summarized under the categories of faith, sacramental life and ministerial service. Faith is a defining element of Christian community, and the Catholic Church holds that the greatest care is needed not only in proclaiming the word of God which gives rise to faith (cf. Rom. 10:14-17) but in being watchful that the revealed truth is faithfully transmitted and that believers are informed about doctrinal or moral developments which are not in harmony with it. Catholics believe that the *magisterium* or teaching office of the church, exercised by the bishops in union with the bishop of Rome, is assisted by the Holy Spirit so that it will not fail to proclaim the truth handed down from the apostles and to guide the people of God with the authority of Christ. The *magisterium* is not above the word of God, but seeks to listen to it, conserve it, and understand it in greater depth and apply it to the existential questions which face contemporary human beings. In every age, the Catholic Church has seen the emergence of various "schools of theology"; outstanding thinkers have left an impressive heritage which provides fertile ground for continued theological reflection today on the sources of revealed truth as found in scripture and Tradition. Catholics believe that the whole prophetic people of God is graced with the anointing of the Spirit which gives believers a supernatural sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*), equipping them to understand the word of God and to apply it in life.

The Catholic Church has developed a rich liturgical and sacramental tradition. Seven sacraments – baptism, confirmation, eucharist, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, ordination and marriage – provide moments in which an intense experience of grace is unfailingly possible for the properly disposed recipient. Catholics believe that, while their form and practice have undergone development, the sacraments ultimately find their origin in the ministry and command of Jesus himself and derive their efficacy from the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection. The celebration of the sacraments is intimately related to the overall spiritual life of the priestly people of God (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9), called to mature in holiness after the image of Jesus by increasing in love for God and neighbour. In keeping with the faith and practice of the patristic period, Catholics see the essential apostolicity of ministry as conveyed through ordination by bishops whose own ordinations stand in a line of apostolic succession going back ultimately to the earliest Christian communities. Ordained ministry must be exercised as a service, a sacramental means by which Christ the prophet, priest and shepherd continues to guide his people. For Catholics, the selection of the twelve by Jesus himself and the special role played by Peter within that group, provide the point of departure for the development of the ministries of bishop and pope, which are considered essential and necessary for the church. From these roots, and by means of a process guided by the Holy Spirit, the ministry of bishops in succession to the apostles soon took the form which it fundamentally retains to the present day, with bishops leading the various local churches throughout the world and supporting one another in a way

that has served the well-being not only of the communities assigned to each of them but also that of the "catholic" unity of the church as a whole.

Within this collegial and conciliar interaction between local churches and their bishops, the bishop of Rome, that city where Peter offered the final witness of his faith as a martyr, has a special duty to serve unity, in a way analogous to the role played by the apostle Peter in the New Testament. The contours of the "Petrine ministry" of the bishop of Rome, whom Catholics consider to be the successor of Peter, would develop in the course of time, but its specific purpose of serving the unity of the whole community is needed and willed by God not only for the first generation of the church's life but for its entire history. This service to universal unity can and has taken various forms. In light of the improved relations between divided Christian communities and the common search for unity, Pope John Paul II asked Christians not presently in full communion with the Catholic Church to seek – together, of course – the forms in which this ministry may accomplish a service of love recognized by all concerned (cf. Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*, 95).

After decades of caution concerning the modern ecumenical movement, the Catholic Church, particularly through the Second Vatican Council, acknowledged that it is the Holy Spirit who has inspired contemporary efforts to arrive at greater Christian unity. The council set forth the ecclesiological basis for Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement by affirming that the many elements of sanctification and truth found in varying degrees in various Christian communities separated from one another constitute degrees of real, though imperfect, communion.

The Catholic Church sees the ecumenical movement as a multidimensional effort – through common prayer, witness, theological dialogue, promotion of the kingdom of God and any other suitable activities – to journey from that partial communion which now exists to the full communion which can one day be celebrated in a common eucharist. The council claimed that the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, professed in the creed, "subsists in" the Catholic Church (*Lumen gentium* 8). By this phrase, the council wanted frankly to express the Catholic conviction that the fullness of the means of salvation with which Christ wished to endow his church can be found only in the Catholic Church. At the same time, by not simply equating Christ's church with the Catholic Church, the council intended to recognize the ecclesial nature and quality of other Christian communities, which the Holy Spirit employs as means for salvation. Catholics believe that the current divisions between Christians do not correspond to the will of Jesus Christ and hamper the more fruitful carrying out of the mission he has entrusted to the church: to make disciples of all nations. Therefore, greater unity must be sought. Not to do so is to contradict the will of Jesus Christ, the head of the church.

According to the Vatican's *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae* of 2005, the Catholic Church numbered 1,085,557,000 persons, or 17.2 percent of the world's population. Of these, 13.2 percent of Catholics live in Africa, 49.8 percent in North and South America; 10.5 percent in Asia, 25.7 percent in Europe and 0.8 percent in Oceania.

Website: www.vatican.va

Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ

The family of churches known as Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ grew out of an early 19th century movement with origins in both the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The movement in the United Kingdom can be traced back to congregations formed in the second half of the 18th century, some of which were amongst those that came together in the first "cooperative" meeting of British Churches of Christ congregations in 1842. The movement in the United States focused around three major leaders, in particular Barton W. Stone and Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Barton Stone was a Presbyterian minister who organized a revival in 1801 which is considered a significant milestone in the religious history of the USA. The experience led him to withdraw from the Presbyterian synod of Kentucky in 1803 and then in 1804 (reflecting the desire to be "simply Christian") to establish the "Christian Church".

Thomas Campbell, also a Presbyterian Minister, came to the United States in 1807 from Ireland. In 1809, because of what he saw as the scandal of Christian division, he formed the Christian Association of Washington (PA) and published a classic document on Christian unity – *"The Declaration and Address"*. His son Alexander Campbell became an advocate of these ideals and soon took the lead in the developing reform movement. Attempts to continue to work with the Presbyterians failed and the reformers reluctantly formed their congregation at Brush Run, Pennsylvania, into a separate church in 1811. An attempt to work with the Baptists over the next two decades also failed and by 1830 these "Disciples" were a separate group.

In 1824 Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell met. Their movements came together in 1832 and a period of definition and consolidation for this united movement followed. The 19th century was a time of significant growth, and the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) became the fifth largest denomination in the United States.

The early leaders of the two movements believed that Christian unity is essential to the proclamation of the gospel and to the integrity of the church's witness in the world, and that its realization could be achieved through the restoration of the faith and order of the New Testament church. Their call was to return to the apostolic tradition of the earliest church, which they identified as the "ancient order of things". On the basis of the NT witness, many of the characteristic beliefs and practices of the church took shape and continue today: weekly celebration of the Lord's supper, baptism by immersion of believers confessing the faith, commitment to the priesthood of all believers in which lay and ordained share in the ministry of word and sacrament, self-governance of the congregation, and the proclamation of the gospel to the world.

The Disciples of Christ believe that the church is a sacramental community, a covenant fellowship brought into being by God's initiative of grace and sustained in its life by the Holy Spirit. Baptism and the Lord's supper are accepted as sacraments of the church, and are the primary elements in shaping the ethos and identity of the Disciples of Christ. Baptism marks entrance into membership in the church universal. Holy communion is the central act of each Sunday's worship service; the invitation is always to an "open table". Christ is present at each Lord's supper both in the elements as they are received and in the life of the community itself.

The movement of the Disciples of Christ, marked by its message of freedom, diversity, simplicity of worship and a reasonable faith, has spread from North Amer-

ica to Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, where it met with other groups holding similar beliefs, usually called "Churches of Christ". Through the missionary movement of the 19th century Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ communities have been established in several other parts of the world. Many of these have joined with other denominations to form united churches.

By 1906, congregations currently known in the United States as "Churches of Christ (a cappella)" had become a distinct group. Throughout the 20th century they have operated quite separately but there is currently a strong movement to embrace the wider church again. In the decades from the 1920s to the 1960s in the United States a further division occurred, culminating in the more ecumenical group restructuring as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with those not wishing to be a part of this denomination remaining as "independent" Christian Churches/Churches of Christ.

The Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ have two international bodies that serve different goals and that operate with different styles:

(1) In 1930 the first "**World Convention of Churches of Christ (WCCC)**" was held to provide this family with an informal gathering of individuals who would come together in an international convention (meeting every four years) for fellowship and sharing. Those attending a World Convention do not represent their churches in any official capacity, but come as individuals wishing to join other "family members" for fellowship, worship, understanding, and education. There are now more than 170 countries with congregations relating to its 19th century heritage and there is a vast network of links within the family.

Periodical: *ChristiaNet*

Website: www.worldconvention.org.

(2) A second international body is the **Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC)**, founded in 1979, as a council of member churches throughout the world from the Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ, together with United and Uniting Churches which Disciples have joined, who have taken official action to join the DECC in supporting its stated goals. The DECC was established to further and strengthen the common calling of Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ to visible unity and mission. It is not a legislative body, but is intended to enable the churches to consult with each other about matters of Christian faith, witness and unity. In particular the DECC seeks:

- to deepen the fellowship of Disciples with each other and with other churches on their way to the visible unity God wills for God's people;
- to facilitate relationships between its member churches and regional and international ecumenical bodies;
- to encourage participation in the ecumenical movement through joint theological study, international bilateral dialogues, church union conversations and other forms of ecumenical engagement and programmes of joint action and witness;
- to gather, share and evaluate information about Disciples' ecumenical activities in local, national and regional situations around the world, and to report on its own activities to member churches;
- to represent the worldwide fellowship of Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ in the wider ecumenical movement, including the appointment of official

representatives of Disciples, when invited to do so by ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches, other Christian World Communions (including the Catholic Church), regional ecumenical bodies, etc.

The DECC pledges itself not to undertake work separately which can be better done together with other churches and Christian World Communions. The DECC has 19 member churches, representing 4.5 million Christians throughout the world. Ten of the member churches are also members of the WCC.

Website: www.disciples.org/ccu

Member churches of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council

Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand

Associated Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe

Association Christian Evangelical Churches (Disciples of Christ) Mexico

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada

Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico

Church of Christ in Congo – Community of the Disciples of Christ

Church of Christ in Malawi

Church of Christ in the Philippines

Church of North India

Churches of Christ in Australia

Churches of Christ in Vanuatu

Disciples of Christ Church in Paraguay

Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ in Argentina

Fellowship of Churches of Christ in England

Ghana United Churches of Christ

United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

United Reformed Church (UK)

Evangelical churches

Luther used the term “evangelical” for all Christians who accepted the doctrine of *sola gratia*, which he saw as the heart of the gospel (*evangelion*). By 1700 the term had become in Europe a simple synonym for “Protestant” or, in German-speaking areas, “Lutheran”. In Britain, however, the expression “evangelical revival” seems to have been used from around 1750 for the religious awakening led by the Wesleys, and later, advocates of revival called themselves evangelicals. While in the 18th century the characteristics were personal piety, moral earnestness, and philanthropy, the features shifted gradually to the personal experience of redemption in Christ, social concern, and confessional orthodoxy. By the end of the 19th century the personal evangelical experience of conversion became central to all evangelical thought and action. Within the main Protestant churches (Reformed, Methodist, etc.), especially in the Anglophone world, oppositions and divisions began to crystallize around categories such as “liberal”, “conservative”, “evangelical” and “fundamentalist” in the first decades of the 20th century. The liberals were open to modernity and promoted the social gospel. The evangelicals resisted the liberal secularizing of Christ, defended the inerrancy of the Bible, and increasingly sought shelter in the fortress of fundamentalism.

It took until the middle of the 1940s before a “new evangelicalism” began to emerge, which was able to criticize fundamentalism for its theological paranoia and its separatism. Doctrinally, the new evangelicals confessed the infallibility of the Bible, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, vicarious atonement, the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, and the second coming of Christ. These are the theological characteristics which are shared by the majority of Evangelical churches today in the world. The other distinctive feature is the missional zeal for evangelism and obedience to the great commission (Mtt. 28:18-19). The shift away from fundamentalism offered opportunities to overcome the divisions with traditional Protestantism, but these were soon overshadowed by the ideological climate of the cold war in which “evangelical” became synonymous with “conservative” and “ecumenical” was equated with “left wing” or “progressive” (depending on the personal bias of the observer). More recently, evangelicals have taken conservative positions on moral issues, e.g., sexuality, abortion, euthanasia. While these labels and emphases are still powerful, many evangelicals are seeking to be defined on other important issues, such as poverty, socio-economic and racial justice, gender and human rights.

Evangelical churches have grown exponentially in the second half of the 20th century and continue to show great vitality, especially in the global South. This resurgence may in part be explained by the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism and the emergence of the charismatic movement (see under *Pentecostal Churches*), which are closely associated with evangelicalism. However, there can be no doubt that the evangelical tradition “per se” has become one of the major components of world Christianity. Evangelicals also constitute sizeable minorities in the traditional Protestant and Anglican churches. In regions like Africa and Latin America, the boundaries between “evangelical” and “mainline” are rapidly changing and giving way to new ecclesial realities.

At the global level, the Evangelical churches, groups and individuals are represented through the **World Evangelical Alliance**, formerly World Evangelical Fellowship, which was founded in 1951 (a first Evangelical Alliance was formed as early as 1846; it ceased to function after World War I, i.e. in the period marked by the rise of fundamentalism). The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) is made up of national and regional Evangelical Alliances or Fellowships, which exist in 123 countries in the world, and group together Evangelical churches, groups, organizations and sometimes individuals. The WEA understands itself as existing: “*To foster Christian unity and to provide a worldwide identity, voice and platform to Evangelical Christians. Seeking empowerment by the Holy Spirit, they extend the Kingdom of God by proclamation of the Gospel to all nations and by Christ-centered transformation within society*” (WEA Purpose Statement approved by the International Council, July, 2002). This purpose is carried out by: a) providing a framework to convene, catalyze, connect, and communicate an evangelical perspective on global issues in full obedience to both the great commandment and the great commission; b) establishing and strengthening regional and national evangelical movements; c) establishing commissions, and releasing the resources of member-bodies to address and meet the needs of the global church; and d) stimulating strategic partnerships in order to strengthen Christian witness and compassionate action in every nation.

The WEA Statement of Faith reads:

“We believe in the Holy Scriptures as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and

conduct... One God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit... Our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His mediatorial work, and His Personal return in power and glory... The Salvation of lost and sinful man through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit... The Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life, to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ... The Unity of the Spirit of all true believers, the Church, the Body of Christ... The Resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation."

The highest governing body of the WEA is the general assembly. It appoints an international council representative of the geographic regions of the WEA. The secretariat is lodged in an international service centre and led by an international coordinator/chief executive officer, who is assisted by an international leadership team. The WEA has commissions on missions, theology, evangelical theological education, religious liberty, women, and youth.

The regional members of the WEA are: the Association of Evangelicals of Africa (AEA), the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA), the Evangelical Association of the Caribbean (EAC), the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA), the Latin American Evangelical Fellowship (FIDE), the North American Council, and the Evangelical Fellowship of the South Pacific (EFSP).

The precise number of national evangelical alliances which constitute the WEA was 123 in 2005; these are estimated to embrace nearly 3 million local churches and 380 million Christians.

Website: www.worldangelicalalliance.com

National Member Fellowships of the World Evangelical Alliance

Africa

Evangelical Alliance of Angola
 Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions of Bénin
 Evangelical Fellowship of Botswana
 Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions of Burkina Faso
 Association of Central African Evangelical Churches
 Fellowship of Evangelical Churches and Missions in Chad
 Evangelical Federation of Ivory Coast
 Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia
 Evangelical Fellowship of the Gambia
 National Association of Evangelicals of Ghana
 Association of Evangelical Churches and Missions of Guinea
 Evangelical Church of Guinea-Bissau
 Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya
 Association of Evangelicals of Liberia
 Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi
 Fellowship of Christian Churches in Mauritius
 Association of Groupings of Protestant Evangelical Churches
 and Missions in Mali
 Evangelical Association of Mozambique
 Namibia Evangelical Fellowship

Nigeria Evangelical Fellowship
 Evangelical Alliance of Rwanda
 Evangelical Fellowship of Senegal
 Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone
 The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa
 Sudan Evangelical Christian Association
 Swaziland Conference of Churches
 Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
 Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
Special members: Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon,
 Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho,
 Tanzania and Uganda

Asia

Australian Evangelical Alliance
 National Christian Fellowship of Bangladesh
 Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia
 Evangelical Fellowship of India
 Evangelical Fellowship of Indonesia
 Japan Evangelical Association
 Korea Evangelical Fellowship
 National Evangelical Christian Fellowship Malaysia
 Myanmar Evangelical Christian Fellowship
 National Churches Fellowship of Nepal
 Vision Network of New Zealand
 Evangelical Fellowship of Pakistan
 Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches
 Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore
 Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka
 Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand

Caribbean

United Evangelical Association of Antigua & Barbuda
 Barbados Evangelical Association
 Dominica Association of Evangelical Churches
 Dominican Evangelical Fraternity (Dominican Republic)
 Guyana Evangelical Fellowship
 Council of Evangelical Churches of Haiti
 Jamaica Association of Evangelicals
 St Croix Evangelical Ministers Association
 St Kitts Evangelical Association
 Fellowship of Gospel Preaching Churches (St Lucia)
 Association of Evangelical Churches in St Vincent & the Grenadines
 Trinidad & Tobago Council of Evangelical Churches
 Caribbean Atlantic Regional Assembly of the Church of God
 Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies
 The Salvation Army Caribbean Territory

Europe

Albanian Evangelical Alliance
 Austrian Evangelical Alliance
 Evangelical Alliance Flanders (Belgium)

Francophone Evangelical Alliance of Belgium
Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance
Protestant Evangelical Council in Croatia
Czech Evangelical Alliance
Evangelical Alliance of Denmark
Estonian Evangelical Alliance
Finnish Committee for World Evangelization
French Evangelical Alliance
Alliance of Protestant and Evangelical Churches
(FYRO Macedonia)
German Evangelical Alliance
Evangelical Alliance of Greece
Hungarian Evangelical Alliance
Evangelical Alliance Ireland
Italian Evangelical Alliance
Evangelical Alliance of Kazakhstan
Latvian Evangelical Alliance
Evangelical Alliance of Luxemburg
Evangelical Alliance of the Netherlands
Evangelical Alliance of Norway
Polish Evangelical Alliance
Portuguese Evangelical Alliance
Romanian Evangelical Alliance
Evangelical Alliance Slovakia
Spanish Evangelical Alliance
Swedish Evangelical Alliance
Swiss Evangelical Alliance (German speaking)
Swiss Evangelical Alliance (French speaking)
The Alliance of Protestant Churches in Turkey
Evangelical Alliance of the United Kingdom
Serbian Evangelical Alliance

Latin America

Argentine Alliance of Evangelical Churches
National Association of Evangelicals of Bolivia
Brazil National Alliance
Brazilian Evangelical Association
Evangelical Fraternity of Chile
Evangelical Confederation of Colombia
Evangelical Alliance of Costa Rica
Evangelical Fraternity of El Salvador
Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala
Evangelical Fraternity of Honduras
Mexican Evangelical Fraternity
Panamanian Evangelical Fraternity
Association of Pastors of Paraguay
Christian Association of Evangelical Churches of Uruguay
Evangelical Council of Venezuela

Middle East

Cyprus Evangelical Alliance

The Fellowship of Evangelicals in Egypt
United Christian Council in Israel

North America

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
National Association of Evangelicals (USA)

Pacific

Evangelical Fellowship of Fiji
National Council of Evangelical Churches of Papua New Guinea
Samoa Evangelical Fellowship
South Sea Evangelical Church (Solomon Islands)
Tonga Evangelical Union

Friends (Quakers)

Quakers – also called Friends or the Religious Society of Friends – date their origins back to 1652 in north-west England and deem George Fox, an itinerant preacher, their founder. Together with other “seekers”, George Fox brought into the tumultuous times in Britain the message of the direct personal experience of God, informed by the scriptures, within a distinctly Christian framework. His theology was related to that of Anabaptist groups of the time, although the Quakers kept themselves distinct. This direct personal experience of the Holy Spirit has been characterized as “the Inner Light” or “that of God in everyone”. Following on the teachings of Jesus, the sense of the kingdom in the present, and the aversion to killing “that of God” in anyone, Quakers refused military service and are generally pacifists. They are one of the historic “peace churches”, along with Mennonites and Brethren. On behalf of Quakers world-wide, two Quaker organizations were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947, in recognition of international Quaker relief work.

Buoyed by a strong evangelical fervour, Quaker ministers (all unpaid) spread the Quaker message throughout Great Britain and Ireland, northern Europe, the British colonies in the Americas, and the Caribbean. In 1682, William Penn received a royal grant of a colony now known as Pennsylvania, and founded its capital, Philadelphia, which remains a centre of American liberal Quakerism. As Quakers in the colonies grew in numbers and moved westwards with the expansion of the USA, different influences affected both their faith and practice. Today there are four strands of Quakerism, which are evangelical, pastored, conservative, and liberal unprogrammed who worship in silent waiting. Each strand traces its roots back to George Fox and the early Quakers.

In the early 1900s, Quakers from America and Europe sent out missionaries to Latin America, Africa and India. Today the largest block of Quakers can be found in East Africa; they are pastored Friends. Evangelical Friends can be found in Central Africa, India, Peru, Bolivia, Taiwan and Central America. Liberal unprogrammed Friends predominate in Europe, Central and South Africa, and the north-eastern USA. The organization within the Religious Society of Friends – the usual denominational designation – begins with the local monthly meeting or church, which belongs to a wider gathering called Yearly Meeting. There are umbrella organizations known as Evangelical Friends International, Friends United Meeting (pastored tradition) and Friends General Conference (liberal unprogrammed tradition), which regroup several yearly meetings.

Founded in 1937 in response to a need for a place where Friends from the four traditions can relate to each other, the **Friends World Committee for Consultation** is composed of yearly meetings from around the world. Having no executive authority over its constituent yearly meetings, the FWCC aims both to promote a deeper understanding among Friends of different nations and faith traditions, and to represent Friends at world bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the Catholic Church, and the United Nations, where it holds general consultative status recognized by the Economic and Social Council. The office of the FWCC is in London.

The FWCC has 103 member yearly meetings, representing 368,000 Christians. The Friends United Meeting (28 Yearly Meetings) and the Friends General Conference (14 Yearly Meetings) in the USA, as well the Canadian Yearly Meeting are members of the WCC.

Periodical: *Friends World News*

Website: www.fwccworld.org

Member Yearly Meetings of the Friends World Committee for Consultation

Africa

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting
(Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia & Zimbabwe)

Burundi Yearly Meeting

Congo Yearly Meeting

Kinshasa Monthly Meeting (DRC)

Hill House Monthly Meeting (Ghana)

Kenya – 15 Yearly Meetings (through FUM)

Port Harcourt Worship Group (Nigeria)

Tanzania – 2 Yearly Meetings

Uganda Yearly Meeting (through FUM)

Asia

Aotearoa New Zealand Yearly Meeting

Australia Yearly Meeting

India – 4 Yearly Meetings

Hong Kong Monthly Meeting (China SAR)

Japan Yearly Meeting

Seoul Monthly Meeting (Korea)

Caribbean

Cuba Yearly Meeting (through FUM)

Jamaica Yearly Meeting (through FUM)

Europe

Austria Quarterly Meeting (of German YM)

Belgium and Luxemburg Monthly Meeting

Britain Yearly Meeting

Czech Republic: Prague Worship group

Denmark Yearly Meeting

Estonia

Finland Yearly Meeting

France Yearly Meeting
 German Yearly Meeting
 Greece (Athens Christian Friends Meeting – of Ohio YM)
 Hungary: Budapest Worship Group
 Iceland: Kópavogur Worship Group
 Ireland Yearly Meeting
 Italy
 Latvia
 Lithuania: Kaunas Quaker Group
 Netherlands Yearly Meeting
 Norway Yearly Meeting
 Russia: Moscow Monthly Meeting
 Spain: Barcelona Monthly Meeting
 Sweden Yearly Meeting
 Switzerland Yearly Meeting

Middle East

Middle East Yearly Meeting (Palestine and Lebanon)

North America

Canadian Yearly Meeting
 Evangelical Friends Church-Mid-America
Friends General Conference (USA – 13 Yearly Meetings)
Friends United Meeting (11 Yearly Meetings in the USA)
 Intermountain Yearly Meeting (USA)
 Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) (USA)
 North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) (USA)
 North Pacific Yearly Meeting (USA)
 Northwest Yearly Meeting (USA)
 Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) (USA)
 Pacific Yearly Meeting (USA)

Latin America

Evangelical Church Star of Bethlehem (Bolivia)
 Evangelical Church Bolivian Union of Friends
 Friends National Evangelical Church (Bolivia)
 Central Yearly Meeting of Friends (Bolivia)
 Friends Bolivian Holiness Mission
 Church of the Friends in El Salvador
 Friends National Evangelical Church of Guatemala
 Friends Holiness Yearly Meeting (Guatemala)
 Friends Yearly Meeting of Honduras
 Religious Society of the Friends Evangelical Churches (Mexico)
 General Meeting of the Friends in Mexico
 Friends National Evangelical Church of Peru

Holiness churches

The Holiness movement originated in the first half of the 19th century in the United States as a renewal movement within American Methodism but soon became trans-denominational, and by the third quarter of the century was also international. It sought to recover the emphasis of John Wesley on the perfection

of love in the lives of believers. This perfection was understood as the whole-hearted love of God and others, not to be confused with human flawlessness, and as God's will for all believers, not just for a special class. Methodism had thrived on American soil since 1766, but by the early 19th century, some within its ranks were convinced that the original Wesleyan emphasis on the perfection of love had been muted. Setting out to retrieve it, they were influenced by the revival and camp meeting focus on instantaneous conversions. Consequently, as the Holiness leaders called believers to the perfection of love, they, too, stressed the importance of an instantaneous experience of perfect love. As they preached, wrote and taught they used not only the language of perfection (see 1 John 4:17-18) but also the language of entire sanctification (see 1 Thess. 5:23). They understood this experience to occur subsequent to conversion, but not to be confused with the glorification that takes place at the time of the resurrection of the body. Furthermore, in line with the earlier Wesleyan movement, their call was for every believer to enter into a covenant of personal holiness for the glory of God. Instead of only some especially gifted persons in the church entering into a carefully disciplined life of holiness, all believers were to do this; they were to present themselves to God as living sacrifices in the midst of the regular routines of life.

The Holiness emphasis began taking on denominational expression with the founding of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection in 1843 and the Free Methodist Church in 1860, both of which grew out of a social witness to holiness – the abolition of slavery and the cessation of renting pews so as to remove economic barriers to participation in worship. In 1867 the movement became more organizationally cohesive with the convening of the first Holiness camp meeting, with some 10,000 in attendance. An outgrowth of this was the founding of the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness, precursor to the present Christian Holiness Partnership (CHP). In the course of time, many other church bodies emerged including The Salvation Army in England in 1878, the Church of God (Anderson, IN) in 1880, and the Church of the Nazarene in 1908. By 1874-75 the international character of the movement is indicated by the large Holiness gatherings that convened especially in Germany, Switzerland and England.

The Holiness movement has spawned many denominations all around the world, many of which are small, due, in part, to its strong emphasis on the disciplined life. According to the CHP, the movement is now spread in some 160 nations. Some four million adherents are in North America, three million in Africa, and four million in Asia. One of the largest Holiness churches in the world is the Korea Evangelical Holiness Church with a million members. The combined membership of all Holiness denominations in Korea is three million. The Japanese Holiness Church founded in 1917 was a persecuted, confessing church during World War II. Some 130 believers were imprisoned for refusal to submit to the radical nationalism of the period.

Three organizations of great importance to the movement are the above-mentioned Christian Holiness Partnership (CHP), the Wesleyan Theological Society (WTS), and Wesleyan/Holiness Clergy International (WHCI). The CHP facilitates cooperative efforts among denominations, camp meetings, institutions such as colleges, seminaries, missionary agencies and publishing houses, and individuals. The WTS is a scholarly society, with over 600 members, that publishes the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*. Given the long history of Holiness women in ministry, the WHCI nurtures women clergy and students.

Scholarly works about the movement include Melvin E. Dieter's *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd edition (Lanham, MD and London: Scarecrow, 1996), and *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement* edited by William C. Kostlevy, in the Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements series, No. 36 (Scarecrow, 2001).

The total number of adherents to the Holiness movement is about 12 million believers who, for the most part, are committed participants in church life. Twenty-one denominations cooperate in the Christian Holiness Partnership, and hundreds of independent congregations and local churches that belong to denominations which are not officially identified as members. There are no Holiness churches as such in membership with the WCC, but several member churches are traditionally close to the Holiness movement.

Website: www.faithandvalues.com/fg_profiles/christian_holiness.asp

Member churches of Christian Holiness Partnership

North America

Association of Evangelical Churches
 Association of Independent Methodists
 Bible Holiness Movement
 Brethren in Christ Church
 Churches of Christ in Christian Union
 Church of God (Anderson)
 Congregational Methodist Church
 Evangelical Christian Church
 Evangelical Church of North America
 Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region
 Evangelical Methodist Church
 Free Methodist Church of North America
 Missionary Church (North-Central District)
 Church of the Nazarene
 Primitive Methodist Church
 The Salvation Army (USA)
 The Salvation Army of Canada and Bermuda
 Wesleyan Church

Asia

Japan Emmanuel General Mission

(list is not exhaustive)

Lutheran churches

The Lutheran churches, most of which are members of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), emerged from one of the prominent strands of the Reformation movements within the (Western) Catholic Church in the 16th century. In the course of the doctrinal controversies of that time, the doctrine of justification by faith through grace alone became the decisive issue and the hallmark of Lutheran teaching. It emphasizes that God redeems human beings from the power of sin through the cross of Jesus Christ and confers God's own righteousness upon them. The Lutheran tradition considers the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, received and responded to in faith without any human merit, as

central to the life of the church. The Lutheran confessional writings, e.g., the Augsburg Confession and Martin Luther's Small Catechism, interpret core convictions regarding the significance of the gospel for individual and common life in faith. The Bible is affirmed as the sole rule of faith, to which all the creeds and other traditions and beliefs are subordinated.

Lutheran churches are partners in the majority of church communion agreements that have been established, e.g., the Leuenberg Concord (1973, now called Community of Protestant Churches in Europe), the Meissen Agreement (1991), the Porvoo Agreement (1992), and Full Communion agreements in the USA and Canada. Varying forms of worship have developed over the centuries, in interaction with local cultures. Lutheran worship tradition has sought to maintain liturgical continuity with the ancient church, in the reading and proclamation of the word of God and in the celebration of the sacraments, baptism and holy communion. Lutheran churches strongly emphasize elementary and secondary religious education as well as theological study and research. The doctrine of the two rules of God has been a well-known part of Lutheran tradition. This teaching has at times been discredited through misinterpretation, e.g., in Nazi-Germany in the 1930s and '40s. In recent decades attempts have been made to reinterpret this teaching as a basis for critique of injustice, authoritarian regimes and destructive societal developments.

The **Lutheran World Federation (LWF)** was founded in 1947. Since 1990 it defines itself as a communion of churches, united in pulpit and altar fellowship. The LWF confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world. LWF and its member churches have been, and remain, active partners in the ecumenical movement through dialogues, where they seek to make specific theological contributions. On behalf of its member churches, the LWF signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by Faith with the Catholic Church in 1999, in the city of Augsburg, one of the main historic sites of Lutheranism.

Until the first half of the 20th century, Lutheran churches were most heavily concentrated in Germany, the Nordic and Baltic countries and the USA. Since the foundation of the LWF, the gravitation centre of worldwide Lutheranism has shifted to the global South, with sizeable churches in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The diacal agenda of the Lutheran churches has increasingly emphasized challenges related to justice and peace, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and dialogue with other faiths, including indigenous spiritualities. The LWF has also contributed by dialogue to improved understanding of the relations between the church and the Jewish people.

The LWF attaches great importance to the relationships between its member churches in the regions. In Africa a Lutheran Conference was formed in 1955, and three sub-regional groupings have been set up: the Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA), the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), and the Lutheran Communion in Western Africa (LUCWA). In 2005, a Lutheran Council in Africa was established. Asia is also divided into three sub-regions: the North East Asian Lutheran Communion (NEALUC), the West and South Asian Lutheran Communion (WeSALUC), and the South East Asian Lutheran Communion (SEALUC). In Europe a regional office for the expression of communion in the Region of Central Eastern Europe (ROCEE) was opened in Bratislava (Slovakia) in 2003. The other regions in Europe are Central Western Europe, and the Nordic Region, where the Lutheran family meets regularly. The Latin American and Caribbean Region includes 13 LWF member churches in Latin America and two in the Caribbean. A regional office exists also for the North America Region.

The LWF has 140 member churches in 78 countries, representing nearly 66 million Christians in the world; 73 of its member churches are also members of the WCC (directly or indirectly). The office of the LWF is located in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.

Periodical: *Lutheran World Information*

Website: www.lutheranworld.org

Besides the Lutheran World Federation, another global body bringing Lutheran churches together is the **International Lutheran Council**. The ILC came officially into existence in 1993, as the result of a process of formation that began in 1952. The ILC defines itself as “a worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the word of God”. The International Lutheran Council has 30 member churches representing 3.3 million Christians in the world. The office of the ILC is located in St. Louis, Missouri (USA).

Member churches of the Lutheran World Federation

Africa

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon
 Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo (DRC)
 Evangelical Church of Eritrea
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya
Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church in Liberia
Malagasy Lutheran Church
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (DELK)
 Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
 Lutheran Church of Nigeria
 Lutheran Church of Rwanda
 Lutheran Church of Senegal
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Church)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (N-T)
Moravian Church in South Africa
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe

Asia

Lutheran Church of Australia
 Bangladesh Lutheran Church
 Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Hong Kong and Macau Lutheran Church
 Chinese Rhenish Hong Kong Lutheran Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong
 Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong
Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (India)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh (India)
Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (India)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Himalayan States (India)
Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur & Assam (India)
India Evangelical Lutheran Church
Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (India)
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (India)
South Andhra Lutheran Church (India)
Arcot Lutheran Church (India)
Batak Christian Community Church (Indonesia)
 Christian Communion of Indonesia Church in Nias
Christian Protestant Angkola Church (Indonesia)
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia
 Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church
 Patpak Dairi Christian Protestant Church (Indonesia)
Protestant Christian Batak Church (Indonesia)
 Protestant Christian Church in Mentawai (Indonesia)
Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (Indonesia)
Indonesian Christian Church
Nias Protestant Christian Church (Indonesia)
 United Protestant Church (Indonesia)
 Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Japan Lutheran Church
 Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church (Japan)
 Kazakhstan: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States
 Lutheran Church in Korea
 Kyrgyzstan: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States
 Basel Christian Church of Malaysia
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia
 Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore
Protestant Church in Sabah (Malaysia)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Myanmar
 Lutheran Church in the Philippines
 Lutheran Church in Singapore
 Lanka Lutheran Church (Sri Lanka)
 Taiwan Lutheran Church
 Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Rep. of China)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand
 Uzbekistan: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States

Caribbean

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname

Europe

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria
 Belarus: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States
 Lutheran Church of Belgium: Arlon and Christian Mission
 Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Czech Republic)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France
Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
 Malagasy Protestant Church in France
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Württemberg (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baden (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thüringen (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mecklenburg (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe (Germany)
Church of Lippe (Lutheran Classis) (Germany)
North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Germany)
Pomeranian Evangelical Church (Germany)
Latvia Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
 Lutheran Church in Ireland
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Church of Norway
 Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
 Russia: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic
 Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia
Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia
and Montenegro
Church of Sweden

Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland
and the Kingdom of Liechtenstein
Ukraine: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States
Lutheran Church in Great Britain
Lutheran Council of Great Britain

Latin America

Evangelical Church of the River Plate (Argentina)
United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Argentina)
Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church
German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bolivia
Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia
German-speaking Evangelical Church in Bogotá
St Martin's Congregation (Colombia)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Costa Rica
Lutheran Costarican Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ecuador
Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (El Salvador)
Evangelical Lutheran Congregation La Epifanía (Guatemala)
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Mexican Lutheran Church
German-speaking Evangelical Church in Mexico
Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru
Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela

Middle East

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Holy Land

North America

Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (Canada)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (USA)
Lithuanian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Diaspora

Pacific

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea

Member churches of the International Lutheran Council

Africa

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
Lutheran Church of Nigeria
Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa
Lutheran Church in Southern Africa

Asia

Lutheran Church of Australia
China Evangelical Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church – Hong Kong Synod

India Evangelical Lutheran Church

Japan Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church in Korea

Lutheran Church in the Philippines

Lanka Lutheran Church (Sri Lanka)

Caribbean

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti

Europe

Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Denmark

Evangelical Lutheran Church of England

Evangelical Lutheran Church – Synod of France and Belgium

Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (Germany)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia

Latin America

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina

Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Chile

Lutheran Church of Guatemala

Lutheran Synod of Mexico

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay

Lutheran Church of Venezuela

North America

Lutheran Church – Canada

Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (USA)

Pacific

Gutnius Lutheran Church (Papua New Guinea)

Mennonite churches

Mennonite and related churches are known as “Historic Peace Churches”. They derive originally from the non-violent Anabaptist movement that emerged in Europe as a radical expression of the 16th century Reformation. Mennonites take their name from the Netherlands reformer and early influential leader Menno Simons (c.1496-1561). Migration, due initially to persecution, and mission spread the movement around the world. Today more than 70 percent of Mennonite Christians live in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

At the centre of Anabaptist-Mennonite faith stands Jesus Christ as Lord, Saviour, and model of life. The church as the body of Christ continues Christ's life and ministry in the world. At least three features shape the church in Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective. The church is *a community of believers* who seek to follow in daily life the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Believers who voluntarily confess the lordship of Christ receive baptism as the sign of the new covenant and of their commitment to a life of discipleship. Believers' baptism means also membership in the church and responsibility for its welfare. Autonomous from the state, the church lives *under the authority of the word of God* as set forth in the Bible. The text is best understood in the context of the community of disciples inspired by the Spirit. Social and personal ethics *in a life of discipleship* is a core part of the

gospel. Followers of Jesus Christ live in the world to serve humankind through action and proclamation. Love of enemies and refusal of violence in the struggle for justice are understood as New Testament imperatives. Rejection of seeking wealth, and acting in favour of economic sharing, is frequently emphasized. Mennonite and related churches claim unity with all believers who confess Jesus Christ and seek to live the way of discipleship. Many cooperate with other Christian churches, especially in peacemaking, service, and mission.

The **Mennonite World Conference (MWC)** began in 1925. It adopted new vision and mission statements in 2003, defining itself for the first time as a "communion" and "community" of churches.

Vision:

Mennonite World Conference is called to be a communion (*Koinonia*) of Anabaptist-related churches linked to one another in a worldwide community of faith for fellowship, worship, service, and witness.

Mission:

MWC exists to (1) be a global community of faith in the Anabaptist-tradition, (2) facilitate community between Anabaptist-related churches worldwide, and (3) relate to other Christian world communions and organizations.

Programme:

Bilateral theological dialogues, Faith and Life Council, Peace Council, Global Mission Fellowship, Global Youth Summit, Young Anabaptist-Mennonite Exchange Network, Global Gift Sharing, Global Church Sharing Fund, Global Mennonite and Brethren in Christ History Project, World Fellowship Sunday, Anabaptist-Mennonite Shelf of Literature. Through its programmes, MWC stands in solidarity with churches in situations of suffering, crises, or conflict.

Organization:

Member and associate churches appoint delegates to the general council that meets triennially and elects the executive committee. A global assembly convenes regularly. Assembly 14 met in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (August 2003). Assembly 15 will meet in Asuncion, Paraguay (July 2009). MWC maintains a general secretariat, currently based in Strasburg, France.

The Mennonite World Conference has 95 member churches, representing 1,051,806 Christians (baptized adults) in the world. Three Mennonite churches are members of the WCC, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany and The Netherlands.

Periodical: *Courier/Correo/Courrier* (quarterly); news releases.

Website: www.mwc-cmm.org

Member churches of the Mennonite World Conference

Africa

Church of the Mennonite Community in Angola

Evangelical Church of Mennonite Brethren in Angola

Evangelical Mennonite Church in Angola

Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso (Associate)

Community of the Churches of Mennonite Brethren in Congo (RDC)

Evangelical Mennonite Community (DRC)

Mennonite Community in Congo (DRC)

Meserete Kristos Church Eritrea (Associate)

Meserete Kristos Church (Ethiopia)

Ghana Mennonite Church

Kenya Mennonite Church

Brethren in Christ Church (Malawi)

Nigeria Mennonite Church

Grace Community Church of South Africa

Mennonite Church of Tanzania

Brethren in Christ Church (Zambia)

Brethren in Christ Church (Zimbabwe)

Asia

Australian Conference of Evangelical Mennonites

Conference of Mennonite Churches in Hong Kong (Associate)

Bharatiya General Conference Mennonite Church Kalisiya (India)

Bharatiya Jukta Christa Prachar Mandali (United Missionary Church) (India)

Bihar Mennonite Mandli (India)

Brethren in Christ Church Orissa (India)

Brethren in Christ Church Society (India)

Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches in India

Mennonite Church in India

Evangelical Church of Tanah Jawa (GITJ) (Indonesia)

United Muria Christian Churches of Indonesia (GKMI)

Jemaat Christian Synod Indonesia (JKI)

Nihon Kirisuto Keiteidan (Japan)

Nihon Menonaito Kirisuto Kyokai Kaigi (Japan)

Tokyo Chiku Menonaito Kyokai Rengo (Japan)

Jesus Village Church (Korea, Associate)

Integrated Mennonite Churches (Philippines)

Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan

Caribbean

Belize Evangelical Mennonite Church

Brethren in Christ Missionary Society (Cuba)

National Mennonite Council Divine Light (Dominican Rep)

Mennonite Evangelical Conference (Dominican Rep)

Jamaica Mennonite Church

Mennonite Church of Trinidad and Tobago (Associate)

Europe

Association of Evangelical Mennonite Churches of France

Council of Mennonite Churches in Germany

Federation of European Mennonite Brethren Churches (Germany, Associate)

Evangelical Mennonite Church of Italy

Swiss Mennonite Conference (Anabaptist)

Mennonite Church in the Netherlands

Association of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ of Spain (Associate)

British Conference of Mennonites (Associate)

Note: The *Association of Mennonite Churches in Germany (Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden)*, which is part of the Council of Mennonite Churches in Germany, is a member church of the World Council of Churches.

Latin America

Evangelical Mennonite Church Argentina
 Evangelical Anabaptist Church in Bolivia
 Bolivian Evangelical Mennonite Church (Associate)
 Association of Mennonite Churches of Brazil
 Mennonite Evangelical Association (Brazil)
 Mennonite Christian Church of Colombia
 Mennonite Brethren Churches of Colombia
 Brethren in Christ Church (Colombia, Associate)
 Convention of Evangelical Mennonite Churches of Costa Rica
 Evangelical Mennonite Church of Ecuador
 Evangelical Mennonite Church of El Salvador (Associate)
 Evangelical Mennonite Church of Guatemala
 National Evangelical Mennonite Church of Guatemala
 Honduran Evangelical Mennonite Church
 Christian Organization Living Love (Honduras)
 Conference of Evangelical Anabaptist Mennonite Churches of Mexico
 Mennonite Conference of Mexico
 Evangelical Mennonite Church of North-East Mexico
 Convention of Evangelical Mennonite Churches of Nicaragua
 Fellowship of Evangelical Mennonite Churches of Nicaragua
 Brethren in Christ Evangelical Mission of Nicaragua
 United Evangelical Church of Mennonite Brethren in Panama
 Evangelical Convention of Paraguayan Churches of Mennonite Brethren
 Lengua Evangelical Mennonite Convention (Paraguay)
 Paraguayan Evangelical Mennonite Convention
 Nivaculé Convention of Evangelical Churches (Paraguay)
 Convention of United Evangelical Churches (Paraguay)
 Evangelical Mennonite Fellowship (German-speaking, Paraguay)
 Association of Mennonite Brethren Churches of Paraguay (German-speaking)
 Association of Mennonite Churches of Paraguay (German-speaking)
 Evangelical Church of the Mennonite Brethren of Peru (Associate)
 Evangelical Mennonite Church of Peru (Associate)
 Council of Mennonite Brethren Congregations (Uruguay)
 Convention of Mennonite Churches in Uruguay
 Conference of Mennonite Churches in Uruguay (German-speaking)
 Council of Evangelical Mennonite Churches in Venezuela (Associate)
 Evangelical Mennonite Church 'Shalom' (Venezuela, Associate)

North America

Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
 Evangelical Mennonite Conference (Canada)
 Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (Canada)
 Mennonite Church Canada
 Brethren in Christ General Conference (USA)
 Conservative Mennonite Conference (USA)
 Mennonite Church USA
 U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Conferences

Methodist churches

Methodism as a form of Christian belief and practice derives from a movement that began with the life and ministry of John and Charles Wesley who desired to bring a greater spiritual enthusiasm to the life of the Church of England in the 18th century. Their efforts transgressed the canonical boundaries of the established church, resulting ultimately in the emergence of a separate church. Theologically, the Wesley brothers held to the optimistic Arminian view that salvation, by God's grace, was possible for all human beings, in contrast to the Calvinistic ideas of election and predestination that were accepted by the Non-Conformists of 18th century England. They also stressed the important effect of faith on character, teaching that perfection in love was possible in this life.

Methodist churches claim to be part of the church universal, believing in the priesthood of all believers and following a pattern of organization established by John Wesley when he organized pastoral oversight for the societies of Methodists which developed as a result of his preaching. The weekly class-meeting for "fellowship in Christian experience" played an important part in the beginnings of Methodism. Throughout its history Methodism has had an active concern for both personal and social holiness, and through its centralized organization, has been able to make coordinated efforts in these areas. Methodism spread to North America and with the political independence of the United States, American Methodists in 1784 constituted themselves as the Methodist Episcopal Church. Largely as a result of missionary labours from Britain and the United States, Methodism spread around the world and today is found in over 130 countries.

The first World Methodist Conference was held in London, England in 1881. It met every ten years until interrupted by World War II. Following the war the Conference agreed to meet every five years. The **World Methodist Council** is composed of 500 members representing the member churches. Council members serve a term of five years. At least one person from each member church serves on the Council's executive committee. The Council's activities include the following:

- Standing committees on education; evangelism; ecumenics and dialogues; family life; social and international affairs; theological education, worship and liturgy; and youth;
- An active programme of world evangelism;
- Active bi-lateral dialogues with the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, and previously with the Lutheran World Federation, the Anglican Communion, and plans to be in dialogue with the Orthodox Church;
- Worldwide ministerial exchange programme;
- Affiliation with the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, the World Fellowship of Methodist and Uniting Church Men, and the World Methodist Historical Society;
- Co-sponsoring the Oxford Institute for Methodist Theological Studies every five years, bringing together the best theological minds from around the world to share and discuss relevant topics;
- Annual World Methodist Peace Award given to an individual or group whose work for peace and reconciliation is notable.

Methodist individuals and churches have made strong contributions to the modern ecumenical movement from its earliest days.

Member churches of the World Methodist Council in Latin America and the Caribbean have formed a regional body, the Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIEMAL in Spanish). An Asian Methodist Bishop's Council was set up a few years ago. There is also a European Methodist Council, and there are British and North American Sections within the WMC.

The headquarters of World Methodism is located at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina (USA). The Council also has a presence at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. The WMC has 76 member churches representing 40 million believers. Of these, 59 churches are members of the WCC.

Periodical: *World Parish*

Website: www.worldmethodistcouncil.org

Member churches of the World Methodist Council

Africa

African Methodist Episcopal Church, Central Africa (Zambia)

African Methodist Episcopal Church, Southern Africa

African Methodist Episcopal Church, West Africa

African Methodist Church in Zimbabwe

Methodist Church Ghana

Methodist Church in Kenya

Methodist Church in Zimbabwe

Methodist Church Nigeria

Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Methodist Church of Togo

Methodist Church Sierra Leone

Protestant Church of Algeria (Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, UMC)

Protestant Methodist Church of Bénin

United Methodist Church, Congo Central Conference (DRC)

United Methodist Church, Africa Central Conference (Angola, Burundi, Mozambique, Uganda, Zimbabwe)

United Methodist Church, West Africa Central Conference (Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone)

United Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire

West Africa Methodist Church, Sierra Leone

United Church of Zambia

Asia

Bangladesh Methodist Church

Chinese Methodist Church in Australia

Church of North India

Church of Pakistan

Church of South India

Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines

Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China

Korean Methodist Church

Methodist Church, Hong Kong

Methodist Church in India

Methodist Church in Indonesia

Methodist Church in Malaysia
Methodist Church in Singapore
Methodist church of New Zealand
 Methodist Church, Lower Myanmar
Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar
 Methodist Church, Republic of China
Methodist Church, Sri Lanka
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
United Methodist Church, Philippines Central Conference
Uniting Church in Australia

Caribbean

Dominican Evangelical Church (Dominican Rep.)
Methodist Church in Cuba
Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas
Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Europe

Evangelical Methodist Church in Italy
 Evangelical Methodist Church of Portugal
Methodist Church in Ireland
Methodist Church UK
Spanish Evangelical Church
United Methodist Church, Central and Southern Europe
Central Conference (Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia,
Czech and Slovak Republics, France, Hungary, Poland,
Switzerland, Serbia & Montenegro, Macedonia)
United Methodist Church, Germany Central Conference
United Methodist Church, Northern Europe Central Conference (Denmark,
Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, Russia)
United Protestant Church of Belgium

Latin America

Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia
Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina
 Evangelical Methodist Church of Costa Rica
 Evangelical Methodist Church of Panama
 Evangelical Methodist Community of Paraguay
Methodist Church in Brazil
Methodist Church of Chile
 Methodist Church of Colombia
Methodist Church of Mexico
Methodist Church of Peru
Methodist Church in Uruguay
 United Evangelical Church of Ecuador

North America

African Methodist Episcopal Church (USA)
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (USA)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (USA)
 Church of the Nazarene (USA)
 Free Methodist Church (USA)
United Church of Canada

United Methodist Church (USA)

Wesleyan Church (USA)

Pacific

Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma

Methodist Church of Samoa

Moravian churches

The Unitas Fratrum, or Moravian Church, is that branch of the Christian church which began its distinct life in Bohemia (central Europe) in the year 1457. It was born of the great revival of faith at the close of the Middle Ages, arising from the national revival of religion in Bohemia, in which the writings of Wycliffe had great influence, and of which John Hus was the greatest leader. Within the movement Peter of Chelcic represented the traditions of Eastern puritanism and freedom from official control in matters of religion. Amidst these influences, the Unitas Fratrum (Latin for "community – or fellowship – of brothers") was founded, under the leadership of Gregory the Patriarch, with a three-fold ideal of faith, fellowship and freedom, and a strong emphasis on practical Christian life rather than on doctrinal thought or church tradition. Its numbers grew rapidly. The Unitas Fratrum sought to maintain a living contact with the early church. It obtained from the Waldenses (see the description of the Waldensian Church) the traditional orders of the ministry, including the episcopacy, and thus became an independent ecclesiastical body.

In the troubled period of the reaction against the Reformation, times of persecution alternated with times of comparative calm, until at last in 1620 the Unitas Fratrum with other Protestant bodies was utterly suppressed. A "Hidden Seed" survived in Bohemia and neighbouring Moravia, to emerge a hundred years later in the Renewed Church. Between 1722 and 1727, some families from Moravia, who had kept the traditions of the old Unitas Fratrum, found a place of refuge in Saxony (Germany), on the estate of Nicolaus Ludwig, Count Zinzendorf. Other people of widely differing views also found there a place of religious freedom, but their differences threatened to make it a place of strife until a profound and decisive experience of unity was given them in an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on August 13, 1727. From this experience of conscious unity came a zeal for remarkable missionary outreach, beginning among slaves on the island of St Thomas in the West Indies in 1732. Within a single decade the missionary effort was extended to Greenland, Suriname, South Africa, Western Africa, Algeria, Arctic Russia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and among Africans and the indigenous population in North America.

The Moravian Church has asserted throughout its history that Christian fellowship recognizes no barrier of nation or race. The Unitas Fratrum cherishes its unity as a valuable treasure entrusted to it by the Lord. It stands for the oneness of all humankind given by the reconciliation through Jesus Christ. Therefore the ecumenical movement is of its very lifeblood. A simple statement titled "The Ground of the Unity" is the church's basic doctrinal statement and "The Covenant for Christian Living," which dates back to the renewal of 1732, sets forth guiding principles for common life and witness.

The **Moravian Unity Board** is the overarching organ of the Unitas Fratrum, an international unity comprised of 19 provinces in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, South America, Central America, and North America, representing about 797,000 Christians. It maintains a permanent office in London. WCC members are the

Moravian Church in America, South Africa, Tanzania, Jamaica, Suriname, Eastern West Indies, Nicaragua, and the British and European Continental Provinces; several provinces hold joint WCC membership, i.e. in America, Tanzania, Britain and Continental Europe.

Website: www.unitasfratrum.org

Member provinces of the Moravian Unity Board

Africa

Moravian Church in South Africa

Moravian Church in Tanzania, Rukwa Province

Moravian Church in Tanzania, Southern Province

Moravian Church in Tanzania, South Western Province

Moravian Church in Tanzania, Western Province

Caribbean

Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province

Guyana Province of the Moravian Church

Moravian Church in Jamaica

Moravian Church in Suriname

Europe

British Province of the Moravian Church

Czech Republic Province of the Moravian Church

European Continental Province of the Moravian Church

Latin America

Moravian Church in Costa Rica

Evangelical Moravian Church in Honduras

Moravian Church in Nicaragua

North America

Alaska Province of the Moravian Church

Labrador Province of the Moravian church

Moravian Church in America, Northern Province

Moravian Church in America, Southern Province

Old-Catholic churches

Old-Catholics are a group of national churches which at various times separated from Rome. The term "Old-Catholic" was adopted to mean original Catholicism. Old-Catholic Christians are composed of three sections: (1) the Church of Utrecht which originated in 1724 when its chapter maintained its ancient right to elect the Archbishop of Utrecht, against opposition from Rome; (2) the German, Austrian and Swiss Old-Catholic churches which refused to accept the dogmas of the infallibility and the universal ordinary jurisdiction of the pope, as defined by the Vatican Council of 1870; (3) smaller groups of Slav origin. National church movements among the Poles in the USA (1987) and the Croats (1924) have resulted in the establishment of the National Polish Church in America and in Poland, and of the Old-Catholic Church of Croatia. Unfortunately the Polish National Church of America and Canada left the Union of Utrecht in 2003. Their bishops could not agree with the majority in the International Bishops' Conference which was in favour of

the opening of the apostolic ministry to women. The Philippine Independent Church established sacramental communion with Old-Catholics in 1965.

The doctrinal basis of the Old-Catholic churches is the Declaration of Utrecht (1889). The Old-Catholics recognize the same seven ecumenical councils as the Eastern Orthodox churches, and those doctrines accepted by the church before the Great Schism of 1054. They admit seven sacraments and recognize apostolic succession. They also believe in the real presence in the eucharist, but deny transubstantiation, forbid private masses, and permit the reception of the eucharist under one or both elements. The Old-Catholic churches have an episcopal-synodal structure. Bishops, as well as the rest of the clergy, are permitted to marry. All services are in the vernacular. Since 1996 the threefold apostolic ministry is open to women. From the start, Anglicans have been close to Old-Catholics. They participated in an international conference of theologians, convened at Bonn by Old-Catholics in 1874, to discuss the reunion of churches outside Rome. Old-Catholics recognized Anglican ordinations in 1925. Since 1931 they have been in full communion with the Church of England first and later on with all the churches of the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury has a permanent representative with the International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Old-Catholic-Orthodox dialogues have taken place since 1931. An agreement on all-important theological and ecclesiological issues was reached in 1987. A joint commission with the Ecumenical Patriarchate looks after the implementation of that agreement within the churches. Since the second Vatican Council the Old-Catholic churches have been in conversation with the Roman Catholic Church. Both on the national and the international level various initiatives were taken in order to discuss the main ecclesiological issues on which the two catholic ecclesiastical families have different views.

An international Old-Catholic congress has met regularly since 1890. The **International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference** is the main instrument for the maintaining of the ties of the communion. It not only decides on internal church matters but serves to promote relationships with various other churches. The president of the conference is the Archbishop of Utrecht. Old-Catholics number about 115,000. With the exception of the Old-Catholic Church in the Czech Republic, all the member churches of the Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference are members of the World Council of Churches.

Website: www.utrechter-union.org

Member Churches of the International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference

Catholic Diocese of the Old Catholics in Germany

Old-Catholic Church of Austria

Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland

Old-Catholic Church of the Czech Republic

Old-Catholic Church of the Netherlands

Polish-Catholic Church of Poland

Under jurisdiction of the Bishops' Conference:

Old-Catholic Church of Croatia

Old-Catholic Mission in France

Old-Catholic Church in Italy

Old-Catholic Church in Sweden and Denmark

Orthodox Church (Eastern)

Eastern Orthodoxy consists of several autocephalous (self-governing) churches: the four ancient Patriarchates of the early church, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, the four Patriarchates of more recent origin, Russia, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, the Catholicosate of Georgia, and the churches of Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, and the Czech Lands and Slovakia. It also includes the autonomous Orthodox churches of Finland and Estonia (with two jurisdictions). The Eastern Orthodox "diaspora" consists of churches in the Americas, Asia, Australia, Western Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. In the United States and Japan, some Orthodox churches have been granted autonomy or semi-autonomy, though these churches have not been recognized by all Orthodox churches. The monastery of Sinai is an autonomous monastic community related to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and Mount Athos and the semi-autonomous Church of Crete remain under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The Eastern Orthodox churches hold the same faith, that of the seven ecumenical councils, as well as sacraments. The Patriarch of Constantinople is called the Ecumenical Patriarch, and has a position as "first among equals". It is he who convenes pan-Orthodox conferences, after consultation with the leaders of the other Orthodox churches. The Orthodox Church sees itself as the unbroken continuation of the Christian Church established by Christ and his apostles in the first century CE, and does not recognize any council since the Second Council of Nicea (787 CE) as ecumenical. Throughout the latter part of the first millennium of Christianity there developed an increasingly difficult relationship between the sees of Rome and Constantinople that led to a schism in 1054 CE. The estrangement evolved further between the 11th and 15th centuries and was exacerbated by the destructive effects of the Fourth Crusade in the early 13th century. The formal break occurred in the 15th century. The issues dividing the churches were the universal supremacy of jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome, and the doctrinal issue of the *filioque* ("and the Son"), the phrase inserted into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 CE) in 6th century Spain, which stated, "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*".

While the Orthodox churches acknowledge seven sacraments, or "mysteries", there are other sacramental actions that make up the liturgical life of the church. Baptism takes place by full immersion, and the sacraments of chrismation (confirmation) and eucharist follow. These sacraments are performed by a clergyman, and children are baptized and chrismated as infants, thereby allowing them to partake of the eucharist. The bread and wine in the eucharist become, through consubstantiation, the real body and blood of Christ; eucharist is received after careful preparation which includes fasting and confession. The worship services are held in national languages, though in some churches the original liturgical languages are used rather than the vernacular. The veneration of icons plays an important role in Orthodox worship, and prayers to the Mother of God and the saints enrich the liturgical texts. Bishops have been drawn from the ranks of the monastic communities since the 6th century CE, and since the Orthodox Church does not prohibit a married priesthood, many of the parish priests are married. Women have been blessed as diaconesses over the last few years. Monasticism has played and continues to play a major role in the life of the Orthodox Church.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople initiated the role of the Orthodox churches in the modern ecumenical movement, with its Encyclical Letter dating from 1920 to

"all the churches of Christ". The call of the letter was for a "koinonia of churches" which would work for charitable cooperation and theological dialogue. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is a founding member of the World Council of Churches. There have been permanent representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church at the WCC since 1955 and 1962, respectively.

The role of the Ecumenical Patriarch as the primary spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christian world and a transnational figure of global significance continues to become more vital each day. His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew co-sponsored the Peace and Tolerance Conference in Istanbul (1994) bringing together Christians, Muslims and Jews. Most noted are his efforts in environmental awareness, which have earned him the title "Green Patriarch." He has organized environmental seminars in co-sponsorship with His Royal Highness Prince Philip, and international environmental symposia on Patmos (1995) and around the Black Sea (1997). Since 1999 three other Religion, Science and the Environment International Symposia have taken place under the joint auspices of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Excellency Mr Romano Prodi, former President of the European Commission: Symposium III, which sailed down the Danube River; Symposium IV: "The Adriatic Sea: A Sea at Risk, a Unity of Purpose" (June 2002) and Symposium V: "The Baltic Sea: A Common Heritage, A Shared Responsibility" (June 2003). These endeavours, together with his inspiring efforts on behalf of religious freedom and human rights, rank Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew among the world's foremost apostles of love, peace and reconciliation for humanity, a reason for which he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the US Congress.

Other examples of significant contributions from Eastern Orthodox churches are the social doctrine laid out by the Russian Orthodox Church, the relationship with Islam lived out by the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch, the work on bio-ethics by the Church of Greece, and the renewal and mission of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania after decades of communist persecution.

The Orthodox Church (Eastern) numbers its membership at 300 million worldwide. With the exception of Georgia and Bulgaria which withdrew in 1997 and 1998, and Estonia, all the Orthodox churches (Eastern) are members of the WCC.

Website: www.ec-patr.org & www.ecupatria.org

Eastern Orthodox churches:

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Russian Orthodox Church

Romanian Orthodox Church

Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Serbian Orthodox Church

Church of Cyprus

Church of Greece

Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland

Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania

Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia

Orthodox Church of Finland

Orthodox Church of Estonia

Orthodox Church in America
Orthodox Church in Japan
 Georgian Orthodox Church

Orthodox churches (Oriental)

The Oriental Orthodox family is comprised of the Ethiopian, Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Indian and Eritrean Churches. Historically they have been referred to as non- or anti- or pre-Chalcedonian, Monophysite, Ancient Oriental or Lesser Eastern. Presently the generally accepted name is Oriental Orthodox. The majority of the members of these churches live in Ethiopia, Egypt, Eritrea, Armenia, India, Syria and Lebanon. There are also large diaspora communities in parts of the Middle East, Europe, Asia, North and South America, and Australia. The Oriental Orthodox churches are ancient churches which were founded in apostolic times, by apostles or by the apostles' earliest disciples. Their doctrinal position is based on the teachings of the first three ecumenical councils (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381 and Ephesus 431). The Alexandrian school of thought has guided and shaped their theological reflection. The teachings of Saint Cyril the Great constitute the foundation of their Christology. They are firmly attached to the Cyrilian formula of "One nature of the Word Incarnate". Their theology is biblical, liturgical and patristic, and is embodied in mysticism and spirituality.

The Oriental Orthodox churches, along with those of the Byzantine tradition or Eastern Orthodox, belong to the larger family of the Orthodox churches. The two groups are not in communion with each other. The breach, which occurred in 451, marking the first ecclesial division in church history, was about the Christological teaching of the Council of Chalcedon. Through the centuries confrontation and estrangement, but also dialogue and rapprochement have characterized the relations between the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox churches. In 1985, after two decades of unofficial meetings, the two groups engaged in an official theological dialogue, which has resulted in Christological agreements. The main remaining question is the reception of the agreements in the churches.

The history and life of the Oriental Orthodox churches has been marked by ceaseless persecution and massacres under the Byzantine, Persian, Muslim and Ottoman powers. The sufferings have had a profound impact on their life, witness, theology and spirituality. Yet this life of the cross has not led them to become entirely isolated and introverted. In spite of their continuous suffering, these churches have sustained themselves through constant efforts of renewal. Under the imperative of new realities and the demands of changing times, they have been able to challenge the strong traditionalism and inward-looking estate that prevailed for some time, due to the historical circumstances. While ancient traditions still dominate, a fresh vitality and creativity are blowing in these churches, both in their motherlands and in the diaspora. They have significantly revived monastic life as a rich source of spirituality, evangelism and diakonia for clergy as well as laity, men and women. They have reorganized theological education. Sunday schools have become centres of intense activities. Youth movements and student associations have been created. Bible study seminars, courses for the Christian formation of laity, fasting and daily celebrations of saints are vivid expressions of deep spirituality and of evangelistic inreach and outreach, which nurture and build these communities of faith. They are churches of the people, without the dichotomy between

institution and community. The whole people of God participate actively in the life and witness of the church.

In early centuries the Oriental Orthodox churches have played a pivotal role in the expansion of Christianity beyond the borders of the Byzantine empire. The Christian faith was taken from Alexandria down to Africa, from Armenia to the North, from Antioch to the Far East. In later centuries, because of changing political and religious conditions, the missionary activities have been carried on mainly in terms of building and sustaining their own community. In today's context of a globalized world, and of pluralistic societies, there is an increasing awareness on the part of the Oriental Orthodox churches of the need to renew the methodologies and forms of mission and evangelism.

Although the Oriental Orthodox churches have suffered from Western missionary efforts in the Christian East, both Catholic and Protestant, they have taken the ecumenical challenge seriously. They firmly believe that meeting together, praying together and entering into frank and critical dialogue with their ecumenical partners is the will of the Lord. The World Council of Churches is for them the most comprehensive instrument of the ecumenical movement, providing them with a global framework for close and meaningful relationships and cooperation with other churches.

After centuries of isolation from each other, the Oriental Orthodox churches finally met in 1965 in Addis Ababa. At this historic meeting the church heads reaffirmed their belonging to one faith. They took several decisions which, for many reasons, have not fully materialized. The challenge remains to give more visibility and tangible expression to the unity of faith of the Oriental Orthodox churches. Among the issues they need to address together are the influence of secularism, the resurgence of religious fundamentalism and the increasing migration of the faithful from the motherlands to other parts of the world. The Oriental Orthodox family does not have an organized institution. Since 1996 the heads of the three churches in the Middle East (Coptic, Armenian and Syrian) have put in place a framework for annual meetings at which they discuss common concerns and issues. Several working groups have been formed to assist the patriarchs with this process. Besides the dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox as a family is also engaged in a theological dialogue with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. The Oriental Orthodox churches have much to share with other churches. They have preserved a strong sense of history and tradition. They can make a unique contribution through their monastic tradition, oriental spirituality, rich liturgy and mystical theology.

The Oriental Orthodox churches, which are all members of the World Council of Churches, represent some 60 million Christians.

Churches which belong to the Oriental Orthodox family

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Etchmiadzin)

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)

Coptic Orthodox Church

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (India)

Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

Pentecostal churches

The Pentecostal movement includes a large number of denominations, independent churches, and para-church organizations that emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christian believers. It emerged first in North America at the beginning of the 20th century, when members of the Wesleyan Holiness Movement began to speak in tongues and identified it as the "Bible Evidence" that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4). This baptism in the Spirit was said to provide power for living an "apostolic" life and engaging in an "apostolic" ministry that included the charisms of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. The movement has gone by such self-designations as "Apostolic Faith," "Full Gospel," "Latter Rain," and "Pentecostal". One of the first and most important centres of activity to identify itself as "Pentecostal," emerged under the direction of an African-American pastor, William Joseph Seymour, and the Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, in April 1906. Within 18 months of its beginning, the "Azusa Street" Mission had sent out scores of evangelists who crisscrossed North America, and missionaries who ministered in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Mexico.

The earliest Pentecostals drew from their Methodist and Wesleyan Holiness roots, describing their entrance into the fullness of Christian life in three stages: conversion, sanctification, and baptism in the Spirit. Each of these stages was often understood as a separate, datable, "crisis" experience. Other Pentecostals, from the Reformed tradition or touched by the Keswick teachings on the Higher Christian Life, came to view sanctification not as a crisis experience, but as an ongoing quest. This debate resulted in the first major schism among early Pentecostals. Groups such as the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), and the International Pentecostal Holiness Church continue to teach the former position, known as "*Holiness*". Groups such as the Assemblies of God and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel hold the latter position, called "*Finished Work*".

A second major schism developed between 1907 and 1916, in discussions over the "apostolic" baptismal formula. Most Pentecostals argued for the classic Trinitarian formula, while others contended for the formula "in the Name of Jesus Christ" recorded in Acts (cf. Acts 2:38). By 1916 a new group of churches known as "*Oneness*" or "Jesus' Name" churches had formed. Among them are the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the United Pentecostal Church. Many of these groups ultimately embraced an understanding of the Godhead in terms that border on a modal understanding.

All three segments of Pentecostalism, "*Holiness*", "*Finished Work*" and "*Oneness*" believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ, and therefore are highly evangelistic and missionary driven. As a result, Pentecostalism is today found in all the regions of the world, and is still growing. It is the largest non-Catholic Christian presence in Latin America. It has grown enormously throughout Africa, often giving rise to African Independent or Indigenous churches. In Asia, Pentecostalism is strong in places like the Philippines, Korea, India, and among the majority of house churches in China. The largest Pentecostal congregations in the world are found in Seoul and Surabaya. At the time of the beginnings of Pentecostalism, several autochthonous Pentecostal churches emerged in Chile (1910) and elsewhere in Latin America that were not directly touched by North American missionary efforts. It is these churches that have been most open to the ecumenical movement. Some of them became members of the WCC in the 1960s, and a good

number have joined the Latin American Council of Churches after it was formed in 1982.

The majority of Pentecostal churches have chosen not to participate in any ecumenical organization. This comes, in part, because of their restorationist perspective on the history of the church that views existing churches as having fallen away from God's intentions through compromise and sin. Another reason is the way so many existing churches have marginalized and rejected the Pentecostals when they attempted to share their testimonies of what God had done in their lives. As a result, sectarian thinking has dominated much of the movement, which in many cases developed an eschatological position that feared ecumenical contact. In 1947, Pentecostals representing all but the Oneness groups gathered in Zurich, Switzerland for a Pentecostal world conference. Many leaders hoped to establish an organization for Pentecostals similar to the WCC that was then in formation. They were unable to do so because of the strongly congregational-centred Pentecostals of Scandinavia and Brazil. Since that time, Pentecostal leaders have gathered in Pentecostal world conferences where a small presidium has discussed items of mutual interest and concern. In 2004 the PWC formally took the name **Pentecostal World Fellowship**.

For the most part of the 20th century, Pentecostals have tended to identify with the Evangelical movement, and to join Evangelical structures. More recently, Pentecostal fellowships, federations or councils have emerged in a number of national and some regional situations. Pentecostal scholars have undertaken to build a body of Pentecostal theology.

Pentecostalism has been able to meet the needs of many on the margins of society and church. It has been effective in bringing people into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. It encourages its members to share their personal testimonies with others, to live their lives with an eye to "holiness", to embrace good works as part of the "Spirit-filled" life, to be open to the sovereign movement of the Holy Spirit through charisms, signs and wonders, and to support the work of the church through regular tithing. In recent years, some classical Pentecostal groups have begun to downplay the role of speaking in tongues as evidence of baptism in the Spirit, though they continue to value it as a legitimate charism of the Spirit. Some Pentecostal churches have embraced what is called a "prosperity theology", proclaiming that God wills both the spiritual and physical (including material) well-being of God's people. Churches such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and the Pentecostal Church God Is Love that emerged in the 1980s in Brazil are controversial even among other Pentecostal churches, for the extent to which they emphasize this teaching.

The emergence of the National Association of Evangelicals in the USA and the World Evangelical Fellowship (now Alliance) in the 1940s, the testimony of the Latin American Pentecostal churches that joined the WCC, and especially the pioneering work of Pentecostal David du Plessis, have created a Pentecostal openness to limited ecumenical contact. Since 1972, Pentecostals have been in dialogue with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Catholic Church. Since 1993, they have been represented at the annual meeting of the Secretaries of Christian World Communions. An international dialogue was established between Pentecostals and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1995, and another between Pentecostals and the WCC, through the Joint Consultative Group authorized at the Harare assembly in 1998. A new dialogue has been established with members from the Lutheran World Federation in 2005.

Groups that participate in the Charismatic Renewal and have maintained membership in their historic denominations have often formed positive relationships with the older classical Pentecostal churches. Similarly, churches of the so-called "Third Wave" (largely charismatic groups like the Vineyard) and many "New Apostolic" groups are related to classical Pentecostalism. They all share many points of theology and experience. According to the World Christian Database, classical Pentecostals number 78 million, Charismatics 192 million and Neo-charismatics 318 million.

Websites: www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org;
www.pctii.org; www.sps-usa.org; www.cepla.org (in Spanish)

Reformed churches

While the term Reformed has sometimes been taken to include all the Protestant churches which have accepted the principles of the Reformation, it is used here in the more accurate sense to refer specifically to church bodies which have theological and historical roots in the French and Swiss-led Reformation (Jean Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Bullinger, etc.). The primary presupposition of the Reformed churches is that the risen Christ is the only head of the church. Thus there is no stress on a special elite person or group that has received through direct revelation or by the laying on of hands extraordinary powers of authority. Doctrines are traditionally governed by such principles as *Sola Scriptura*, salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, God's sovereignty, and the calling to be agents of transformation in the world. Worship is usually simple, orderly and dignified, with an emphasis upon the hearing and preaching of the word of God. Few Reformed and Presbyterian churches have weekly celebration of the eucharist; monthly eucharistic celebrations are more common. The level of education required for the Presbyterian or Reformed minister is traditionally high.

The Reformed churches generally adhere, with some variations, to a form of ecclesiastical polity in which the church is led by teaching elders (ordained pastors) and ruling elders or presbyters (lay persons) who are organized in various "courts". The courts include the local church level (session or its equivalent), the regional church level (Presbytery, classis or an equivalent title), the wider regional or national level (the synod) and the national or highest autonomous level (general assembly or general synod). Synods consist of members of several presbyteries within a large area and in some cases constitute the final legislative body. Usually the general assembly or general synod is the supreme legislative and administrative body. Proponents of this governing structure in the 16th and 17th centuries did not regard it as an innovation but as a rediscovery of the apostolic model found in the New Testament. According to Calvin, the Primitive Church had four different offices: pastor, doctor or teacher, deacon, and presbyter or elder. He recognized, however, that other offices might be adopted.

The Reformed family has a broad spectrum. It has churches from the historic Reformation era, which now share much in common with other mainline Protestants. It also has churches from pietist and separation movements in the 18th and 19th centuries, whose recommitments to Scripture and the Reformed confessional documents continue to influence their values today. In the 20th century some were also influenced by the Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. As a result there are four international groupings of the Reformed family.

The **World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)** is the largest and oldest of these groupings. Its earliest predecessor was "The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System", which was founded in London in 1875 by 21 Reformed and Presbyterian churches, mainly from Europe and North America. In 1949 the International Congregational Council was formally established. At Nairobi, Kenya, in 1970, the two organizations, Reformed and Congregational, came together in the new World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The constitution underlines that the Alliance is much more a family of churches than a confessional institution. Subscription to "any narrow and exclusive definition of faith and order" is not listed among the conditions for membership. Churches belong to the Alliance because they see in it an instrument of common witness and service. One of its purposes reads as follows: "To facilitate the contribution to the ecumenical movement of the experiences and insights which churches within this Alliance have been given in their history, and to share with churches of other traditions within that movement, and particularly in the World Council of Churches, in the discovery of forms of church life and practice which will enable the people of God more fully to understand and express God's will for his people." Leaders of member churches of the Alliance were among the pioneers of the WCC.

The recent history of WARC is characterized by some key public statements and initiatives on justice issues. In 1976 the Alliance published a study on the theological foundation of human rights and in 1982 it declared that apartheid is a sin and its moral and theological justification a heresy. In 1983 it asked the World Council of Churches to call on its members for a covenant on issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The 23rd General Council at Debrecen, Hungary, in 1997, called for a process of recognition, education and confession concerning economic injustice and ecological destruction. In 2000 the Executive Committee of WARC made a declaration stating that homosexual persons ought not to be deprived of their human rights. In 2004 the 24th General Council at Accra, Ghana, adopted a confession of faith based on the conviction that "the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neo-liberal economic globalization."

Regional needs and growing membership have given rise to area organizations within the Alliance. Area Councils include WARC Europe, the Caribbean and North American Area (CANAAC), the Alliance of Presbyterian Churches in Latin America (AIPRAL), the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA), the North East Asia Area (NEAAC). The central offices of the WARC are located in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. Programmes which emphasize theology, ecumenical relations, justice, partnership of women and men, cooperation and witness, youth, communication and finance are carried out from the general secretariat in Geneva.

The **Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC)** is a smaller grouping, mainly bringing together those churches whose adherence to the Reformed Confessions was a strongly held, defining principle. It began in 1946. Its founders believed that the adherence to the truth of these Confessions was the only ground for unity. In the six decades since, these churches have journeyed into a deeper understanding of ecumenicity, have qualified their demands for confessional unity, but retain confessional integrity as a high value. Along the way, some members would not accept these changes, and two other international groupings have emerged, the International Conference of Reformed Churches with a more doctrinaire emphasis, and the World Reformed Fellowship, which combines stricter doctrinal coherence with

an evangelical mission emphasis. Today, the REC still captures the values of the pietist and separatist tradition. In its purpose and values statement of 1998, it highlights biblical and confessional integrity as a primary value. At the same time, the Council has expanded its relationships with other ecumenical organizations and Christian communions. This is most striking in its closer relations with the WARC. Besides direct conversations and some collaboration, 27 of its 39 members are also affiliated with the WARC. The REC has expanded its contact with the World Council of Churches. After sending observers to WCC meetings for decades, it has become a consultant to the Conference of World Mission and Evangelism, and has sent delegates to meetings of the Commission of Faith and Order.

REC membership is strongest in Africa and Asia, and relatively weaker in Europe, North America and South America. The Council has four permanent commissions: Human Relations, Theological Education and Interchange, Mission and Diakonia, and Youth and Christian Nurture. It speaks out where its members suffer hardship or discrimination and has supported specific peace processes that affect its members. Since 1996 the Council has addressed the issue of religious pluralism, exploring what it means to live with neighbours of other faiths. It also provides a forum where members consult and compare their relationships to their governments. In 1999 the REC urged its members to join in the Jubilee 2000 campaign for the forgiveness of international debt. The office of the REC is located in Grand Rapids, USA.

The WARC has a total of 218 member churches with more than 76 million members; 121 of its member churches belong also to the WCC. Its office is located in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. The REC groups 39 churches representing 12 million believers; 10 of its member churches are also members of the WCC. The REC has its office in Grand Rapids, USA.

Periodicals: *WARC Update*; *Reformed World*. *REC News Exchange*; *REC Focus*.

Websites: www.warc.ch; www.recweb.org

Member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Africa

African Protestant Church (Cameroon)

Association of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Burkina Faso

Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Harare Synod

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Malawi Synod

Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv (Nigeria)

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar

Dutch Reformed Church (South Africa)

Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana

Dutch Reformed Church – Synod of Central Africa (Zimbabwe)

Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique

Evangelical Church of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville)

Evangelical Church of the Republic of Niger

Evangelical Community in Congo (DRC)

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola

Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ (Nigeria)

Lesotho Evangelical Church

Peoples Church of Africa (South Africa)

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon

Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

Protestant Church of Algeria

Protestant Church of Christ the King (Central African Republic)

Presbyterian Church in Rwanda

Presbyterian Church of East Africa (Kenya)

Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea

Presbyterian Church of Ghana

Presbyterian Church of Liberia

Presbyterian Church of Mauritius

Presbyterian Church of Mozambique

Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa

Presbyterian Church of the Sudan

Presbyterian Community in Congo (DRC)

Presbyterian Community of Eastern Kasai (DRC)

Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (DRC)

Presbyterian Community of Western Kasai (DRC)

(Reformed Presbyterian Community in Africa)

Protestant Church of Réunion Island

Protestant Church of Senegal

Protestant Community of Shaba (DRC)

Reformed Church in Africa (South Africa)

Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Reformed Church in Tunisia

Reformed Church in Zambia

Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria

Reformed Church of East Africa (Kenya)

Reformed Community of Presbyterians (DRC)

Reformed Presbyterian Church in Uganda

United Church of Christ in Mozambique

United Church of Christ in Nigeria

United Church of Zambia

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Mozambique)

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Namibia Regional Council)

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Zimbabwe)

Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Asia

Christian Church in Luwuk Banggai (Indonesia)

Christian Church in Central Sulawesi (Indonesia)

Christian Church in Sulawesi (Indonesia)

Christian Church of Southern Sumatra (Indonesia)

Christian Church of Sumba (Indonesia)

Christian Churches of Java (Indonesia)

Christian Evangelical Church in Bolang Mongondow (Indonesia)
Christian Evangelical Church in Halmahera (Indonesia)
Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (Indonesia)
Christian Evangelical Church in Timor (Indonesia)
Christian Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud (Indonesia)
 Church of Christ (India)
 Church of Christ in Japan
Church of Christ in Thailand
Church of North India
Church of South India
 Congregational Federation of Australia
 Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka
East Java Christian Church (Indonesia)
Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (Indonesia)
Evangelical Church in Kalimantan (Indonesia)
 Evangelical Church of Maraland (India)
Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
 Independent Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Indonesian Christian Church
Indonesian Protestant Church in Buol Toli-Toli
Indonesian Protestant Church in Donggala
Indonesian Protestant Church in Gorontalo
Karo Batak Protestant Church (Indonesia)
Korean Christian Church in Japan
Mara Evangelical Church (Myanmar)
Pasundan Christian Church (Indonesia)
 Presbyterian Church in Korea (HapDongJeongTong)
 Presbyterian Church in Malaysia
Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
 Presbyterian Church in Singapore
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
 Presbyterian Church of India
 Presbyterian Church of Korea (DaeShin I)
Presbyterian Church of Korea (TongHap)
 Presbytery of Lanka (Sri Lanka)
 Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Protestant Christian Church in Bali (Indonesia)
Protestant Church in the Moluccas (Indonesia)
Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi (Indonesia)
Protestant Church in Timor Lorosa'e
Protestant Church in West Indonesia
 Reformed Presbyterian Church, North East India
Sialkot Diocese of the Church of Pakistan
Toraja Church (Indonesia)
 Toraja Mamasa Church (Indonesia)
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
 United Evangelical Church of Christ (Philippines)
Uniting Church in Australia

Caribbean

Church of Scotland (Trinidad & Tobago)
 Dominican Evangelical Church (Dominican Rep.)
 Guyana Congregational Union
 Guyana Presbyterian Church
 Presbyterian Church in Grenada
Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago
 Presbyterian Church of Guyana
Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba
United Church in Jamaica and Cayman Islands

Europe

Church of Lippe (Germany)
Church of Scotland (UK)
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
Evangelical Reformed Church (Germany)
 Evangelical-Reformed Church in Poland
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (Switzerland)
Greek Evangelical Church
 Malagasy Protestant Church (France)
Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
 Presbyterian Church in Ireland (UK)
 Presbyterian Church of Africa (UK)
Presbyterian Church of Wales (UK)
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
 Protestant Reformed Church of Luxemburg H.B.
Reformed Alliance (Germany)
 Reformed Christian Church in Croatia
Reformed Christian Church in Serbia & Montenegro
Reformed Church in Austria
 Reformed Church in Latvia
 Reformed Church in Slovenia
Reformed Church in Romania – Oradea District
Reformed Church in Romania – Transylvania District
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
Reformed Church of France
Reformed Church of Hungary
Reformed Church of Slovakia
 Reformed Synod of Denmark
Remonstrant Brotherhood (NL)
Spanish Evangelical Church
 Synod of the Evangelical Reformed Church (Unitas Lithuaniae)
United Free Church of Scotland (UK)
United Protestant Church of Belgium
United Reformed Church (UK)
 Union of Evangelical Congregational Churches in Bulgaria
Union of Welsh Independents (UK)
Waldensian Evangelical Church (Italy)

Latin America

Arab Evangelical Church of Sao Paolo (Brazil)
 Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Mexico
Christian Reformed Church of Brazil
Evangelical Church of the River Plate (Argentina)
 Reformed Churches in Argentina
 Evangelical Congregation Church (Argentina)
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Bolivia
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Costa Rica
 Evangelical Reformed Churches in Brazil
 Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil
 National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala
 National Presbyterian Church (Chile)
 National Presbyterian Church in Mexico, A.R.
 Presbyterian Church of Brazil
 Presbyterian Church of Chile
Presbyterian Church of Colombia
 Presbyterian Church of Venezuela
 Presbyterian Evangelical Church in Chile
 Presbyterian Reformed Church of Mexico
 Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador
 Swiss Evangelical Church (Argentina)
 United Evangelical Church of Ecuador
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil
Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate (Uruguay)

Middle East

Evangelical Church – Synod of the Nile (Egypt)
National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
 National Evangelical Union of Lebanon
 St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church (Holy Land)
Synod of the Evangelical Church in Iran
Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East

North America

Christian Reformed Church in North America
 Cumberland Presbyterian Church (USA)
 Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (USA)
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church (USA)
Korean Presbyterian Church in America (USA)
 Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church (USA)
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Reformed Church in America (USA)
United Church of Canada
United Church of Christ (USA)

Pacific

Congregational Christian Church of Niue
Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu
Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa
Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands

Kiribati Protestant Church

Maohi Protestant Church (French Polynesia)

Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Reformed Congregational Churches (Marshall Islands)

United Church in the Solomon Islands

United Church of Christ – Congregational in the Marshall Islands

Member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Council

Africa

Christian Reformed Church of East Africa (Uganda)

Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Harare Synod

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Nkhoma Synod (Malawi)

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Zambia Synod

Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv (Nigeria)

Dutch Reformed Church (South Africa)

Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (South Africa)

Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (Dutch

Reformed Church of Africa, South Africa)

Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

Reformed Church in Africa (South Africa)

Reformed Church in Mozambique

Reformed Church in Zambia

Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria

Reformed Church of East Africa (Kenya)

Reformed Church of Swaziland

Reformed Presbyterian Church in Uganda

Asia

Christian Church of Sumba (Indonesia)

Christian Reformed Churches in Australia

Christian Reformed Church in Myanmar

Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines

Church of Toraja Mamasa (Indonesia)

Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka

Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)

Javanese Christian Churches (Indonesia)

Presbyterian Church of India

Presbyterian General Assembly (Reformed Church of Korea)

Reformed Church in Japan

Southernpart Sumatra Christian Church (Indonesia)

Toraja Church (Indonesia)

Caribbean

Christian Reformed Church of the Dominican Republic

Europe

Evangelical Reformed Church of France

Greek Evangelical Church

Protestant Church in the Netherlands

Latin America

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Mexico

North America

Christian Reformed Church in North America

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian church, although distinctive in government and practice. The Army's doctrine follows the mainstream of Christian belief and its articles of faith emphasize God's saving purposes. Its objects are "the advancement of the Christian religion... and, pursuant thereto, the advancement of education, the relief of poverty, and other charitable objects beneficial to society or the community of mankind as a whole."

The movement, founded in London, England, in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth, has spread to many parts of the world. The rapid deployment of the first Salvationists was aided by the adoption of a quasi-military command structure in 1878 when the title "The Salvation Army" was brought into use. A similarly practical organization today enables resources to be equally flexible. Responding to a recurrent theme in Christianity which sees the church engaged in spiritual warfare, the Army has used to advantage certain soldierly features such as uniforms, flags and ranks to identify, inspire and regulate its endeavours. Evangelistic and social enterprises are maintained, under the authority of the general, by full-time officers and employees, as well as soldiers who give service in their free time. The Army also benefits from the support of many adherents and friends, including those who serve on advisory boards. Leadership in the Army is provided by commissioned officers who are recognized ministers of religion.

All Salvationists accept a disciplined and compassionate life of high moral standards which includes abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. From its earliest days the Army has accorded women equal opportunities, every rank and service being open to them, and from childhood the young are encouraged to love and serve God. Raised to evangelize, the Army spontaneously embarked on schemes for the social betterment of the poor. Such concerns developed, wherever the Army operates, in practical, skilled and cost-effective ways. Evolving social services meet endemic needs and specific crises worldwide. Up-to-date facilities and highly-trained staff are employed.

The need for modernization and longer-term development are under continual review. Increasingly the Army's policy and its indigenous membership allow it to cooperate with international relief agencies and governments alike. The movement's partnership with both private and public philanthropy will continue to bring comfort to the needy, while the proclamation of God's redemptive love offers individuals and communities the opportunity to enjoy a better life on earth and a place in Christ's everlasting kingdom.

The international headquarters of the Army are located in London. There are 15,241 local Salvation Army churches (including corps, outposts, societies, new plants and recovery churches) with close to 1.6 million Christians (senior soldiers, junior soldiers and adherents). No Army churches are member churches of the WCC, although most of the territories are members of National Councils of Churches associated with the WCC.

Periodical: *All the World*

Website: www.salvationarmy.org

Territories and commands of the Salvation Army

Africa

Congo (Brazzaville) Territory
Congo (Kinshasa) & Angola Territory
East Africa Territory
Ghana Territory
Liberia Command
Malawi Command
Nigeria Territory
Rwanda Region
Southern Africa Territory
Tanzania Command
Zambia Territory
Zimbabwe Territory

Asia

Australia Eastern Territory
Australia Southern Territory
Bangladesh Command
Hong Kong & Macau Command
India Territories: National, Central, Eastern,
Northern, South Eastern, South Western, Western
Indonesia Territory
Japan Territory
Korea Territory
Pakistan Territory
Philippines Territory
Singapore, Malaysia & Myanmar Command
Sri Lanka Territory
Taiwan Region

Caribbean

Caribbean Territory

Europe

Belgium Command
Denmark Territory
Eastern Europe Command
Finland & Estonia Territory
France Territory
Germany Territory
Italy Command
Netherlands & Czech Republic Territory
Norway, Iceland & the Faroes Territory
Portugal Command
Spain Command
Sweden & Latvia Territory
Switzerland, Austria & Hungary Territory
United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland

Latin America

Brazil Territory
 Latin America North Territory
 Mexico Territory
 South America East Territory
 South America West Territory

North America

Canada & Bermuda Territory
 USA Territories: National, Central,
 Eastern, Southern, Western

Pacific

New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga Territory
 Papua New Guinea Territory

Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a denomination of conservative evangelical Christians. The church arose out of the eschatological expectations of the middle nineteenth century (epitomized by the Millerite Movement), but was only formally organized in 1863. The Millerites had set October 22, 1844, for the return of Christ. With the failure of this date, the movement fell into disarray. One of the small Adventist groups adopted the Seventh-day Sabbath, reinterpreted the events of 1844, and became, in due course, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The roots of Adventism, however, go back much further – to the Reformation and the church of the New Testament.

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as the inspired word of God. In essence, the Bible is their only creed, though they do have a statement of 28 Fundamental Beliefs, which is subject to revision at any General Conference World Session, as new light is received or better language is found, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These beliefs include the Trinity, believers' baptism, spiritual gifts, death as an unconscious state until the resurrection, and the New Earth as the home of the redeemed after the millennium. SDAs are creationists and believe that man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of the Biblical creation week. With the entry of sin, God's plan of salvation was put into effect. In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, his suffering, death and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept the gift of salvation may have eternal life. Since the very beginning, Seventh-day Adventists have been consistent advocates of religious freedom for all, and have taken a lead in its international promotion, including at the UN.

Global mission and evangelism are essential elements of the SDA ethos. The church is intent on sharing the good news of justification, righteousness by faith, salvation through Jesus Christ, and his imminent return. As a result, the SDA Church is probably the most widespread Protestant denomination, with work in over 200 countries. Though cradled in North America, less than 8 percent of her membership today resides there, and there is considerable growth in various parts of the world. Adventists wish to live lives of service to God and humankind. To help achieve this goal the church owns and operates many institutions: over 6,000 schools (from kindergarten to university), 720 hospitals and health-care facilities, publishing houses, and health food factories. Media centres (worldwide

satellite TV and radio) have been established in recent decades. Adventists believe in a healthy lifestyle, which includes a good diet (many Adventists are vegetarians) and abstention from harmful drugs, including alcohol and tobacco products. Adventists also promote public health. The church operates the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), which is well-known internationally for its work on behalf of disaster victims and third world development projects.

The SDA church sees herself not as a federation of local or national churches, but as one world church. There is an effective form of representative government. The church's polity provides for four key organizational levels: 1) the local church, a united body of individual believers, 2) the Conference, a united body of local churches, 3) the Union Conference, the united body of several conferences (a larger territory, often a nation), 4) the General Conference, the worldwide body whose constituent units are the approximately 100 Unions. The General Conference operates through its 13 Divisions (branch offices).

Seventh-day Adventists "recognize those agencies that lift up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for the evangelization of the world" (*General Conference Working Policy*, O105). They enter into fellowship with other Christians and practice open communion. They believe that in a certain sense they are a prophetic movement with a time of the end message centering on the "eternal gospel" to give to the world. While they welcome opportunities to dialogue and reach better understanding, they have not formally joined the organized ecumenical movement by becoming members of councils of churches. They do, however, in many cases have observer, consultant, or advisor status. Adventists wish to preserve and protect their unique identity and give life to their God-given evangelistic and service mission.

The office of the general conference is located in Silver Spring, USA. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is comprised of 14 million baptized believers, representing with children a fellowship of some 25 million Adventists.

Periodical: *Adventist Review*

Website: www.adventist.org

United and Uniting churches

United churches are those which have been formed through the fusion of two or more separate churches, of different or the same confession. They have arisen over the past two centuries as churches have sought to make the unity given them in Christ fully visible. In union, churches move beyond cooperation and partnership to a degree of mutual accountability which can adequately be expressed only by life within a single ecclesial structure. There are some 50 united churches today, found in all regions of the world. Many of these incorporate churches that were themselves formed from earlier unions, so that the total number of "uniting actions" may be as many as 150.

Uniting churches are those presently engaged in a formal process towards union. At present a total of some 40 churches are involved in at least 15 such processes worldwide. In some cases churches on the way to union already express the unity given them in Christ in partial and provisional ways, for example through partnership agreements or joint mission programmes. It should be noted that some already United Churches describe themselves as "Uniting" to stress their commitment to further union (e.g. the Uniting Church in Australia, 1977).

United churches have taken Christ's prayer that Christians may be one (John 17:21) as an imperative for concrete action towards unity. They have adopted a "kenotic ecclesiology" whereby divided churches from different confessions are prepared to "die" to their former identities in order to "rise" together into a new, united church. They are the most complete (though not the only possible) form of "organic union" (the second Faith and Order world conference, Edinburgh 1937), and the clearest expression of the "local churches truly united" foreseen in the statement on conciliar fellowship from the WCC Nairobi assembly (1975).

The United churches form probably the most diverse family of churches worldwide. Five distinct types are often identified: the first is the earliest unions bringing together Reformed and Lutheran churches in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia in the 19th and early 20th centuries (the Old Prussian Union of 1817, later the Evangelical Church of the Union, in Germany). The second type is the series of unions through the 19th century, bringing together various combinations of Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, and other "free" churches in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States (beginning with the United Church of Canada, 1925).

The third type is unions among the confessions named above in the southern hemisphere and the Caribbean (the Church of Christ in Thailand, 1934; the United Church of Zambia, 1965; the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, 1992); the fourth type are the unions including Anglican churches and thus episcopal structures of governance (beginning with the Church of South India, 1947, and including the most comprehensive union, the Church of North India, 1970, composed from Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Disciples, Methodist, Brethren and Presbyterian churches). Up to now these unions are limited to the Indian sub-continent.

The fifth type is the unions among churches within the same confessional family (the Presbyterian Church (USA), 1983). While such unions do not require overcoming major theological differences, historical, cultural and social sources of division often make the union process at least as difficult as among churches from different confessions.

These churches, then, are linked not so much by a uniform structure or ecclesiology as by their commitment to visible – that is, structural as well as spiritual – unity and by the actual experience of union. Their ecclesiological life is shaped by their experience of integrating the diverse (indeed, sometimes apparently opposed) understandings and practices brought into the union (for example, the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom (1072/1983) has incorporated both "infant" and "adult" baptism into its theological and liturgical life).

Church unions often make an important theological and social witness. For example, the unions in the southern hemisphere have been an important vehicle for the indigenization of the church as several mission-founded churches, funded largely from abroad, have yielded to a single, autonomous locally led and funded church. A different witness was made by the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (1999) as it brought together a predominantly white church and a black church in the context of immediate post-apartheid South Africa.

To this point the United and Uniting churches have not formed their own Christian World Communion, not wanting to become "another denomination" and perhaps fearing that such a move would lessen their zeal for further union. The WCC's Faith and Order Commission has, at their request, served as the united and uniting churches' common reference point, organizing a series of international

consultations of united and uniting churches and publishing a Survey of Church Union Negotiations at regular intervals.

Many United churches have maintained contacts to the world confessional bodies of their constituent churches. Of the world communions, the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches have encouraged their member churches to enter into new unions. They (and the Anglican Consultative Council) have maintained continuing contacts with united churches incorporating respectively Disciples, Reformed and Congregational, or Anglican elements.

Issues facing the United and Uniting churches today, as explored at their most recent international consultation, include (1) the nature of *union* (how much agreement in theology and practice is essential for union? what form of organization will best serve the new united church?), the imperative for *mission* (how to ensure that the union serves the church's mission to the world, rather than simply ensuring the church's survival?), and the question of *identity* (what is the distinctive identity of these churches? how can they relate most effectively to one another, to their "parent" churches and their world communions, to other churches and to the ecumenical movement?). In addition, several current union processes (in South Africa, Wales, the United States) include Anglican or Episcopalian churches and thus face the question of episcopal governance. In the United States, issues of racism are crucial in the nine-member Churches Uniting in Christ (from 2002, the successor to the Council on Christian Unity).

With their commitment to making unity fully visible, and their practical experience of union, the United and Uniting churches continue to make a distinctive and important contribution to the ecumenical movement.

Website: www.wcc-coe.org (under Faith and Order)

List of United and Uniting churches

Africa

Church of Christ in Congo (DRC)
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
United Church of Zambia
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Asia

China Christian Council
Church of Bangladesh
Church of Christ in Thailand
 Church of Jesus Christ in Lairam
 (Baptists & Church of Jesus Christ, North-East India)
Church of North India
Church of Pakistan
Church of South India
Communion of Churches in India
 (from the Joint Council CSI/CNI/Mar Thoma)
Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China

Korean Christian Church in Japan
United Church of Christ in Japan
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
Uniting Church in Australia

Caribbean

United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
United Protestant Church Netherlands Antilles

Europe

Evangelical Church in Rhineland (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Anhalt (Germany)
Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Westphalia (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Silesian Upper Lusatia (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Pommern (Germany)
Evangelical Church of the Union (Germany)
Evangelical Church of the Palatinate (Germany)
Bremen Evangelical Church (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Baden (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Hessen und Nassau (Germany)
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions (Austria)
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (Czech Republic)
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Reformed Church of France
United Reformed Church (UK)
United Protestant Church of Belgium
Waldensian Church/Evangelical Methodist Church of Italy

North America

Churches Uniting in Christ (USA)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Presbyterian Church (USA)
United Church of Canada
United Church of Christ [USA]
United Methodist Church [USA]

Pacific

United Church in Papua New Guinea
United Church in the Solomon Islands
United Church of Christ – Congregational
in the Marshall Islands

Comparative Table I

Christian World Communions and the World Council of Churches
Overlap in Number of Member Churches (in decreasing order)

Christian World Communion	Number of churches	WCC members	
		Number	%
Oriental Orthodox	7	7	100
United and Uniting Churches	51	49	94
Eastern Orthodox	18	15	83,3
International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference	6	5	83,3
Anglican Communion	44	36	82
World Methodist Council	76	59	77,6
Moravian Unity Board	19*	12	63
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	218	121	55
Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council	19	10	52,6
Lutheran World Federation	140	73	52
Friends World Committee for Consultation	103**	43	41,7
Reformed Ecumenical Council	39	10	25,6
Baptist World Alliance	211	25	11,8
Mennonite World Conference	95	3	3,2
Salvation Army	58***	0	0
World Evangelical Alliance	?	6****	
Pentecostals (Classical)	?	7	
Holiness Churches (Christian Holiness Partnership)	21	0	0
Seventh-day Adventist General Conference*****		0	0

Note: For several Christian World Communions, the number of churches that are members of the WCC (column 2) is higher than the number of the corresponding church family in the table on page 14 (column 2). The membership of these Christian World Communions includes other churches which are part of the WCC, either indirectly, or churches which have a dual confessional belonging, or United and Uniting churches.

* Provinces

** Yearly Meetings

***Territories and Commands

**** WCC member churches of which it is known that they are a member of a national evangelical fellowship or alliance affiliated with the WEA. No survey has been done to establish the exact number.

*****The SDA Church sees herself as one world church

Comparative Table II

**Christian World Communions and the World Council of Churches
Overlap in Number of Christians (in decreasing order)***

Christian World Communion	Number of Christians	WCC members	
		Number	%
Oriental Orthodox	65,694,642	65,694,652	100
Anglican Communion	85,234,199**	83,518,812	98
Moravian Unity Board	797,000	790,339	99
International Old Catholic Bishops' Conf.	115,000	82,621	72
Eastern Orthodox	228,100,000	214,204,830	94
Lutheran World Federation	66,000,000	59,656,695	90,3
World Methodist Council	40,000,000	33,584,821	84
United and Uniting Churches	80191629	72,323,924	90
Disciples Ecumenical Consult. Council	4,500,000	3,613,306	80,3
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	76,000,000	49,881,871	65,6
Baptist World Alliance***	35,000,000	21,430,217	61
Friends World Cttee for Consultation	368,000	203,800	55
Reformed Ecumenical Council	12,000,000	4,621,000	38,5
Mennonite World Conference	1,051,806	102,524	9,7
World Evangelical Alliance	380,000,000	4,703,346	1,2****
Pentecostals (Classical)	78,000,000	260,600	<1%
Holiness Churches	12,000,000	0	0
Salvation Army	1,600,000	0	0
Seventh-day Adventists General Conf.	14,000,000	0	0

Note: For several Christian World Communions, the number of Christians that are in WCC membership (column 2) is higher than the number of the corresponding church family in the table on page 14 (column 4). The membership of these Christian World Communions includes other churches which are part of the WCC, either indirectly, or churches which have a dual confessional belonging, or United and Uniting churches.

*The figures used in this table are those communicated by the Christian World Communions and the WCC member churches, with the exception of those for the Anglicans and the Pentecostals (Classical), taken from the World Christian Database

**Number of Anglicans according to the World Christian Database plus the four united churches which are members of the Anglican Communion.

***Baptist churches only count baptized believers as members.

****This percentage is based on the total membership of the six WCC member churches known to be members of a national evangelical fellowship or alliance affiliated with the WEA (see preceding table). The real percentage is likely to be higher, for two reasons: 1) The exact number of WCC member churches related to the WEA through national affiliation is probably higher than six, and 2) many Christians and congregations belonging to WCC member churches are individually a member of the national evangelical fellowship or alliance in their country.

Global Mission Communions

“Global Mission Communions” are church bodies set up for the purpose of world mission, which are based on the principle of local churches coming together for celebration, deliberation and common action. They have come into being in the context of the ecumenical reflection on international relationships in mission that has been going on since the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism of 1963, in Mexico City. Many of the old missionary societies, which were created in the 18th and 19th century to do mission overseas, have been restructured with a view to integrating the concern for mission in the church or churches concerned, and to changing the nature of the relationship between the “sending” churches and the churches that have grown out of the missionary work. As a result, many churches in the “global North” have set up departments for world mission or global ministries within their ecclesial structure, and accountable to their synod or general assembly, in the place of the former missionary society. In consultation with churches in the “global South” to which they are historically related, they have sought to reshape these relationships on a basis of partnership and mutuality.

Some groups of churches in the north and the south, bound together by a historic missionary relationship, have gone a step further. They have decided to join in a community or council, in which each church is represented as a member equal to the others, and which is entrusted with the task of doing world mission together. A common feature of these “global mission communions”, which distinguishes them from other world mission bodies, is their conciliar nature, as bodies made up of local, autonomous churches. The oldest of these is the Evangelical Community of Apostolic Action (Cevaa), formed in 1971 by the churches historically related to the former Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, which now calls itself Community of Churches in Mission – Cevaa. It was followed by the Council for World Mission in 1977, and the United Evangelical Mission in 1996.

Community of Churches in Mission – Cevaa

The Evangelical Community of Apostolic Action (Cevaa in French) is a Community of Protestant Churches in Mission, which was created in 1971, in Paris, France. The Cevaa came into being by decision of the member churches from north and south of the former Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (founded in 1822), to enter together into new relationships of equality and solidarity. Today, Cevaa groups 35 Protestant churches in 21 countries, in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. These churches have decided to pool part of their human and financial resources and activities, in order to respond together to their calling in mission. The story of the creation of the Cevaa is part of the changes in the 1960s, when the so-called “younger churches”, which often had achieved their autonomy before the independence of their countries, acquired a new strength and freedom, and rejected the missionary tutelage of the past. It was the time of the merger of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches (1961), of the understanding of mission as part of the church, and as “mission in six continents” (Mexico, 1963). The Cevaa was preceded by joint “apostolic actions” in Dahomey (now Bénin) and France, carried out by two inter-

national and inter-disciplinary teams. These new experiences in doing mission, which lasted several years, paved the way for the new body to be set up.

Three convictions are at the basis of the Cevaa and constitute its specificity. The Christian community can no longer be divided into missionary churches and churches that are the object of mission: all have been entrusted with the mission of Christ. Secondly, the best way to witness to Christ in today's societies is to form together a community of faith, prayer and action. And thirdly, the whole gospel must be announced to the whole human being, not only the part that speaks of the kingdom to come, not only the spiritual part, but the totality of the message of life in God, that is addressed to the whole person, as an individual and a member of the society. These convictions are embodied in all the missionary programmes of the Cevaa, which are all undergirded by a foundational activity of the community called "theological animation": the confrontation of the reading of the gospel with the socio-cultural realities of each church; the constant re-actualization of the gospel message; the critical reflection on the world and the church, based on the scriptures; the strengthening of the capacities of the people of God through various ways of formation.

The charter of the Cevaa, adopted in 2002, spells out the objectives of the community: 1) To support common actions and missionary programmes for the witness and the evangelization of the member churches. 2) To share human and material resources according to jointly agreed priorities. 3) To awaken the creative abilities of believers through training and community education. 4) To develop networks of vigilance for the respect of human rights, against all forms of oppression and discrimination, and for the preservation of the creation. 5) To stimulate a responsible participation of all, men and women, in the many facets of life in church and society. 6) To encourage the circulation of information, the sharing of experience and the mutual challenge between churches of different sensitivities, languages and cultures. 7) Whenever possible and respecting the beliefs of all, to promote dialogue and cooperation with those active, socially and religiously, in a given area.

The Cevaa has its offices in Montpellier, France.

Periodical: *Témoignages* (bimonthly, in French and English)

Website: www.cevaa.org

Member churches of Cevaa

Africa

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar

Evangelical Church in Morocco

Evangelical Church of Cameroon

Evangelical Church of Gabon

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo

Lesotho Evangelical Church

Lutheran Church of Senegal

Methodist Church of Togo

Presbyterian Church of Mauritius

Presbyterian Church of Mozambique

Protestant Methodist Church of Bénin

Protestant Church of Christ the King (Central African Republic)

Protestant Church of Réunion Island
 Protestant Church of Senegal
Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon
United Church of Zambia
United Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire

Europe

Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
Evangelical Free Church of Geneva (Switzerland)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France
Evangelical Methodist Church in Italy
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Fribourg (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Neuchâtel (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Valais (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Vaud (Switzerland)
 National Union of Independent Evangelical Reformed Churches (France)
Protestant Church of Geneva (Switzerland)
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
Reformed Church of France
Reformed Synodical Union Bern-Jura (Switzerland)
Union of Waldensian and Methodist Churches (Italy)

Pacific

Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles
Maohi Protestant Church (French Polynesia)

Council for World Mission

The Council for World Mission (CWM) is a worldwide community of Christian churches committed to sharing their resources of money, people, skills and insights globally, to carry out God's mission locally. The CWM was established in 1977 in its present form. It grew out of the London Missionary Society (LMS, founded in 1795), the Commonwealth (Colonial) Missionary Society (1936), and the (English) Presbyterian Board of Missions (1847). The CWM has 31 member churches: nine in the Pacific, five in Europe, ten in Asia, five in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, and two in the Caribbean. Most member churches of the CWM have backgrounds in the Reformed tradition. Several are United churches.

The Council for World Mission was created as an experiment in a new kind of missionary organization. No longer were the resources for ministry and mission to come just from Europe. The Council's churches voted for a democratic structure in which everyone could contribute and receive from each other as equals. The CWM believes that the local church has the primary responsibility for carrying forward God's mission locally. As a global body, the Council exists to help resource-sharing for mission by the CWM community of churches. The Council has four permanent programmes: sharing people in mission, mission programme development, mission education, and leadership development and capacity-building in mission and ministry. These programmes give encouragement, provide training opportunities, share information, and give practical help to the churches' mission programmes.

Sharing people in mission and ministry is still an important part of CWM's work. Over the years, a new pattern of mission personnel has emerged. Missionary move-

ment is no longer a one-way traffic from North to South or West to East. It is multi-directional. Missionaries are sent from South to South, South to North, North to North, and North to South. Each church is encouraged to create a possibility to receive someone from a partner church, and send someone to a partner church. Current activities of sharing people in mission include long-term and short-term missionary service, and so-called "experience-enlargement programmes". The latter are designed for individuals or groups to go through an in-depth experience in a partner church, in a particular field or in the total life of that church, for up to three months. This can include the concept of twinning of two congregations, to learn, grow, and share together in mission. The programmes for scholarships, training, and leadership development are another dimension of sharing people in mission. CWM seeks to promote scholarship and training opportunities not only in the North and West, but also in the South and the East.

In 1992, CWM launched the Community of Women and Men in Mission (CWMM), one of several new programmes of the Council. A survey was conducted in ten of the member churches, which helped to identify issues that hinder partnership of women and men in mission. Regional consultations were held to look at these issues in the particular regional context. At the global level, the meetings resulted in the launching of the campaign "Women Taking Control of Their Lives" in 1998, which helped the participating churches to raise awareness about gender inequality in the church and society. A global meeting held in 2001 reviewed progress in the area of partnership of women and men in mission within CWM, and brought suggestions for the future; currently the CWMM programme is in full swing. There are also other more recent programmes which are being piloted and which are making good progress within CWM, its constituencies and its mission partners.

The CWM has its offices in London, UK.

Periodical: *Inside Out* (bimonthly)

Website: www.cwmission.org.uk

Member churches of the Council for World Mission

Africa

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar

Churches of Christ in Malawi

United Church of Zambia

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Asia

Church of Bangladesh

Church of North India

Church of South India

Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China

Presbyterian Church in Singapore

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Presbyterian Church of India

Presbyterian Church of Korea

Presbyterian Church of Malaysia

Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

Caribbean

Guyana Congregational Union

United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Europe

Congregational Federation (UK)

Presbyterian Church of Wales (UK)

Protestant Church in the Netherlands

Union of Welsh Independent (UK)

United Reformed Church (UK)

Pacific

Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu

Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa

Congregational Christian Church in Samoa

Congregational Union of New Zealand

Kiribati Protestant Church

Nauru Congregational Church

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

United Church in Papua New Guinea

United Church in the Solomon Islands

United Evangelical Mission

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) is a missionary communion of churches in three continents, which currently consists of 34 member churches in Africa, Asia, and Europe (Germany). Its objective is the communion in mission, and mutual assistance in missionary tasks. The UEM constitution states that the United Evangelical Mission – Communion of Churches in Three Continents – shall operate within a network of churches in Africa, Asia, and Europe, and wherever it is called to be. Together they shall proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of all people, and shall meet the present-day missionary challenges. In a world torn apart, they commit themselves to remain members of the one body of Christ, and therefore:

- grow together into a worshipping, learning and serving community;
- share gifts, insights, and responsibilities;
- call all people to repentance and new life;
- bear witness of the kingdom of God in striving for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The United Evangelical Mission is the successor to the Vereinigte Evangelische Mission which, as a German missionary organization, was itself established in 1971 through a fusion of the Rhenish Mission (founded in 1828) and the Bethel Mission (1886), and in 1979 the Zaire Mission. The transformation of the German missionary body into an international missionary communion of churches was launched in 1996, as a result of the first general assembly of the UEM, in Bethel, Germany. In the international missionary communion, all member churches support each other through the exchange of experience, staff and financial assistance. Particular focal points are the fields of church social service and education. German staff work as ministers, theological lecturers, deacons, physicians, nurses, agricultural and building engineers and administrators in Africa and Asia. In return,

African and Asian parish workers and theologians work in German parishes, UEM, and regional services. Constantly gaining in importance is the South-South exchange. Southern churches currently exchange staff, for example, from Tanzania to Botswana or from Rwanda to Congo. In Indonesia, the exchange of staff between churches has a long tradition. The objective of the extension of this South-South exchange is to overcome gradually the dominating influence of money and technology. Self-confidence may grow to find African or Asian solutions.

Another focal point of UEM's work is the commitment to human rights. The joint work of the member churches, for example, through education programmes, human rights projects, lobby and advocacy work, is committed to justice, peace and the integrity of creation (e.g. campaign for the cancellation of debt). UEM is a member of the Forum for Human Rights, an amalgamation of over 40 German non-governmental organizations which is committed to enforcing human rights globally, and in Germany. Since 2000, special emphasis is put on the coordination and support of anti-AIDS programmes in the churches. Other programme priorities include the empowerment of women, youth work, and evangelism.

The UEM is organized in a general assembly, three regional assemblies, a council, an executive committee, and a secretariat. The demands, objectives and decisions for regional activities are formulated in the three regional assemblies for Africa, Asia and Germany, which meet at least once between the general assemblies and appoint delegates. The general assembly meets every four years to discuss general policies and decide on guidelines and priorities for joint work. It elects to the council nine representatives from each region. The council meets once a year and elects an executive committee with five members which meets three times a year and entrusts the executive staff (conference of secretaries) with the coordination of daily work.

Periodical: *Mission Online* (quarterly, in English); *In die Welt, für die Welt* (bi-monthly, in German); *VEM-Infoservice* (monthly, in German)

Website: www.vemission.org

Member churches of the United Evangelical Mission

Africa

Church of Christ in Congo – Baptist Community in Central Africa (DRC)

Church of Christ in Congo – Community of the Disciples of Christ (DRC)

Church of Christ in Congo – Community of United Evangelical Churches on the Lulonga (DRC)

Evangelical Church of Cameroon

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

(Northwest, Northeast, East and Coastal, Karagwe Dioceses)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia

Presbyterian Church in Rwanda

Province of the Episcopal Church in Rwanda

Asia

Batak Christian Community Church (Indonesia)

Batak Protestant Christian Church (Indonesia)

Chinese Rhenish Hong Kong Lutheran Synod

Christian Church in Indonesia (HKI)

Christian Church in North Central Java (Indonesia)

Christian Protestant Angkola Church (Indonesia)
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia
Christian Protestant Mentawai Church (Indonesia)
East Java Christian Church (Indonesia)
Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (Indonesia)
Karo Batak Protestant Christian Church (Indonesia)
Methodist Church in Sri Lanka
Nias Christian Protestant Church (Indonesia)
Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (Indonesia)
United Church of Christ in the Philippines

Europe

Church of Lippe (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Rhineland (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Westphalia (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau (Germany)
Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck (Germany)
Evangelical Reformed Church (Germany)

Part II

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL

Regional and National Councils and Conferences of Churches

In English, the word “council” has two distinct meanings. The first application of the term, sometimes used in the phrase the ‘councils of the undivided church,’ refers to the seven ecumenical councils stretching from Nicea I (325) and Constantinople I (381) to Constantinople III (680-81) and Nicea II (787). These councils have a privileged place in Christian tradition because the leaders of the “oikoumene” (the inhabited world of the Roman-Byzantine empire) established some basic matters of Christian faith and church order that previously had been threatening the stability of the church. The second use of the word “council”, as defined by the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (WCC Publications, Geneva, 2002), “is a voluntary association of churches within a defined geographic area which, without compromising the distinctive identity and authority of its members, enables their sharing in common reflection and action on matters of Christian unity, faith and ethics, and in programmes of common Christian witness and service...”

In other languages, one term (concile, Konzil, concilium) often is used for the ecumenical “councils” of the ancient church, the governing bodies of some contemporary churches, and the form of full, visible Christian unity envisioned as the goal of the ecumenical movement. Another word (conseil, Rat, consilium) is used when referring to voluntary associations of churches committed to healing their divisions for the sake of the world. These voluntary associations are the subject of this chapter.

Nature and Purpose of Councils and Conferences of Churches

Councils of churches are enormously diverse in size, purpose and membership, depending on context, history and self-understanding, and yet all are participants in the one ecumenical movement. Some are partnerships of churches. Others include, either as members or associate members, religious agencies such as Bible societies, YMCAs and YWCAs, and associations of seminaries. Some are funded primarily by the member bodies themselves; others are dependent on aid from outside sources, which may affect their programmatic foci.

Some councils were formed early in the twentieth century, and remain pan-Protestant in membership. In a number of countries they are called “federation” rather than council. Others were formed (or re-formed) in the middle of the twentieth century after Vatican II, when the Roman Catholic Church officially entered the ecumenical movement. The members of these councils may include Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. In a few cases, two national bodies co-exist in one country, one mainly or entirely Protestant, the other with Roman Catholic, and sometimes also Orthodox and/or Evangelical/Pentecostal membership. There are also situations where a so-called “free church” grouping exists along with a national council.

In at least one region, the primary focus of ecumenical ministry was shifted from the national to the local. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is a reconfiguration of the former British Council of Churches, developed as the Roman Catholic Church became a member. The purpose of CTBI was consistent with a conciliar vision – working together when possible, and striving towards greater visible unity among churches in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and England. The vision of where this purpose would be most fully lived out, however, shifted to communities, towns and regions, which were encouraged to form local “churches together in...” The phrase “churches together” has been picked up in other places – notably the United States – but does not necessarily conform to the CTBI model in practice. Instead, Christian Churches Together in the USA envisions “growing closer together” through dialogue among five Christian “families” of churches – Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, Orthodox, Racial/Ethnic and Roman Catholic. In yet another situation, the members of the Canadian Council of Churches re-envisioned their purpose as a “Forum where everyone’s voice matters and all voices are equal.” Their emphasis is on inclusivity, dialogue and process, as well as common witness when possible. Only actions receiving “100 percent consensus are recognized as representing the common Christianity we hold and as the voice of the Canadian Council of Churches”.

Many national councils find themselves struggling with issues that, not surprisingly, are reflected in their members – seeking to reclaim their purpose, to involve new generations of ecumenical leaders, or to obtain adequate funding to meet their shared goals. The understanding of the nature and purpose of councils of churches continues to evolve as the churches experience and reflect on their life together in various contexts, but in all cases they are *of the churches*, and this is a key to their identity.

In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the World Council of Churches, a policy statement entitled *Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches* was adopted by the WCC Central Committee (September 1997) and “commended to member churches and ecumenical partners for study and action.” The text continues to provide a good summary of the evolving understanding of councils, and is a useful touchstone when considering these issues. The text refers to the WCC Constitution (Art. 3,1) which says the churches are “on the way to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, [seeking] to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.” (p. 13)

Despite their diverse origins and make-up, national councils of churches are composed primarily or exclusively of churches within the geographic region they encompass. They are, of necessity, representational bodies. Member churches designate official representatives who (at least ideally) serve both as liaisons from their own church to gatherings of the churches together through the council, and who communicate concerns of the council to the church they represent. Sometimes these representatives are religious leaders; sometimes they are ecumenical officers; sometimes they are officially designated clergy and laity. In recent years, some councils of churches, with the encouragement of their members, have been more intentional in including persons who previously had been excluded from decision-making processes – for example, women, minority communities (however defined in a particular context), people with disabilities, and youth.

When church representatives come together at a meeting of the council of churches, although the churches retain their distinct and autonomous identities, their decisions and actions in many ways reflect the self-understandings of the members about what it means to be the church – and thus, the church together. Their gatherings will tend to include one or more of the following: shared Bible

study, prayer, and worship; dialogue about issues the churches hold in common, and about matters of disagreement; initiatives that encourage ecumenical education and formation; common witness to the good news of the gospel, and understandings about ways to be evangelical without proselytizing; social service for the common good; prophetic witness about social concerns when the churches are in agreement; and relationships with people of other faiths.

The churches do these things together through the council in faithfulness to the prayer of Jesus “that they may all be one”, (John 17:20) and in keeping with the reconciling impulses of the gospel. They typically have an agreed basis of membership (sometimes Christological; sometimes Trinitarian), and some statement of understanding about the commitments of membership that churches make to each other through their participation in the life of the council. As the churches have “lived together” in ecumenical relationship, they have acted on their commitments to Christian unity in a variety of ways: maintaining relationships through dialogue in the midst of tensions among churches or in society; working together in response to human needs; challenging each other to reconcile memories of past wrongs; offering common witness in the face of daunting political challenges; and praying for each other, and praying together.

Regional Conferences and Councils

At the time of the foundation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 there were no regional ecumenical organizations yet. The first to come into being was the East Asia Christian Conference, in 1957. It was followed in 1959 by the Conference of European Churches (CEC). At the early stage of this new development in the ecumenical movement, the leadership of the WCC voiced some concern that it would lead to fragmentation and weakening of the oneness of the movement. However, the creation of regionalized ecumenical instruments reflected the felt need of the churches for a place where they could deal with the specific issues of their region, and make their voice heard at the regional level. Regional ecumenical organizations also provide a context for the churches to express and celebrate their common regional identity, culturally, historically and politically.

In 1963, the African churches founded the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), and in 1966 the churches in the Pacific established the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC). The Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) was formed in 1973. That same year the East Asia Christian Conference became the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). In 1974, the churches of the Middle East brought into being the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). And in 1982 the churches in Latin America created CLAI, the Latin American Council of Churches. The only region where there is no such body is North America.

Although the regional ecumenical organizations (REOs as they are being called) share a common identity and constitute a distinctive group within the one ecumenical movement, they differ in approach, priorities, working style, and structure, according to the particularities of each region. The different designations of “conference” and “council” also reflect nuances in their self-understanding. In two of them, the Christian Conference of Asia and the Pacific Conference of Churches, national councils of churches are full members along with the churches. The Caribbean Conference of Churches has a category of associate membership for national councils of churches; the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Conference of European Churches and the Latin American Council of Churches have a similar associate status for councils and other organiza-

tions. The Middle East Council of Churches is shaped according to the specific model of “families of churches”.

In three of the regional bodies the Catholic Church is a full member: in the Caribbean Conference of Churches as founding member, in the Pacific Conference of Churches since 1976 and 1991, and in the Middle East Council of Churches since 1990. The Christian Conference of Asia works closely with the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, with which it has formed an Asian Ecumenical Committee. Similarly, the Conference of European Churches and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences cooperate in various programmes and have jointly organized European Ecumenical Assemblies. The Latin American Council of Churches is in dialogue with the Latin American Episcopal Conference.

In the early 1980s, the regional ecumenical organizations began to develop inter-regional cooperation. The general secretaries of the organizations started meeting regularly, to share information and discuss common concerns. The World Council of Churches joined this process. In 1992, the REOs and the WCC formulated and agreed on a set of “guiding principles for relationships and cooperation”. Since then, an “REOs and WCC General Secretaries Group” meets annually. It should be underlined that the regional ecumenical organizations are entirely autonomous bodies, which in no way depend structurally or otherwise on the WCC. The WCC has formally acknowledged the REOs in its Rules as “essential partners in the ecumenical enterprise”. This partnership is reflected in the intensive programme cooperation between WCC teams and REOs, in a variety of ways, according to the nature of the programmes and the regional priorities.

National Councils and Conferences

In 1910, at the time of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, there were only two national Christian councils. One of the objectives of the International Missionary Council (IMC), which was formed after the Edinburgh conference, was to encourage missionary societies to set up national conferences or councils for the coordination of their work. By 1948, thirty councils were members of the IMC. When the IMC merged with the WCC in 1961, these councils became affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. This relationship still exists. Thirty national councils of churches (or national Christian councils) were affiliated with CWME in 2005.

The process by which missionary conferences developed into Christian councils, and then, even if not always in name, into national councils of churches (NCCs), was already advanced by 1948. In the following years it was carried further. Asian and African Christian leaders began to think that it was inappropriate for missionary agencies to have membership in a national Christian council. While their financial contributions were useful, and even necessary, their membership both obscured the nature of the councils and diminished their effectiveness in their relationships with communities and national governments. The National Council of Churches in India is a typical example. The Missionary Council was formed in 1912; then the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon in 1921; then the National Christian Council of India and Pakistan in 1947. According to its revised constitution of 1956 “only organized church bodies are entitled to direct representation in the Council”. Missions which were still not integrated in a church in India could become associate members. Thereafter, the Christian councils have tended to become councils of churches. In 1979 the National Christian Council of India changed its name to the National Council of

Churches in India, reflecting the change in understanding of membership as church-based.

The Second WCC Assembly at Evanston (1954) made provision for a more formal relationship of national councils of churches/Christian councils with the WCC, by creating a category of “associate councils”. The difference between “associate councils” and “affiliated councils” is that associate councils are formally related to the WCC as a whole. They are represented by advisers at WCC central committee meetings and by delegated representatives at assemblies. In 2005, the number of associate councils was 64.

Affiliated councils are legally members of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism and support the work of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. Some of these councils do not wish to become directly associated with the WCC because of objections in some of their member churches. In order to provide a framework for cooperation with these and other councils, a third category of relationship has been established, called “councils in working relationship with the WCC”.

In the late 1960s, the WCC made specific efforts to encourage and facilitate the creation of national councils of churches/Christian councils in countries where they did not yet exist. In 1971 it convened the first international conference of national councils, to discuss their nature and purpose, their role in the ecumenical movement, and cooperation and relationships between the WCC and national councils. A second international consultation was held in 1986, this time jointly organized by the WCC, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) of the Catholic Church, and a working group set up by the councils. In 1993 the third international consultation took place in Hong Kong, organized by the NCCs themselves, with the participation of the WCC and the PCPCU. Two more consultations have been held, in 1997 and 2002, in conjunction with meetings of the WCC central committee. These have been limited to associate councils, mainly for financial reasons. A small liaison group composed of general secretaries of NCCs in various continents relates to the WCC on matters of overall relationships and consultation. Programme cooperation between the NCCs and the WCC takes places in many ways. Very often the national council of churches/Christian council is the primary ecumenical partner of the WCC in a particular country.

National councils of churches exist in all the regions except the Middle East. There is a consensus among the churches in the Middle East that the purpose of Christian witness and unity in the region is best served at the regional level, through the Middle East Council of Churches.

Roman Catholic participation in NCCs and REOs

Roman Catholic participation in national councils of churches and regional ecumenical organizations has grown steadily since the Second Vatican Council. As of this writing, the Roman Catholic Church is a member of 72¹ of the 122 national councils of churches/Christian councils surveyed in this book, and of three of the seven regional ecumenical organizations (Caribbean Conference; Pacific Conference; and Middle East Council). *Ecumenical Collaboration at the Regional, National, and Local Levels* was the first post-Vatican II text developed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) which laid out

¹ Full member of 65, observer/associate member of 7. Of these, 34 are associate councils with the WCC.

principles on which Catholic participation in councils of churches is based. A later text, *The Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (DAP), issued by the PCPCU in 1975, calls councils of churches an “important instrument” in the ecumenical quest and welcomes participation, while placing primary authority for deciding whether to join a council with local bishops through their synods of episcopal conferences. It lists a variety of issues that might be considered when evaluating the possibility of membership, such as the system of representation, voting rights, decision-making processes, manner of making public statements, and the degree of authority attributed to common statements. (DAP, 169) A 1995 document on *The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those Engaged in Pastoral Work* (PCPCU) recommends that ecumenical formation, especially of seminarians, include information about councils of churches.

In anticipation of the 9th assembly of the World Council of Churches, the Joint Working Group, responsible for facilitating relationships between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, issued a text on Roman Catholic participation in national and regional councils of churches entitled *Inspired by the Same Vision*. That text includes a detailed development of the history of Roman Catholic participation in national councils of churches and regional ecumenical organizations.

Orthodox participation in NCCs and REOs

In countries with a majority Orthodox church, as yet there are no national councils of churches (with the exception of Romania). In many other places, however, the Orthodox churches are members of the NCC, e.g. in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and to a lesser extent in the Caribbean and Latin America. Orthodox churches are also fully involved in the REOs, particularly in Europe and the Middle East, and in Africa and Asia.

Evangelical and Pentecostal participation in NCCs and REOs

A relatively new phenomenon, which so far has not been the subject of adequate reflection, is the increasing presence of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in national and regional ecumenical bodies. In this regard, the Salvation Army has traditionally had a bridge function. In 2005, national territories or commands of the Salvation Army were full members of 52 national councils, and observer/associate member in three more. In the majority of these countries they are also part of the national evangelical alliance or fellowship. The Salvation Army is also represented in most of the REOs, through some of its national territories in the regions concerned. In 2005, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was present as a full member in five national councils, and as an observer/associate in another four.

The listing of NCC constituencies in this book reveals that 50 national councils, i.e. 40 percent of the total, have Pentecostal participation through the presence among their members of one or several Pentecostal churches. In 40 councils, Pentecostal churches are full members, in 10 they are observer/associate members. In a few regions, some Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have also joined the regional ecumenical body, e.g. in the Caribbean and Europe, and – more significantly – in Latin America. Several African Instituted churches are members of the AACC.

Africa

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

The All Africa Conference of Churches is a fellowship of churches and institutions working together in their common witness to the gospel by:

- Mobilizing to live faithfully the message of God's love
- Nurturing a common understanding of the faith
- Interpreting and responding to challenges to human dignity
- Acting prophetically in word, life, and services for healing

The decision to create a regional organization was taken at a widely representative meeting at Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1958. The work of the Provisional and Continuation Committees appointed following the Ibadan Conference led to the birth of the AACC at its first assembly on 20 April, 1963, in Kampala, Uganda. The theme of the Kampala assembly was *Freedom and Unity in Christ*. The delegates addressed the colonial situation in the spirit of nationalism that permeated the political scene of the continent at the time. The message of Kampala to the churches in Africa asked a vital question that needs to be asked again today: "Why, in Cape Town, in Dakar, in Douala and Nairobi, on the plains and by the rivers of this land, must we continue in those divisions, which crucify the Lord until he returns?" The delegates identified themselves with the aspirations of the peoples of the continent towards development of dignity and a mature personality in Christ and exhorted the churches "to participate wholeheartedly in the building of the African nation". The AACC has accompanied the churches in their engagement in the decolonization and nation-building processes. It played a significant role in the dismantling of apartheid in Southern Africa. The journey towards unity and freedom initiated at Kampala has continued through seven other assemblies with different themes:

Abidjan (Ivory Coast)	1969	<i>Working with Christ in Africa Today</i>
Lusaka (Zambia)	1974	<i>Living No Longer for Ourselves but for Christ</i>
Nairobi (Kenya)	1981	<i>Following in the Light of Jesus Christ</i>
Lomé (Togo)	1987	<i>You shall be my Witnesses</i>
Harare (Zimbabwe)	1992	<i>Abundant Life in Jesus Christ</i>
Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)	1997	<i>Troubled but not Destroyed</i>
Yaoundé (Cameroon)	2003	<i>Come Let Us Rebuild</i>

These themes manifest the effective prophetic witness of the church in Africa as the people of the continent struggle with the issues that confront them in their daily lives. The theme of the eighth assembly, *Come Let us Rebuild*, was a call to the churches to continue where they left off at Kampala. The impulse for the theme is the Nehemiah motif of rebuilding Jerusalem devastated by the Babylonian exile. Like Jerusalem of the time, the continent of Africa has gone through devastation of many sorts. The euphoria that characterized the period of independence has been lost and the continent has experienced conflicts and wars, resulting from disappointingly bad governance, corruption, global economic injustice, etc. Increased poverty has characterized the independent nations and has

been further compounded with the emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that continues to devastate the populations. The eighth assembly in Yaoundé re-issued the call of Kampala “to participate wholeheartedly in the building of the African nation”.

The AACC continues to stand with the churches in addressing relevant issues that confront the continent, and to provide a platform of collective voices and collective action. Its foundational programmes are theology, mission and evangelism, ecumenical growth and interfaith relations. Core issues on its agenda include social and economic justice (overcoming poverty), health and wholeness (HIV/AIDS) and international relations (governance, ethics and morality). Its vision is “Called to work together for Life, Justice, Truth and Peace”. The AACC has 133 member churches and 32 associate councils of churches in 39 countries, representing 120 million Christians in Africa. It is engaged in a thorough process of reconfiguring ecumenical relationships and cooperation in the continent, by integrating the churches, national councils, sub-regional fellowships and the continental body itself into a coherent network. The head office of the AACC is in Nairobi, Kenya; there is a regional office in Lomé, Togo.

Website: www.aacc-ceta.org

Member churches of the All Africa Conference of Churches

Protestant Church of Algeria
Evangelical Church of Angola
Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola
Protestant Methodist Church of Benin
Church of the Province of Central Africa (Botswana)
Association of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Burkina Faso
Episcopal Church of Burundi
Episcopal Church of Burundi – Diocese of Bujumbura
Union of Baptist Churches of Burundi
United Methodist Church of Burundi
African Protestant Church (Cameroon)
Evangelical Church of Cameroon
Native Baptist Church of Cameroon
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
Presbyterian Church of Cameroon
Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon
Protestant Church of Christ the King (Central African Republic)
Evangelical Church of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville)
United Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire
Church of Christ in Congo – Baptist Community in Africa (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Baptist Community of Congo (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Central Community of Christ in Africa (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Community of the Assemblies of the Brethren in Shaba (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Community of the Disciples of Christ in Congo (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Evangelical Community of Congo (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Evangelical Community of Kwango (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Mennonite Community (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Congo (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – Protestant Baptist Church in Africa (DRC)
Church of Christ in Congo – United Methodist Community (DRC)
Church of Christ Light of the Holy Spirit (DRC)
Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu (DRC)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Congo (DRC)
Salvation Army (DRC)
Evangelical Protestant Church in Djibouti
Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
Episcopal Church in Egypt, N. Africa, Ethiopia & Somalia
Evangelical Church Synod of the Nile
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
Evangelical Church of Gabon
Anglican Diocese of The Gambia
Methodist Church of The Gambia
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana
Joint Anglican Diocesan Council of Ghana
Methodist Church in Ghana
Presbyterian Church of Ghana
Salvation Army (Ghana)
Reformed Church of Equatorial Guinea
African Brotherhood Church (Kenya)
African Christian Church and Schools (Kenya)
African Israel Nineveh Church (Kenya)
African Church of the Holy Spirit (Kenya)
Anglican Church of Kenya
East African Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers) (Kenya)
Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church
Methodist Church in Kenya
Nairobi Yearly Meeting of Friends Church (Quakers) (Kenya)
Presbyterian Church of East Africa (Kenya)
Salvation Army (Kenya)
Lesotho Evangelical Church
Church of the Lord Aladura (Liberia)
Episcopal Church of Liberia
Lutheran Church in Liberia
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (Liberia)
Presbyterian Church of Liberia
United Methodist Church (Liberia)
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean (Madagascar)
Malagasy Lutheran Church (Madagascar)
Presbyterian Church of Mauritius
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Synod
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Blantyre
Church of the Province of Central Africa (Malawi)
Evangelical Church in Morocco
Presbyterian Church of Mozambique
United Methodist Church of Mozambique
Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Church of the Lord Aladura (Nigeria)
Methodist Church in Nigeria
Nigeria Baptist Convention
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
Salvation Army (Nigeria)
Province of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda
Province of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda – Diocese of Butare
Free Methodist Church in Rwanda
Presbyterian Church in Rwanda
Union of Baptist Churches in Rwanda
Protestant Church of Senegal
Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean (Seychelles)

African Methodist Episcopal Church (Sierra Leone)
Church of the Province of West Africa, Diocese of Freetown (Sierra Leone)
Church of the Province of West Africa, Diocese Bo (Sierra Leone)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone
Methodist Church of Sierra Leone
United Methodist Church (Sierra Leone)
Church of the Province of Southern Africa (South Africa)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa
Methodist Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)
Moravian Church in South Africa
Presbyterian Church of Africa (South Africa)
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
 Ethiopian Episcopal Church, South Africa
Episcopal Church of the Province of the Sudan
Presbyterian Church in Sudan
 Kukhany' Okusha Zion Church (Swaziland)
 (Christian Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion)
 United Christian Church of Africa (Swaziland)
Anglican Church of Tanzania
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
Moravian Church in Tanzania
Moravian Church in Western Tanzania
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo
Methodist Church of Togo
Church of Uganda
Reformed Church of Zambia
 Salvation Army – Zambia & Malawi Territory
United Church of Zambia
Zambian Anglican Council
African Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
 Christian Marching Church of Central Africa (Zimbabwe)
 Independent African Church (Mushakata) (Zimbabwe)
Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
 Salvation Army (Zimbabwe)
United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
United Methodist Church (Zimbabwe)

Associate members of the All Africa Conference of Churches

Council of Christian Churches in Angola
 Botswana Christian Council
 National Council of Churches of Burundi
 Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon
 The Gambia Christian Council
 Christian Council of Ghana
 Christian Council of Lesotho
 Liberian Council of Churches
 Federation of Protestant Churches in Madagascar
 Malawi Council of Churches
 Christian Council of Mozambique
 Council of Churches in Namibia
 Christian Council of Nigeria
 Protestant Council of Rwanda
 Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
 South Africa Council of Churches
 Sudan Council of Churches
 Council of Swaziland Churches

Christian Council of Tanzania
 Uganda Joint Christian Council
 Christian Council of Zambia
 Zimbabwe Council of Churches
 Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa (ACLCA)
 Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF) (Zambia)
 Organization of African Instituted Churches
 Protestant Theological Faculty (Cameroon)
 Zomba Theological College (Malawi)
 Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda
 Christian Care (Zimbabwe)
 Interdenominational African Ministries' Association of Southern Africa (IDAMASA)
 Liberia Baptist Missionary & Educational Convention, Inc.
 Rwandan Women Community Development Network

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN INSTITUTED CHURCHES

The Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) is an association of African Independent and Instituted Churches (AICs), which has its origins in the work of HG Bishop Markos of the Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt) with AICs since 1976, in Kenya. In 1978, HH Pope Shenouda III of the Coptic Orthodox Church invited leaders of AICs from seven countries for a conference in Cairo, where the OAIC was founded. The basic aims of the organization were teaching and training. On purpose, development work and political involvement were left out. The main activity was Theological Education by Extension (TEE), which received much support from ecumenical partners.

The second conference of the OAIC, in 1982, was attended by representatives of AICs from 17 countries. The conference approved a constitution which required member bodies to be Trinitarian, based on the New and Old Testament, and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In terms of organization, the constitution placed ultimate authority with a general assembly to be convened every four years, and composed of representatives of the member churches. This model proved not to be suitable for the OAIC, which was lacking the resources to implement adequately such constitutional requirements. In spite of these shortcomings, the conference stimulated conciliarity among AICs. It sought to establish an AIC identity, distinct from the other church groupings in Africa, such as the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, and more conservative groups.

In the early 1980s, the international headquarters of the OAIC were established in Nairobi, Kenya. The TEE programme continued to spread throughout the continent and became the support structure of the organization. As of 1990, three new departments were set up: Rural Development, Women, and Research and Communication. A serious review of the organization was conducted which resulted in a regionalization, whereby churches would first adhere to one of the OAIC regions, or chapters, and the general assembly would be composed of representatives of these regions. The internal administration would be re-organized. The new structure was put in place in 1997, when the assembly was able to meet, in conjunction with a joint OAIC-WCC consultation on the relationships between the AICs and the mission-founded churches in Africa.

The OAIC has made a significant shift in the direction of a more ecumenical profile. This is mainly due to the growing self-confidence of the AICs in their own identity. There are now chapters in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Botswana, Zim-

babwe, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The mission of the OAIC continues: “to bring African Instituted Churches together in fellowship and to equip and enable them to preach the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed.”

Member churches of the Organization of African Instituted Churches

East Africa Region

Kenya

African Christian Church and Schools
African Church of Holy Spirit
 African Church Mission
 African Divine Church
 African Holy Zionist Church
 African Interior Church
African Israel Nineveh Church
 African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa
 African Kenya Church of Saints
 Avahuki Church of Kenya
 Bethany Church of God
 Bethsaida Church
 Calvary Evangelistic Fellowship Church
 Christian Brotherhood Church
 Church of African Sinai Mission
 Church of Christ in Africa
 Church of Mercy
 Church of Peace in Africa
 Church of Prophets
 Church of Saviour
Coptic Orthodox Church
 God's Last Appeal Church
 Gospel Holy Spirit Church
 Gospel of Jesus Christ
 Gospel Messengers Fellowship Church
 Holy Spirit Church of East Africa
 Home Zion Tabernacle Centre
 Israel Assembly of Kenya
 Jerusalem Church of Kenya
 Jesus Worship Power Centre
 Kanisa Israel
 Kenya Israel Evangelistic Church of East Africa
 Liberty Gospel Church
 Light Evangelical Church
 Lyahuka Church of East Africa
 Mercy and Holy Ghost Church
 Musanda Christian Church of Africa
 Nabii Christian Church
 National Independent Church of Africa
 Nomiya Luo Roho Church
 Pentecostal Revival Church of God
 Pentecostal Evangelism Team
 Redeeming Ministries
 Roho Israel Church of God
 Roho Revelation Church
 Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of Africa
 St Catherine Calvary Church
 Shiloh United Church of Christ Apostolic Worldwide
 Tabernacle Church in Africa
 United Pentecostal Evangelistic Crusade

Vineyard Grace Centre
 Zion Harvest Church
 Zionist Church
 In Association: Dini ya Roho Mafuta Pole ye Africa

Tanzania

African Brotherhood Church
 Africa Faith Mission
 Church of Christ in Africa
 Free Church of Africa
 Four Square Gospel Church of Tanzania
 Immanuel Church of Africa
 Kerubi Church
 Last Church of God
 Nomiya Church
 Nomiya Sabato
 Onyal Nyuol Roho Church
 The Gospel for All Nation Church
 Tanganyika Sabato Church
 Volunteers of Salvation
 Kanisa la Pentecosti
 Maranatha Christian Centre
 Siloam Tabernacle Assembly
 Roho Nyota
 The Holy Baptist Church
 Holy Ghost Sabbath

Uganda

African Divine Church
African Israel Nineveh Church
 Centre for Evangelism
 Church of Christ in Africa
 Christ's Disciples
 Christian Worship Centre
 Harvesters Church
 Holy Spirit Church of East Africa
 Redeemed Gospel Ministries
 Unity Church of Christ

South African Region

Western Cape – Cape Town

African Apostolic Faith Mission
 African Manuel Church in Zion
 Apostolic Faith Mission Voice of Zion
 Cepolon Apostolic Church in Zion
 Church of Christ of South Africa
 Christ for All Nations Church
 Efese Apostolic Church in Zion
 First Apostolic Church in Zion
 Holy Nazareth Apostolic Church
 Ibandla Lika Kristu South Africa
 Ibandla Lika Kristu
 International Healing Ministry
 New Congregation Church in Zion
 New Pentecostal Church in Zion
 Sandesi Apostolic Church in Zion
 The Betaleste Church in Zion
 The Colossian Apostolic Church in Zion
 The Pedesta Zion Church
 Ultimatum Christian Faith Ministry

Zion Church the Home of God
Zion City Apostolic Church of South Africa

Eastern Cape – South Africa

African Apostolic Holy Spiritually Gift Church in Zion
Anointed Word of Faith Church
Antioch Christian Church
Apostolic Gospel Church
Bantu Congregational Church in Zion
Baptist Church of God
Congregational Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion
Corinthians Church of South Africa
Elukhanyisweni Apostolic Church in Zion
General Church of God
Luxolweni Apostolic Church in Christ
Mesiya Christian Apostolic Church
Morians Epic Church in Zion
National Congregation of Christ
New Corinthian Apostolic Church in Zion
New Peniel Church in Zion
Nkululekweni Apostolic Church in Zion
No 1 Holy Church in Zion
No 1 Jerusalem Church in Zion
Peniel Church in Zion
Philadele Apostolic Church in Zion
Philippian Church Apostolic in Zion of South Africa
Reformed Church in Christ
Salem Christian Church in Zion
Spiritual Christian Apostolic Church in Zion
St Johns Apostolic Faith Mission
St Paul's Faith Mission Church of South Africa
St Patric Christian Church
St Peter's Apostolic Church in Zion
St Peter's Church in Zion
St Peters Faith Mission Church
St Solomon Apostolic Church
The African Holy Apostolic Church
The Church Apostolic in Zion in Africa
The Church of God in Zion
The Christian Apostolic Church of Africa
The Christ Gospel Church
The Dumeth Church of God
The Free Church of Christ
The Holy Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion
The Holy Banner of Ethiopian Apostolic Church in Zion
The Holy Light Apostolic Church
The New Star Church in Zion
The Union Public Christ Apostolic Church in Zion
The Voice of Usindiso Zion Church
The Zion Feast Church of Christ
True Church of God in Zion
Verona Apostolic Church in Zion
Vow Apostolic Church in Zion
We Are the Family of Jesus Church in Zion
Zion Apostolic Church of Christ

Democratic Republic of Congo Region

Church of Christ – Light of the Holy Spirit
Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu
Church of Jesus the Saviour

Church of the Alliance of Christ
 Church of the Holy Spirit in Africa
 Church of the Holy Spirit in Congo
 Community of Evangelization and Healing by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit
 Evangelical and Prophetic Community
 Evangelical Church of the Apostles in Congo
 Evangelical Pentecostal Assembly in Africa
 Pentecostal Mission and Alliance of Christ

Madagascar Region

Malagasy Church Tranozorozoro Antranobiriky (FTMA)
 Renewed Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLMN)
 Independent Christian Spiritual Lutheran Church (FLMaK)

Nigeria Region

Aladura Apostolic Church
 Aladura Church of God International
 Blessed New Jerusalem Church of Nigeria
 Celestial Church of Christ
 Christ Apostolic Mission Church
 Christ Army Church of Nigeria
 Christ Church of Light
 Christ Faith Mission Church of Nigeria
 Christ Gospel Apostolic Church
 Christ Gospel Church of Peace (Aladura)
 Christ Healing Sabbath Mission
 Christ Holy Church International
 Christ People Church (Aladura)
 Christ Salvation Sabbath Mission
 Christ the Lamb Sabbath Galilee International
 Christ the Saviour Church Aladura
 Christ the Saviour Gospel Church
Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide
 Communion of Independent African Church
 Community of Yahweh
 Divine Healing Evangelistic Crusade
 Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim
 Gospel Baptist Conference of Nigeria
 Holy Sabbath Church of Christ, Ezizama
 Holy Spiritual Church of Jesus Christ
 Hosanna Church of Christ
 Inner Circle Christ Mission
 Jehovah True Sabbath Mission of Christ the King
 Jerusalem Church of the Lord
 Living Christ Gospel Mission
 Ma'ayo Christ's Church (Aladura)
 Messiah Gospel of Cherubin and Seraphim
 Mission of True Sabbath of Nigeria
 New Eden Light of Jesus Christ
 New Temple Spiritual Church of Nigeria
 Sacred Cherubim and Seraphim Church
 Salem Church of Christ
 Soul Rescue Apostolic Church
 Spiritual Healing Temple of God
 Trinity Council Church
 True Covenant of God Sabbath Mission
 True Jesus Apostolic Church
 United Church of Cherubim & Seraphim
 United Spiritual Church of Nigeria
 Union Church of the Lord

Union Church of Christ
 Universal Praying Band
 Wonderful Power of Christ Church

West Africa Anglophone Region Ghana

Abba Shalom Church
 Apostles Church
 Believers Salvation Ministry
 Calvary Faith Ministries
 Cherubim and Seraphim
 Christ General International Gospel Ministry.
 Christ Healing Ministry
 Christ Holy Church International
 Christ Mission Church
 Christ Revival Ministry
 Church of the Living God.
 Commonwealth Christian Centre
 Divine Healers Church
 Divine Voice of God.
 Eternal Joy Assembly
 Faith Gospel Ministry
 Family of Christ Ministry
 Father's Heart Ministry, Worldwide
 Fellowship Church of Christ
 Glory of Christ Ministry
 Gospel Faith Mission International
 Gospel Hour Church
 Gospel Message Church
 Grace Christian Ministry
 Grace Universal Church.
 Higher Hope Miracle Chapel International
 Holy Shepherd Church
 Inner Truth Church
 Jesus Alone Ministry
 Jesus Feeds Fellowship and Ministry International
 Lord of Nazareth Church
 Lord's Mission Church
 New Born In Christ Ministry
 Peaceful Healing Church
 Pentecostal Holy Church
 Pentecostal Restoration
 Power Hand of Christ.
 Solid Rock Outreach
 Springs of Life
 Steps to Christ Church
 Straight Gate Church
 Stream of Life
 Triumphant New Life Ministries
 Truth and Life Church
 United Christ Pentecostal Church
 United Church of Christ.
 Victory Family Ministry
 World Evangelism Mission
 Word Power Outreach

Additional churches in Ghana

Apostolic Christian Church
 Calvary Charismatic Center
 Christ Living Temple
 Christ Revival Church

Compassion for Souls Chapel
 Deeper Christian Life Ministries
 End Time Ministries
 Faith Gospel Church
 Grace and Truth Ministries
 Grace of God Church
 New Life Pentecostal Ministry

SUB-REGIONAL FELLOWSHIPS OF COUNCILS AND CHURCHES

Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches of Central Africa (FOCCOCA)

(Communauté fraternelle des Conseils chrétiens des Eglises et Eglises d'Afrique centrale, COFCEAC)

Founded in 2002.

Basis: Faith in the triune God. Commitment to the unity of the churches and the ecumenical movement.

Members:

Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches in Congo (Brazzaville)
 Council of Protestant Churches of Equatorial Guinea
 Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon
 Church of Christ the King (Central African Republic)
Evangelical Church of Gabon
 Ecumenical Peace Service (Cameroon)
 Christian Action for Peace and Justice (Congo Brazzaville)

Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA)

Founded in 1999.

Vision: The creation of communities that are inclusive, harmonious and living an abundant life in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa.

Members:

Christian Council of Tanzania
 Church of Christ in Congo
Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
 Evangelical Church of Eritrea
 National Council of Churches of Burundi
 National Council of Churches of Kenya
 New Sudan Council of Churches
 Protestant Council of Rwanda
 Sudan Council of Churches
 Uganda Joint Christian Council

Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA)

Founded in 1980 as Fellowship of Christian Councils in East and Southern Africa (FOCCESA) and as FOCCISA in 1999.

Objective: To enable Christian councils in the sub-region to pool their resources and energy.

Members:

Botswana Christian Council
 Christian Council of Lesotho
 Christian Council of Malawi
 Christian Council of Mozambique
 Christian Council of Tanzania
 Christian Council of Zambia
 Council of Christian Churches in Angola
 Council of Churches in Namibia
 Council of Swaziland Churches
 National Council of Churches of Kenya
 South African Council of Churches
 Zimbabwe Council of Churches

Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA)

Founded in 1994.

Objectives:

1. To promote fellowship and effective witness to our faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ among Christian councils and churches in the sub-region.
2. To encourage the setting up of Christian councils where they do not exist.
3. To promote the councils and churches' involvement in holistic development in the sub-region.

Members:

Christian Council of Ghana
 Christian Council of Guinea
 Christian Council of Nigeria
 Christian Council of The Gambia
 Christian Council of Togo
 Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
 Evangelical Church of the Republic of Niger
 Liberian Council of Churches
 Mennonite Central Committee, Burkina Faso
 Protestant Church of Senegal
Protestant Methodist Church of Benin
United Methodist Church in Côte d'Ivoire

ALGERIA

Population: 32,877,042
 Surface area: 2,4 million sq.km
 Capital: Algiers
 GNI per capita: 1,930 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Arabic, Berber, French
 Religions: Muslim 97%; other 3%; Christian < 1%
 Christianity: Catholics 4,203; Protestants 3,657; Independent 27,200

Algeria is the second largest country in Africa after Sudan. It became independent in 1962 after more than 130 years of French colonial rule and a bitter liberation struggle. In cooperation with the small churches in the country and the Algerian government, the WCC, CIMADE and other ecumenical agencies

founded in 1962 the Christian Committee for Service in Algeria. After a period of emergency relief, the CCSA developed a vast reforestation programme. By 1965, more than 22 million fruit and timber trees had been planted and another 50 million seedlings were handed over to the government. Ever since independence, the National Liberation Front (FLN) has dominated politics in Algeria, although a surprising first round electoral success of the fundamentalist Islamic National Front (FIS) in 1991 spurred the army to intervene, to prevent the Islamists from forming a government. Since then Algeria has struggled through a continuous low level civil conflict between Islamic activists and the secular state apparatus. This terrorism has had a profound impact among the Algerian population, of whom nearly 100,000 were killed before the FIS's armed wing was disbanded in January 2000. In 2005 the population voted in favour of a referendum on national reconciliation. While progress towards peace is slowly being made, better living conditions for the people and democratization continue to be Algeria's greatest challenge.

Protestant Church of Algeria*

(Eglise protestante d'Algérie)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 10,000

Communities: 14

Pastors: 2

Lay pastors: 12

Member of: WCC (1974) – MECC – FMEEC – WARC – ARCA – WMC

The official name of the church as recognized by Algerian authorities is in English: "Association of the Protestant Church of Algeria". Protestantism was present in Algeria from the early years of French colonization. The first synod of Reformed churches was held in 1843, and Methodists began their work in North Central Algeria (Bougie) in 1883, under the inspiration of the French Methodist Church, and organized in annual conferences (according to linguistic affinities). Many other denominations or missions have also served in Algeria, including the Adventists, Anglicans, Baptists, Mennonites, Pentecostals, and others. The association as it exists today, which takes the form of a federation of communities, was founded in 1972 by the coming together of the United Methodist and French Reformed communities in Algeria. At about the same time, the Mennonite, Salvation Army, and Church of God communities disappeared, and their members were incorporated into the Protestant Church of Algeria. Adventists and Anglicans exist alongside (and outside of) the Protestant Church.

The number of individual members of the church is not precise, as accurate records are not kept up-to-date by the constituent communities. The real number is somewhere between 5,000 and 15,000 in the entire country. The other Protestant faithful unattached to the Protestant Church of Algeria represent a group of about the same size. In addition to the member communities, the church is in relation with about fifteen communities that have asked to be included, and with which the church is in accompaniment (organization, training, etc.).

Since its foundation, many Algerian Christians have joined the church and have brought a new personality to it. These new communities are extremely diverse, ranging from very traditional to very informal and charismatic. They are also very enterprising in their outreach, with varying degrees of "discipline" and method. The witness is not simply verbal, however, as there is considerable emphasis on the diaconal aspects of witness: there are no more clinics or hospi-

tals, but many church members are involved in educational projects, in lay training programmes, in continuing training of leadership, in the opening and operation of day-care schools, kindergartens, publications, translation projects, specific church-school programmes of the different communities, choral groups and choirs, audiovisual activities and production, and church planting. A priority is the training of the current and future leadership for emerging communities.

ANGOLA

Population: 14,532,929

Surface area: 1,2 million sq.km

Capital: Luanda

GNI per capita: 740 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Portuguese, Mbundu, Kikongo

Religions : Christian 94%; traditional 5%; other 1%

Christianity: Catholics 9,856,484; Protestants 4,098,230; Anglicans 110,000;

Independent 743,740

Two Bantu kingdoms, the Kongo and the Mbundu, existed in the area now known as Angola, when the Portuguese arrived there at the end of the 15th century. The name Angola is derived from the name of the Mbundu king Ngola. The Portuguese colonial domination was marked by wars, the slave trade and oppression of the African people. Angola achieved its independence from Portugal in 1975, after a long liberation war which caused immense suffering. A protracted civil war followed, between the MPLA supported by the former Soviet Union, and UNITA supported by the USA and South Africa, that led to hundreds of thousands of displaced people, millions of refugees, and an estimated 1.5 million deaths between 1975 and 2000. The country continues to face huge problems of rehabilitation and reconstruction, aggravated by the problem of landmines and the incidence of HIV/AIDS. Angola is a major oil producer but the revenues hardly benefit the population because of corruption and greed of the elite. The churches have been deeply involved in peace and reconciliation, cooperating across denominational barriers of Protestant, Evangelical and Catholic. Two large churches, the United Methodist and the Anglican Diocese, are indirect members of the WCC, respectively through the United Methodist Church and the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. The Evangelical Alliance of Angola groups the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. Together with the Charismatics, they represent about 10 percent of the Christians in Angola (2000).

***Council of Christian Churches in Angola**

(Conselho de Igrejas Cristãs em Angola, CICA)

Founded in 1992 (forerunner: Angolan Council of Evangelical Churches, founded in 1977).

Objective: To promote cooperation between the churches and other national and international agencies.

Member churches:

Anglican Diocese in Angola

Apostolic Faith Church in Angola

Christian Apostolic Mission in Angola

Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola
 Evangelical Brethren Church in Angola
 Evangelical Church of Angola
Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
 Evangelical Mennonite Church in Angola
Evangelical Pentecostal Mission in Angola
Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola
 Full Gospel Church in Angola
Kimbanguist Church in Angola
 Mennonite Community Church in Angola
 Twelve Apostles Church in Angola
United Methodist Church in Angola

Associate members:

Alliance of YMCA
 Church of God in Angola
 Emmanuel Unido Seminar
 Salvation Army

Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola
 (Igreja Evangélica Baptista em Angola, IEBA)

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 90,000
 Local churches: 300
 Pastors: 77
 Member of: WCC (2005) – CICA – BWA – AABF

In 1878 the Baptist Mission Society (UK) began working in Angola. During the years 1961-74, known as the time of exile, most Baptist Christians took refuge in Congo (today's DRC). Two years after the independence of Angola, in 1977, the first general assembly took place and the Evangelical Baptist Church became autonomous. Its confession of faith reads: "We believe that the scriptures teach that there is a living and true God, infinite and intelligent spirit, supreme creator and judge of heaven and earth, glorious in holiness and worthy of all praise, trust and love, existing in three persons in unity and diversity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in all divine perfection, fulfilling distinct functions in accomplishing the great work of redemption." The church practices the sacraments of baptism (believers' baptism by immersion) and holy communion. It is organized according to the Baptist tradition. The supreme decision-making body is the general assembly, in which all the local churches are represented. The church is spread over eight of the 18 provinces of the country. More than 200,000 children and adults attend Sunday school classes (statistics 2001). Besides the pastors there are about 150 other full-time church workers. The IEBA has its own theological seminary in Luanda. The ministry is open to women. The church runs four clinics, a number of primary schools, four agricultural projects, a centre for street children and two vocational training centres.

Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
 (Igreja Evangelica Congregacional em Angola)

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 950,000
 Congregations: 2,800
 Pastors: 122

Deacons: 260

Deaconesses: 380

Member of: WCC (1985) – AACC – CICA – WARC

Periodical: *A Nossa Jornada* (bimonthly, in Portuguese)

The church unites the work originally begun by the American Board of Foreign Missions (now UCC, USA) in 1880 and the mission of the Congregational Church of Canada (now the UCC, Canada) in 1886. In 1940 a theological school was opened, and the graduation of several pastors resulted in a significant growth and development in the life of the church. During the period from 1957 to the independence of Angola in 1975, the work of the two North American churches was united and the new church was called the Council of Evangelical Churches in Central Angola. Following independence and the formation of a national Council of Churches the name was changed to the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola.

Due to original missionary agreements the IECA had strong membership in certain regions. In addition to 60 primary and three secondary schools, it had the most highly developed medical programme in the territory and an extensive rural public health service. During the civil war the infrastructure in the rural areas was completely destroyed and the church was divided into two: one part in the countryside and the other in the cities. Now that there is peace the work developed in the cities since 1977 is being extended to the rural areas and reconstruction has begun. New converts join the church which is growing and spreading throughout the country, working in 15 provinces out of 18.

According to its constitution the functions of the IECA are to maintain divine worship and to spread the Christian faith, revealed and manifested in the service of love to all human beings. Therefore the church is carrying out a strategic plan with different programmes of literacy and education, health, agriculture, peace-reconciliation and human rights. For this work the church has moved from being a rural mission church to an urban-rural mission church. The reconstruction of the rural infrastructures in order to help people rebuild their lives is an urgent task. At the same time the church has to strengthen its urban mission.

The IECA is the second oldest evangelical church in Angola and totally autonomous. Pastors are now trained at an interdenominational seminary in Huambo. The IECA participates fully in ecumenical activities and programmes in Angola.

Evangelical Pentecostal Mission of Angola

(Missão Evangélica Pentecostal de Angola)

Church Family: Pentecostal

Membership: 75,000

Congregations: 300

Pastors: 84

Evangelists: 366

Elders & Deacons: 542

Member of: WCC (1985) – CICA

The origins of the church go back to evangelistic work begun in 1950 by missionaries from the USA. They were later joined by missionaries from the Portuguese Assemblies of God. In 1974, when Angola became independent, the church took the name of Evangelical Pentecostal Mission of Angola. It is fully recognized by the government. The church is involved in evangelism and Christian

education, social work, issues of justice, peace, reconciliation and human rights, health care and rural development. It has departments for ecumenical and public relations, for women and for youth. Other departments look after the administration of the church and the needs of the pastors in the rural and urban areas. The MEPA has spread all over Angola.

All members of the church are authorized to preach the gospel. Services are held every day of the week. Baptism is by immersion. Besides baptism and the eucharist, the consecration of believers, marriage and burial are also celebrated as sacraments. The MEPA has good relations with the other Christian churches in Angola. It is affiliated with the World Pentecostal Fellowship and has close ties with Pentecostal churches in Brazil.

Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola (Igreja Evangélica Reformada de Angola, IERA)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 200,000

Congregations: 452

Pastors: 219

Member of: WCC (1995) – AACC – CICA – WARC – ARCA

The Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola (IERA) was founded in 1925 in Uíge Province (in the north) by missionaries from England and Switzerland. During the war of liberation (1961-75) the church suffered severe persecution at the hands of the Portuguese, its properties were destroyed and many members went into hiding or fled to neighbouring countries. After independence the parishes were gradually reconstituted and the church began to live and work again. In this same period the IERA and other churches founded the Council of Evangelical Churches in Angola and the IERA became a member of the United Emmanuel Seminary in Huambo, which will become the Protestant University of Angola. The church also created its own biblical institute. The pastoral ministry of the IERA is open to women. There are currently five women pastors. Women are also present in the executive committee of the church, some of them as elected members, some representing the women's organization.

The IERA is in relationship with the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, the Protestant Church in the Netherlands and the mission department of the Reformed Churches in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Uniting Evangelical Church “Anglican Communion in Angola”

See under Church of the Province of Southern Africa

BENIN

Population: 7,103,140

Surface area: 112,600 sq.km

Capital: Cotonou

GNI per capita: 440 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: French

Religions: Traditional African 42%; Christian 38%; Muslim 20%

Christianity: Catholics 1,750,000; Protestants 621,200; Independent 333,930

The Benin of today was the site of Dahomey, a prominent West African kingdom that rose in the 15th century on what was known as the Slave Coast, one of the primary supply centres of slaves to the European traders. In 1872 Dahomey became part of French West Africa and the Republic of Benin achieved independence in 1960. A succession of military governments ended in 1972 with the establishment of a government based on Marxist principles. Multi-party democracy was introduced in 1991. The economy of Benin is still largely based on subsistence agriculture. As in most former French colonies, the Catholic Church is the majority church. The Protestant Methodist Church is a member of the WCC. The largest Protestant denomination is the Assemblies of God, and there are several other sizeable Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. A Council of Protestant Evangelical Churches has been in existence, but was no longer functioning in 2005. The Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions, another grouping, is affiliated with the WEA.

Protestant Methodist Church of Benin

(Eglise protestante methodiste du Benin, EPMB)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 90,000

Congregations: 420

Pastors: 72

Member of: WCC (1972) – AACC – FECCIWA – WMC – Cevaa

The church was founded in 1843 by Thomas Birch Freeman of the Methodist Missionary Society of London. Freeman, the son of a freed slave, also undertook pioneering missionary work in Ghana and western Nigeria. The church maintains its historical links with the Methodist Church of Great Britain. Administratively the Methodist Church of Benin is organized in 15 regional synods. It covers the whole of the territory of Benin from the southern coastline to the Niger border in the north. The church is recognized as playing an active role in the life of the nation: it is involved in agricultural projects, in hospital and prison chaplaincy, in service to refugees; through its strong Union of Methodist Women it is directly concerned with the training of young girls and young women in rural areas, enabling them to have a basic education and to learn income-generating skills.

The Benin Methodist Church plays a leading role in the National Committee to Combat AIDS, but also, at local church level and through the women's union, it works to promote AIDS awareness and prevention.

Ministerial training is a pivotal part of the total mission of the Methodist Church through the Protestant University of West Africa (Université Protestante de l'Afrique de l'Ouest – UPAO). Formerly the Institute of Protestant Theology, this centre which traditionally trains candidates for the pastoral ministry not only from Benin but also from Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Togo, Cameroon, Senegal and Gabon, acquired university status in 2004. The training of evangelists is undertaken at the Bible school jointly with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo. The Methodist Church is involved in the study of Islam and in dialogue with the Muslim community and other religions.

BOTSWANA

*Botswana Council of Churches

Founded in 1966.

Basis: The Botswana Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour according to the Bible and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling of service, to the glory of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
Anglican Diocese of Botswana
 Church of God In Christ
 Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
 Lamb's Followers Apostles Church
Methodist Church of Southern Africa
 Revelation Blessed Peace Church
 Roman Catholic Church
 St Apostolic Church in Botswana
 St Isaac Church in Salvation
 St Paul's Apostolic Mission
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
 Utlwang Lefoko Apostolic Church

Associate members:

Association of Medical Missions in Botswana
 Bible Society in Botswana
 Christian Women's Fellowship
 Jesus Generation Movement
 Kgolagano College of Theological Education
 Mennonite Ministries in Botswana
 Young Women's Christian Association

BURKINA FASO

Population: 13,797,527
 Surface area: 274,000 sq.km
 Capital: Ouagadougou
 GNI per capita: 300 US\$
 Classification: Least developed country
 Languages: French, Mossi, other
 Religions: Muslim 49%; African traditional 32%; Christian 19%
 Christianity: Catholics 1,634,000; Protestants 1,132,610;
 Independent 108,800

Burkina Faso is situated in the Sahel, south of the Sahara desert. The Mossi empire governed this land until the close of the 19th century, when it became a French protectorate and later a colony, called Upper Volta by the French. The country gained its independence in 1960, and received its African name during the time of military coups in the 1980s. Over 90 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, mostly subsistence farming and nomadic herding. One of

the main threats to the economy is recurrent drought. Many innovative local groups are working with the rural population to improve living conditions. Cotton is the main export product. In recent years, Burkina Faso has taken a lead in defending the cause of cotton from the South in the WTO negotiation rounds. Islam was introduced to the area during the 18th century, and Christianity came with colonization. Today over half of all Christians are Catholics. The Protestant denominations belong to the Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. The largest is the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal, 800,000 members). Together they form the Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions, affiliated with the WEA. In the 1970s and 1980s the WCC ran an extensive anti-drought programme in Burkina Faso and other Sahel countries, with an office based in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso.

Association of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Burkina Faso*

(Association des Eglises évangéliques réformées du Burkina Faso, AEERB)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 38,887

Congregations: 12

Pastors: 10

Member of: WCC (2005) – AACC – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *La nouvelle de la mission* (in French)

The Association is a grouping of local congregations located mainly in the northern part of Burkina Faso and in the capital Ouagadougou, which were the fruit of evangelism work of a pastor who separated from the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) in 1977. He studied at the Theological Institute of Porto Novo (Benin) where he became acquainted with the Reformed-Presbyterian tradition. The association was officially founded in 1986. The pastor and his co-workers evangelized in remote rural areas and most of the church members are first-generation Christians. The congregations are established among the poorest sectors of the population in this Sahel region where people subsist on one harvest of millet or sorghum a year, in very harsh and precarious conditions. The association tries to assist the peasants with digging wells, installing water pumps, setting up cereal banks, building schools and clinics, a small orphanage, etc. The president of the association has been able to build relationships with several ecumenical agencies, which are providing support for these projects.

The association recognizes the sovereign authority of the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ and revealed by the Holy Spirit in the canonical books of the Old and New testament, confessed in the Apostles' Creed, the Ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions of Faith of the Reformation.

The association counts currently nine churches and three centres of evangelism which will also become local churches. Each congregation has a pastor and a parish council. In future the local churches will be grouped in consistories and regional synods. The general synod composed of delegates from the regions acts as the general assembly of the association.

BURUNDI

Population: 7,318,712

Surface area: 27,830 sq.km

Capital: Bujumbura

GNI per capita: 90 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: French, Kirundi, Swahili and other

Religions: Christian 90%; African traditional 8%; Muslim 2%

Christianity: Catholics 4,600,000; Protestants 1,125,780; Anglicans 600,000

The original inhabitants of the area of today's Burundi are the Batwa, Baganwa, Bahutu and Batutsi. Burundi existed as an independent kingdom from the 16th century until 1903, when it was colonized by the Germans. After World War I it became a protectorate under Belgium. The colonial powers fomented and exploited rivalries between the population groups. Burundi recovered its independence from Belgium in 1962 as a kingdom under Tutsi rule. Violent ethnic conflicts erupted in 1964 and 1972, when many Bahutus were massacred, and again in 1988. The first democratically elected president was assassinated six months after he took office in 1993. A civil war followed, in which over 300,000 people were killed, mostly Batutsis, and many more were forced to flee to neighbouring countries. During this period Burundi was also involved in, and affected by the conflicts in Rwanda and the DRC. With the help of the African Union, and in particular former President Nelson Mandela, an agreement was negotiated which brought peace back to Burundi in 2005. Burundi is a small, densely populated agricultural country. Up to 90 percent of the population depends on subsistence farming. Coffee and tea are the main export products. The Catholic Church is the majority church. The two largest non-Catholic groups are the Anglicans and the Pentecostals. The United Methodists in Burundi belong to the United Methodist Church and are therefore an indirect member of the WCC. The Baptist Union has indicated its interest in WCC membership.

***National Council of Churches of Burundi**

(Conseil national des Eglises du Burundi, CNEB)

Founded in 1989 (forerunners: Alliance of Burundi Protestant Churches founded in 1970, and Protestant Missionary Alliance of Rwanda-Burundi founded in 1935).

Mission statement: "Allowing the member churches to mobilize and help the population to live an abundant life."

Member churches:

Anglican Diocese of Bujumbura

Anglican Diocese of Gitega

Anglican Diocese of Makamba

Anglican Diocese of Buye

Anglican Diocese of Matana

United Methodist Church

Free Methodist Church

Union of Baptist Churches

Evangelical Church of Friends (Quakers)

Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu

Website: www.cnebonline.org

Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 800,000

Dioceses: 6

Parishes: 113

Bishops: 5

Clergy: 173

Member of: WCC (1961/1994) – AACC – CNEB – ACC – CAPA

Periodical: *Amakuri* (monthly, in Kirundi)*EAB Press* (bi-monthly, in English)

The Anglican presence in Burundi was established through the work of the Church Missionary Society in the 1930s. It grew rapidly as a result of the East African Revival, and through medical and educational work. The former Rwanda Mission set up its first mission stations at Buhiga and Matana in 1935, and Buye in 1936. The first national bishop was consecrated in 1965 and Buye Diocese was created, covering the whole country. New dioceses came into being in 1975 and 1985. These became part of the Francophone Province of Burundi, Rwanda and Boga-Zaïre. In 1989 the synod of that province decided to divide the province in three: Burundi, Rwanda, and Zaïre (now Democratic Republic of Congo). The dioceses in Burundi affirmed this action and formed the Province of the Episcopal Church of Burundi in 1992. The church has currently five dioceses, and a sixth one is in the process of being created. Since 2005 the official name is Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi.

The Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi accepts and teaches the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine, sacraments and teaching of the One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church. Its purpose is to maintain and to strengthen the vision and mission of the Anglican Church of Burundi, in conformity with the doctrine and faith of the Anglican Communion.

The church is committed to mission and evangelism, and to the support of theological education and training for ministry. Among its main concerns are peace and reconciliation, repatriation of refugees and displaced people, community development, literacy and education, and HIV/AIDS.

CAMEROON

Population: 16,564,191

Surface area: 475,400 sq.km

Capital: Yaoundé

GNI per capita: 630 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: French, English, Bamileke, Douala and other

Religions: Christian 56%; African traditional 24%; Muslim 20%

Christianity: Catholics 4,470,000; Protestants 3,290,700; Other 685,550

Many different ethnic groups lived in the area when the Portuguese arrived in the late 15th century and began a trade in ivory and slaves. In the late 19th century, Germany declared Cameroon a protectorate, which lasted until the end of World War I, when the land was divided between the French and the British. After World War II, there were moves in each part towards self-rule and independence, but by 1961, former French Cameroon and part of British Cameroon

merged to become one country (the northern part of British Cameroon joined Nigeria). The economy is dependent upon timber resources and agriculture. Cameroon holds a significant reserve of natural gas, which is relatively unexploited, and petroleum products constitute more than half of all exports. The majority of the people are farmers inhabiting small villages in southern and central Cameroon. Many of the northern people were semi-nomadic herders. Despite movement towards democratic reform, the process of democratization remains slow. Christianity in Cameroon is closely linked with the colonial history of the country. In 2005, the Federation of Protestant Churches and Missions in Cameroon, which was originally organized in 1943, was restructured to become the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon. Yaoundé, the capital, has two important institutions for the Protestant churches in West Africa: a theological faculty, and a Centre for Christian Literature (CLE).

***Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon**

(Conseil des Eglises Protestantes du Cameroun, CEPC)

Founded in 2005 (forerunners: Federation of Protestant Churches and Missions in Cameroon, founded in 1969, and Evangelical Federation of Cameroon and West Africa, founded in 1943).

Basis: To be a member a church must accept the holy scriptures as the only authority for the teaching of the gospel and in all matters of faith, and respect the traditions, doctrines, and liturgical and administrative forms of the other member churches.

Member churches:

- African Protestant Church*
- Anglican Church*
- Cameroon Baptist Convention
- Evangelical Church of Cameroon*
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon
- Fraternal Lutheran Church of Cameroon
- Native Baptist Church of Cameroon*
- Presbyterian Church in Cameroon*
- Presbyterian Church of Cameroon*
- Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon*
- Union of Evangelical Churches in Cameroon

Associate members:

- Christian Mission
- Full Gospel Mission in Cameroon
- Mission of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon
- Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Cameroon
- Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Worldwide Mission in Cameroon

The Council is organized in ten regional sections.

Website: www.wagne.net/femec

African Protestant Church*

(Eglise protestante africaine, EPA)

- Church Family: Reformed
- Membership: 10,000
- Congregations: 32

Pastors: 26
 Catechists: 32
 Member of: WCC (1968) – AACC – CEPC

The church had its beginnings in the work of the American Presbyterian Mission. For the sake of the defence of the local language, Kwassio, it organized itself as an independent group in 1934. After several changes in the name, the designation African Protestant Church was adopted. As a church that has its roots in the tradition of the Reformation, the EPA confesses Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of the universe. It has developed a theology and a teaching focused on the biblical theme of abundant life for all (John 10:10) and is therefore strongly involved in development activities and the struggle against poverty. The laity play an important role in the church, and much attention is given to the participation of all the members. Originally concentrated in the region of Lolodorf, the church has spread to other parts of the country. It has a training institute called School of Theology Abraham Nzie Nzouango. The EPA has no historic relations with churches outside Cameroon. It benefits from the cooperation with sister churches in the country, e.g. for the training of its ministers.

Evangelical Church of Cameroon

(Eglise évangélique du Cameroun, EEC)

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 2,000,000
 Congregations: 700
 Pastors: 300
 Evangelists: 485
 Member of: WCC (1958) – AACC – CEPC – WARC – ARCA – Cevaa

The gospel was first brought to what is now Cameroon by African-American missionaries from Jamaica. They joined the work of the Baptist Missionary Society (London) in the area which began in 1845. After 1884, when the territory came under German rule, the Basel Mission took over. Following the defeat of Germany in the first world war Cameroon was divided into two mandated territories of the League of Nations. In the part of the country placed under French mandate the Paris Mission Society replaced the Basel Mission. Its work gave birth to the Evangelical Church of Cameroon, which was officially established in 1951 and became autonomous in 1957. The church has extended itself and has grown very rapidly, particularly in the regions of Bamileke and Bamoun and in the south.

The Evangelical Church of Cameroon understands itself as part of the universal church, the body of Christ endowed with the preaching of the good news of Jesus Christ and giving testimony to God's kingdom. It recognizes the sovereign authority of the word of God and is in communion with all the churches having Jesus Christ as their foundation. The pastors of the EEC are trained at the theological college in Ndoungue and the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Yaoundé.

The EEC is organized in parishes (which can comprise one or more annexes and places of worship), districts or consistories, regional synods, and a general synod at the national level which is the highest decision-making body of the church. The regional and general synods meet annually. An executive commission represents the general synod in between meetings. Four departments contribute to the life and witness of the church: Christian education, which is in charge of theological and liturgical research, hymnology and church choirs, and children's worship; communication and information, comprised of a press service,

television unit and radio service; youth, responsible for the Christian Youth Union and four youth centres, and organizing specific programmes for parish youth, students in colleges and universities, youth in towns and villages; Christian Women Union, which promotes the participation of women in the church and the society and runs a socio-educational centre for young people. The church has also a group for justice, peace and creation which is involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, care for street children, training for self-employment and the issue of violence against women.

The EEC runs extensive educational, medical and social services. It has 53 nursery and 140 primary schools, and 13 secondary and technical colleges; three more colleges are being planned. In the medical field four hospitals and 39 dispensaries and health centres are at the disposal of the people. Several social centres take care of children and youth who are in need of assistance. In the area of development the EEC has five agricultural schools and three centres for training and integrated development. It has also a sailors' community centre.

Native Baptist Church of Cameroon

(Eglise baptiste camerounaise, ECB)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 55,000

Synod Districts: 15

Local churches: 500

Pastors: 60

Evangelists: 39

Member of: WCC (1995) – AACC – OAIC – CEPC – BWA – AABF

Periodical: *Eyala* (The Word, quarterly)

The British Baptist mission began working in today's Cameroon in 1845. After the territory came under German rule in 1884 the British missionaries had to leave and the Baptist community was expected to cooperate with the German missions. Difficulties arose on questions of doctrine and liturgy and the Baptist leaders realized that the missionaries wanted to dominate their churches. The tensions resulted in the creation of three churches in 1897: the Evangelical Church (Basel Mission), the Baptist Church (Berlin Mission) and the Native Baptist Church. After World War I the Paris Mission arrived in Cameroon and tried, in vain, to re-unite the three. In 1921 a charismatic leader and opponent of the colonial regime was elected president of the NBC. After many contentions with the Paris Mission the NBC was finally recognized as an autonomous denomination in 1949. It received official recognition from the government in 1972. The church understands itself as an African Instituted Church.

Like other Baptist churches the NBC is a confessing church, whose doctrine is based on salvation by grace, the authority of the holy scriptures as the word of God, the Holy Trinity of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the spiritual unity of God's children and baptism by immersion.

As part of the universal church, the NBC is involved in mission and witness, diakonia, the formation of the workers of the church, the improvement of their living conditions and the struggle against poverty. The church has a secretariat for education which runs four school groups comprised of primary and secondary schools. Four associations contribute to the life of the church: women, men, youth and the choir. The highest decision-making body of the NBC is the general conference. The church has departments for evangelism and Christian education, for social work and for development. In terms of territorial organization it is com-

prised of four large regional synods or conventions. Besides the 500 local churches there are another 50 places of worship. Pastors are trained at the Protestant Theological Institute of Ndoungué, the Baptist Institute of Biblical and Theological Studies at Ndikinimeki, and the Faculty of Protestant Theology at Yaoundé.

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 700,000

Presbyteries: 23

Congregations: 1306

Pastors: 220

Evangelists: 65

Member of: WCC (1961) – AACC – CEPC – WARC – ARCA

English Baptists had first come to this part of West Africa in 1845. In 1884 the territory came under German protection and it was agreed, at a conference of European Missionary Societies, that the Basel Mission should take over the work of the English Baptists. This was done in 1886. During the first world war the administration of the country passed into British hands and the German and Swiss missionaries were called back. This had a tragic effect on the work of the mission but a small group of faithful people continued the work, making the church a truly indigenous one. In 1925 European missionaries began returning to the country. The second world war again disrupted church life, which was however followed by a period of intense activity and growth. The church became autonomous in 1957. A new constitution was drawn up and adopted, marking the autonomy of the church. It consists of three parts: basic principles, organization, worship and life.

The church runs three general hospitals, a rehabilitation center for leprosy patients, 18 health centres, two with an ophthalmological unit, and a central pharmacy. Much emphasis is placed on primary health care in the villages. In the educational field the church has 23 nursery schools, 122 primary schools, 14 secondary/high schools and a teacher training college. There is also a centre for agricultural and employment training. The pastors receive their training at the theological seminary in Kumba (66 students in 2004/05). Some are still being trained outside Cameroon, in Africa and overseas. There are plans to begin a church university by the year 2010. The church has departments for women, men and youth. The radio and communication department runs its own radio station, the Christian Broadcasting Service in Buea.

The PCC has joined other Protestant churches in Cameroon to address common issues of an educational, social, political as well as spiritual nature. It supports and promotes the information and eradication of HIV/AIDS and has a very strong policy statement on the issue.

Last year the PCC celebrated one hundred years of the gospel in the Grassland, in Ntanfoang, Bali, where the first Basel missionaries settled. The church is looking forward to celebrating in 2007 the golden jubilee of its autonomy. To God be the glory.

Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

(Eglise presbytérienne camerounaise, EPC)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 1,800,000

Parishes: 300

Pastors: 500

Member of: WCC (1963) – AACC – CEPC – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *Mifassan, Donal* (in local languages)

Fruit of the American Presbyterian Mission (now Presbyterian Church USA) since the 19th century and partially of the Basel Mission since 1920, the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon became an autonomous church in 1957. At the start of the 21st century the evangelical action of the EPC covers the whole of the national territory. The vast northern part of the country, which for a long time was considered a Muslim area, is today a mission field. The church has been able to train two pastors who are from that region. The EPC is also active in Europe, particularly in France and Switzerland where it has parish communities, and in neighbouring Gabon.

The church is composed of six synods and 25 consistories (or presbyteries). The medical department is responsible for eight hospitals. The school department runs 14 nursery, 32 primary and 11 secondary schools. There are also departments for Christian education and for agriculture. Various associations contribute to evangelism and social activities of the church: women, men, youth, companions for evangelization, and sons and daughters of pastors. The ECP maintains close relationships with the Presbyterian Church (USA), its historical partner.

Union of Baptist Churches in Cameroon

(Union des Eglises baptistes au Cameroun, UEBC)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 75,000

Local churches: 360

Pastors: 100

Member of: WCC (1961) – AACC – CEPC – BWA – AABF – Cevaa

Periodical: *Echos de l'UEBC* (monthly, in French)

The Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon grew out of the work of the Baptist Missionary Society (UK) which started in 1846. The first Baptist missionary came from Jamaica. As of 1884 the churches which later constituted the union were successively under the tutelage of the Berlin Mission, the Basel Mission, and finally, after World War I, the French Protestant Mission, from which the UEBC obtained its autonomy in 1957. The primary task of the union is evangelism and diakonia. Its vision is to remain a united church, formed and constituted dynamically in order to witness to Jesus Christ to the people in whose midst it wishes to live a full life.

In its strategy the union has developed during the past ten years its reflection and activities with the aim to open itself up. It has now two centres of theological training, one in the south and the other in the north of the country. It runs 25 primary and secondary schools and four hospitals, plus a number of community health centres. It is organized in 20 ecclesiastical regions or conventions, and has completed the construction of its national office which is the management centre of its work and human resources. The union is in the process of restructuring its international relations. Evangelism campaigns are held to expand the UEBC, scholarships are allocated for the formation of its personnel, and the union has an ecumenical project for the creation of a guest and meeting centre. The UEBC works closely with the European Baptist Mission which provides support for its activities.

CONGO (REPUBLIC OF)

Population: 3,920,514

Surface area: 342,000 sq.km

Capital: Brazzaville

GNI per capita: 650 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: French, Lingala, Kikongo and other

Religions: Christian 90%; African traditional 8%; Muslim 1,3%

Christianity: Catholics 1,950,000; Protestant 438,650; Orthodox 4400;

Independent 519,980

Bantu people lived in the area of the Republic of Congo long before European colonization began. The territory became a French colony and was part of French Central Africa until independence in 1960. Congo was one of the new nations in Africa with a socialist regime, which lasted several decades. In the 1990s the country suffered two civil wars because of power struggles between political leaders, who had each their own militia. Many people lost their lives, others were displaced or fled to neighbouring DRC. Congo has rich oil resources. Oil is the main export product, followed by coffee, but the revenues do not benefit the people. Most of the population in the rural areas lives from subsistence farming. The Catholic Church is the majority church. Besides the Evangelical Church, which is the largest Protestant denomination, other WCC member churches present in Congo are: the Kimbanguist Church, which has its headquarters in the DRC just across the Congo river, and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, which has a large parish in Brazzaville. These churches, together with the Salvation Army and the Lutherans, form the Ecumenical Council of Congo. There are also several Pentecostal and Evangelical churches.

***Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches of Congo**

(Conseil œcuménique des Eglises chrétiennes du Congo, COECC)

Founded in 1970.

Basis: To be a member a church must confess faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and be committed to unity in diversity and to the promotion of the ecumenical movement.

Member churches:

Evangelical Church of Congo

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Congo

Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Alexandria)

Roman Catholic Church

Salvation Army

Associate members:

Christian Action for Development and Relief

Christian Action for Peace and Justice

Committee of Religious Communities for the Struggle against HIV/AIDS

Evangelical Church of Congo

(Eglise évangélique du Congo, EEC)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 150,000

Congregations: 118

Pastors: 132

Evangelists: 289

Member of: WCC (1963) – AACC – COECC – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *La Couronne* (in French)

Protestant missionary work in what is today the Republic of Congo began in 1909 with the arrival of missionaries sent by the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. Baptist missionaries, also from Sweden, started evangelizing a region in the north of the country in 1921. From 1947 onwards, missionaries of the Mission Covenant Church of Norway worked in another area in the north. The Evangelical Church of the Congo became autonomous in 1961. It is the largest Protestant church in the country and is growing rapidly. The fundamental vocation of the EEC is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, in obedience to the commandment to make disciples of all nations. The church recognizes its responsibility to evangelize the people among whom God has placed it, as well as other people who have not yet received the gospel. The church also responds to its calling through other manifestations of the Christian faith, in particular by committing itself to the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and in combating illness, misery, poverty, ignorance, obscurantism, the pollution of nature and the ruthless exploitation of human beings and the earth's resources.

By virtue of its charismatic approach and its zeal, its use of African musical instruments and its dynamic campaigns of evangelization, the church has a distinct influence in the society. The EEC is very interested in the improvement of medical services, the practice of preventive medicine and the enhancement of the standard of living. It runs a number of dispensaries and maternity wards. It has a theological faculty for post-graduate theological studies and a Bible institute for the training of evangelists. The church has a rich spiritual life but lacks financial resources. Many of its members are unable to contribute financially to its activities. The EEC maintains close relations with churches in Sweden, Norway, Finland and France.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Population: 56,097,226

Surface area: 2,3 million sq.km

Capital: Kinshasa

GNI per capita: 100 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: French, Lingala, Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili and other

Religions: Christian 96%; African traditional 2%; Muslim 1%; other 1%

Christianity: Catholics 31,800,000; Protestants 12,352,300; Kimbanguists 8,500,000; Anglicans 440,000; Orthodox 13,000; Independent 4,312,000

At the Berlin Conference of 1884, King Leopold II of Belgium claimed the Congo as his personal property. His ruthless exploitation of the territory caused untold suffering to the people. In 1908 Congo became a Belgian colony, which it remained until independence in 1960. The country was coveted by the international powers, because of its natural wealth, especially minerals, and its strategic importance. Mobutu, who seized power in 1965, established a dictatorial regime, exploited the country and served the interests of the West. He was finally overthrown in 1997. From 1998 until 2003 the DRC was in the grip of civil war, in

which neighbouring countries Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi intervened, supporting rebel factions, while Angola and Zimbabwe took the side of the government. According to a UN report, several million people were killed, many were displaced, and all parties committed large-scale plundering of natural resources. With the help of South Africa, an inter-Congolese dialogue was conducted, and in 2003 a coalition government was formed. The Catholic Church is the largest church. The Protestants and the Anglicans are organized in the Church of Christ in Congo, which is composed of 62 churches called "Communities". The DRC is the home of the Kimbanguist Church, one of the largest African Instituted Churches. There are many other independent churches, and a small indigenous Orthodox Church under the Patriarchate of Alexandria. The Catholic Church and the Church of Christ in Congo played a key role in the inter-Congolese dialogue, and several of their clergy were given high positions in the coalition government. The great majority of the people live in dire poverty and struggle daily for survival.

Church of Christ in Congo – Anglican Community of Congo

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 500,000

Dioceses: 7

Bishops: 7

Parishes: 307

Priests: 409

Member of: WCC (1961/1998) – ACC – CAPA

The first missionary work of the Anglican Church in Congo started with a Ugandan evangelist who settled in Boga in 1896, in the sub-region of Ituri. After his death in 1933 the church spread through the sub-region of North Kivu. After the independence of Congo in 1960 the Anglican Church experienced a time of great expansion. The first diocese was created in 1972, as part of the Province of Uganda, Rwanda and Boga-Zaïre. The new province was inaugurated in 1992 with the name: Province of the Anglican Church of Congo. It now has seven dioceses. As a member of the Church of Christ in Congo it is known as the Anglican Community. The provincial synod held in 2003 in Bukavu decided the transfer of the headquarters of the province from Bunia to Kinshasa. The new diocese of Kinshasa was inaugurated on 20 December 2003.

The Anglican Church of Congo teaches and confesses the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation. It accepts as norms of the faith the scriptures, the three Catholic Creeds and the Book of Common Prayer. The first priority of the church is evangelization, especially in the western part of the country, e.g. Kinshasa, Lower Congo, Bandundu and also in neighbouring Congo Brazzaville. It is intended to create two new dioceses in the near future, Aru and Kasai. The church is also planning to establish an Anglican Centre in Kinshasa, and to install communication equipment in several dioceses. Other activities are the training of managerial staff and lay people through seminars, Bible schools, etc. Development, health care, and the promotion of peace and reconciliation are among the priorities of the church.

The province of the Anglican Church of Congo is facing many difficulties. Concentrated in the eastern part of the country, it has suffered particularly from the war situation in the Great Lakes region. The many years of violence and mismanagement of the political leaders have impoverished its members. Funds are lacking to pay the clergy and to purchase land and houses which are needed as the church is growing.

Church of Christ in Congo – Baptist Community of Congo
(Eglise du Christ au Congo – Communauté baptiste du Congo, CBCO)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 376,558

Districts: 32

Local churches: 792

Pastors: 850

Member of: WCC (1985) – AACC – BWA – AABF

The Livingstone Inland Mission started working in Lower Congo in 1878. The work was taken over by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in 1884 which, together with seven other mission societies, created in 1902 the Missionary Conference, forerunner of the Protestant Council of Congo in 1928. The Baptist Church of Congo was formed in 1946. It went through several name changes and mergers, was a founding member of the Church of Christ in Congo and adopted in 2004 a new constitution under the name Baptist Community of Congo. The foundation of the teaching of the church is the word of God as revealed in the holy scriptures, which is freely studied in the light of the faith, the Baptist and evangelical tradition, Christian conscience and modern science. The church opens its doors to each person on the basis of the faith in Jesus Christ, without imposing any confession of faith, regardless of race, region, country and ethnic group. It assembles the faithful in evangelism, social activities, worship and in the mission of Jesus Christ so that together they contribute to the furtherance of the kingdom of God on earth and in the country and constitute through the gospel, the source of eternal life and of progress of the individual and the society. The CBCO seeks to consolidate the unity of its action through the respect of the diversity of the people and ethnic groups which form the community, the principle of autonomy and decentralization, better communication between the local churches and regional alternation in leadership.

The community has departments for evangelism, church life and mission, for education, medical services, women and development. It has a convention with the state for the running of 608 primary and 453 secondary schools. It operates nine hospitals, 96 health-care centres and two training schools for nurses. It is actively involved with other churches in Congo, in particular with member communities of the Church of Christ, in several institutions such as the Protestant University of Congo, the Evangelical Centre for Christian Literature, and more recently the Protestant University of Kimpese in Lower Congo. Looking to the future, the CBCO intends to dedicate itself to the primary needs of the population. The community would like to encourage means to increase and improve food production for survival, strengthen cooperation with the state in primary health care programmes in rural areas and reinforce the Christian management programme.

Church of Christ in Congo – Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo
(Eglise du Christ au Congo – Communauté des Disciples du Christ au Congo, CDCC)

Church Family: Disciples

Membership: 650,000

Congregations: 552

Pastors: 193

Catechists: 1,000

Member of: WCC (1965) – AACC – DECC

Periodical: *Bulletin d'Information des Disciples* (monthly, in French, Lingala, Lomongo)

The Community of Disciples of Christ is the fruit of the work of the American Disciples Overseas Mission, which began in 1899 in the region of the equator of the then Belgian Congo. The church became autonomous in 1964. It has its headquarters in Mbandaka, in the Province of the Equator. The Disciples of Christ in Congo, like all other Disciples of Christ in the world, confess Jesus Christ as Lord, believe in the Holy Trinity, in the supreme authority of the Bible as the foundation of faith, baptism by immersion, the holy communion, the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. The church makes a serious effort to preserve African culture and arts in the liturgical celebrations. It witnesses to the unity of the church as the body of Christ, or the unity of all Christians irrespective of race, gender and confession, to the task of restoring the unity of the church on the basis of the New Testament, the task of preaching the gospel and of making Disciples all the Congolese provinces and neighbouring countries.

The highest authority of the community is the general assembly. The CDCC has departments for evangelism, education, health care and development. It runs 186 primary and 59 secondary schools, three nursery schools, six hospitals, 28 operational health centres and a centre for the training of nurses. In the area of community development the CDCC has a social centre for women, a school for agriculture, a coffee plantation, a bookshop and printing house, and a religious radio programme. It is a founding member of the Protestant University of Congo in Kinshasa and has its own institute for theological training which is being upgraded to Masters degree level. The church is actively working towards financial self-reliance at the local level. It is involved in the struggle against HIV/AIDS and in promoting peace, democracy and the respect of human rights.

Church of Christ in Congo – Evangelical Community of Congo (Eglise du Christ au Congo – Communauté évangélique au Congo, CEC)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 83,746

Congregations: 87

Pastors: 114

Member of: WCC (1961) – AACC – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *Ninsame Miyenge* (monthly, in Kikongo and French)

The Evangelical Community of Congo is the fruit of the work of the Swedish Missionary Alliance (now the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden) which was founded in 1878 as the result of a revival movement. The church became autonomous in 1961 and is a member community of the Church of Christ in Congo. It is concentrated in Lower Congo and has its headquarters in Luozi. Most of the work of the Evangelical Community is in rural areas but urban evangelism has made some very significant progress, e.g. in the city of Kinshasa where today 30 of the 87 congregations of the CEC are located. The church runs 157 primary and secondary schools, five hospitals and several dispensaries. Eight doctors and some sixty medical assistants care for more than 40,000 patients each year. The state has entrusted one hospital and two health centres to the CEC for a period of five years. The church works in close cooperation with the state. It is taking full charge of its prophetic mission, through its social commitment, the care for the

earth through reafforestation, denunciation of social abuses and the promotion of virtues to make the society more human.

The church pursues the objective of holistic evangelization, in the framework of integrated and integral development. Besides evangelism its main concern is to be actively involved in education, health care, gender equality and the promotion of human dignity. The CEC maintains excellent relationships with the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden.

Church of Christ in Congo – Mennonite Community in Congo

(Eglise du Christ au Congo – Communauté Mennonite au Congo, CMC)

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 86,600

Congregations: 721

Pastors: 187

Member of: WCC (1973) – AACC – MWC

Before the formation of the Congo Inland Mission in 1912, the Mission Board of the Mennonite Church and the Amish Mennonite Conference (both in the USA) had sent missionaries to the Congo. In 1911 the United Mennonite Board of Missions was organized and incorporated as the Congo Inland Mission a year later. Missionaries of the Swedish Baptist Mission joined the Congo Inland Mission in 1914. The name was changed to Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc. in 1970. American Mennonite missions have been at work principally in three provinces: Bandundu, Western Kasai and Eastern Kasai. The Evangelical Mennonite Church of the Congo was established in 1960. When it joined with other Protestant churches to form the Church of Christ in Congo it took the name Mennonite Community Congo. Its headquarters are in Tshikapa in the Western Kasai, about 500 km from Kinshasa.

At the time of the struggle for independence from colonial rule, Mennonite missionaries had to leave the country. Some returned, but during the troubled period of the early 1990s all left and the Mennonite Community in Congo lost all external support. The church has grown in number and inner strength. Its members are essentially among the poor population living in remote rural areas. Communication is extremely difficult. The Mennonite Community is trying to assist the people through schools, agricultural projects and some medical work. For the formation of its pastors and evangelists it operates two Bible schools and a theological school.

Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Congo

(Eglise du Christ au Congo – Communauté Presbytérienne du Congo, CPC)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 2,500,000

Synods: 12

Presbyteries: 43

Congregations: 926

Pastors: 672

Member of: WCC (1972) – AACC – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *Bikaye* (quarterly, in Tshiluba)

The Presbyterian Community of Congo was founded by the American Presbyterian Congo Mission (now Global Ministries of the PC USA), which started work

in Luebo, in the central part of Congo (Kasai region) in 1891. The church became fully autonomous as the Presbyterian Community of Congo, member of the Church of Christ in Congo. Concentrated in the two Kasai provinces (East and West), the CPC has spread to other parts of the country, e.g. Shaba in the south-east where it started an evangelism project in 1988. The CPC took on a role as mediator in conflicts that severely affected its communities in East Kasai and Shaba during clashes in 1992–94. In 1996 the church leadership intervened with efforts for reconciliation and successfully negotiated with officials solutions to these conflicts.

The church is actively involved in evangelism, education, health care, women's ministries and community development. In West Kasai it runs 150 primary and 52 secondary schools, most of which are in the rural areas, and a teacher training college, the only one in the region. In East Kasai its 200 schools were confiscated by the authorities. The department for Christian education coordinates efforts for church leadership development, laity training, Sunday school programmes, youth ministries, religion in schools, literacy programmes and church choir promotion. The CPC carries out its health ministries and pastoral care for the sick in six hospitals. The evangelism department is responsible for establishing new churches and assisting weak presbyteries, and oversees several regional evangelization projects. Community development activities take place in both rural and urban areas. The project for development in East Kasai is a comprehensive effort focusing on agricultural production, training, water resources and community action. The CPC has a printing press, a bookstore and a radio ministry. The department for women and families, while keeping evangelization as a primary goal, is providing training opportunities for women in health, nutrition and development. Women form the majority of the church members. About 25 percent of the pastors are women.

Together with the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa the CPC operates several institutes for ministerial training. The Reformed Theological College of Kasai has become a Presbyterian University with two faculties: theology and law. The CPC is a founding member of the Protestant University of Congo in Kinshasa. The headquarters of the CPC are in Kananga.

Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (Eglise du Christ au Congo – Communauté presbytérienne de Kinshasa, CPK)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 67,436

Congregations: 186

Pastors: 143

Member of: WCC (1996) – AACC – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *Identité* (bimonthly, in French)

The Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa was formed by groups of Christians coming from the centre of the country, the Kasai region where the Presbyterian Community in Congo is concentrated, which grew out of the work of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission in that area since the 19th century. Because of the distances and the difficulties of communication it became necessary to have an autonomous church in Kinshasa, the capital of the country. But since at that time there were not yet autonomous churches in Congo and Kinshasa, and Léopoldville was the mission field of two Baptist missionary societies, an invitation from these missions was required. With the creation of new quarters in Léopoldville and the extension of the city towards the east the two missions called

on the American Presbyterian Mission which, in 1954, accepted to establish the Presbyterian Mission of Léopoldville (PML). The work began officially in 1955. Christians from other denominations living in the capital were welcome to join the Presbyterian mission if they wished. In January 1960 the PML decided to found an autonomous church under the name Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Section of Léopoldville. The church was officially registered in May 1960, i.e. before the independence of the country. Of all the churches in the DRC the PCK was the first to be recognized before independence. The PCK uses the symbol of the apostles as the confession of its faith. It recognizes two sacraments: baptism and holy communion.

The PCK maintains strong fraternal relations with the Presbyterian Community of Congo, especially in the area of leadership training. The two churches jointly own the Sheppard and Lapsley Presbyterian University of Congo which is based in Kananga in Western Kasai. The two are founding members of the Church of Christ in Congo. When the latter was created in 1970 the name of the denomination became Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa. The PCK works in four provinces: Kinshasa, Bandundu, Lower Congo and Equator. It has started a mission among the Pygmies which covers about 200 villages. The PCK runs also 60 primary and 44 secondary schools. It has a pastoral institute and an institute of advanced theology, an institute of medical technology and a professional construction school. Since 1984 the PCK has joined the programme “Health for All by the Year 2000” and runs six health centres, two small maternity wards, two hospital centres and three clinics.

The ecclesiastical structure of the PCK is Presbyterian: consistories, presbyteries, synods and general assembly. In all the decision-making bodies clergy (men and women) and elders (men and women) are represented. The laity is organized in three federations: women, men and youth.

Church of Christ in Congo – Protestant Baptist Church in Africa / Episcopal Baptist Community in Africa

(Eglise du Christ au Congo – Eglise protestante baptiste en Afrique / Communauté épiscopale baptiste en Afrique, EPROBA/CEBA)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 67,325

Congregations: 520

Pastors: 520

Vicars : 135

Member of: WCC (1973) – AACC

Periodical: *Feuille épiscopale* (in French, Swahili and Kiluba)

The church was founded in 1956 by Bishop Kabwe-ka-Leza and 45 other members of the Garenganze Evangelical Mission. It took the name Protestant Baptist Church in Africa in 1964. In 1976, with the “zairerization” imposed by former president Mobutu, the church, like all the other Protestant churches in Zaïre, became a member community of the Church of Christ in Congo, and was called Episcopal Baptist Community in Africa. After the democratization of the country in 1990 the church combined the two names, putting the previous one first (PBCA/EBCA). The acronym commonly used in French reads EPROBA/CEBA. The church confesses the Christian faith in the triune God and in Jesus Christ who died on the cross and rose again, for the remission of sins, according to the Apostles’ Creed.

The EPROBA/CEBA has eight departments. The first one, evangelism and church life, is in charge of evangelization, healing and deliverance through prayer, edification, biblical instruction, observance of the teaching (doctrine, liturgy) and rules (discipline, conflict resolution) of the church. The department of community development is responsible for communication and information, diaconal and social services, and peace, justice and integrity of creation (including the struggle against HIV/AIDS). Other departments deal with finances, medical service, and education (32 primary and nine secondary subsidized schools, 48 primary and 40 secondary private schools); this department also looks after a Christian lay centre for young people (vocational training, language courses, etc). The Federation of Protestant and Religious Women is an important department promoting the intellectual and spiritual fulfillment of the women, their participation in the church and in society, and the development of cooperation and partnership with Christian women's organizations of other churches, in the DRC and abroad. The federation carries responsibility for several social centres and services (e.g. orphanage, sewing, literacy, ecumenical solidarity, guest-house, agricultural project, etc.). Youth United in Christ, the youth department, has activities in the areas of voluntary work, camps, sport, moral and spiritual care for boys and girls, organization of unemployed youth, etc. The Faculty of Protestant Theology of Lubumbashi is responsible for the formation of pastors and other church workers.

The ecclesiastical structure of the EPROBA/CEBA is episcopal. It has three levels: the bishop who is the president and legal representative and the assistant bishops, general vicars and vicars, pastors and their assistants. These episcopal ministries are open to any man or woman who has a divine calling, has completed the required biblical and theological formation and is accepted by the Committee for Pastoral Ministry and the governing bodies of the church. The administration of the church, the departments, services and personnel resources are coordinated by the general secretary. In all there are over 3500 employed church workers and close to 2000 volunteers.

The EPROBA/CEBA is historically concentrated in the south-eastern part of the DRC (Katanga, Kasai, Kivu). It is present in other parts of the country (Kinshasa) and in Zambia. It has a partnership with the French Reformed Church in Stockholm (Sweden) and the Evangelical Church in Werheim (Germany).

Church of Christ Light of the Holy Spirit

(Eglise du Christ Lumière du Saint Esprit)

Church Family: African Instituted Church

Membership: 1,398,129

Congregations: 350

Bishops: 5

Pastors: 450

Member of: WCC (1973) – AACC – OAIC

Periodical: *Le Messager apostolique* (in French)

The Church of Christ Light of the Holy Spirit was founded in 1931. It is an independent Christian community of Protestant orientation, fruit of the Holy Spirit movement in the DRC. The church is based on the word of God as contained in the Bible, which is the basis of its teaching: the belief in the Holy Trinity of one God, Creator of the whole universe, of Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, Lord and Saviour who died on the cross, risen from the dead and redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, guide and giver of strength; obedience to the ten commandments of God, the fourth of which consecrates Sunday as the day of the Lord set

apart for the adoration and glorification of God the creator father; the belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands; and monogamous marriage blessed by the church.

In the life of the church, Tuesdays and Fridays are the days of prayer and intercession for the faithful of each congregation, and Wednesday is the day for Bible study and prayer meetings. The parish meeting takes place once a month, the bishops meet once a year and the general assembly every two years.

The objectives of the church are to evangelize the population in the light of the Bible and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to establish congregations and build churches, to organize educational, medical, social and other activities aiming at the spiritual, moral and physical development of the whole human person. As an integral part of the cultural and religious life of the society, the church organizes various encounters for women and young people, children's holiday camps, evangelism campaigns, literacy courses, and Sunday schools for the little ones. The church promotes also rural development projects, and maintains cordial relations with other Christian communities in the DRC. Future plans include the extension of its activities in Africa and in the world, the struggle against HIV/AIDS, the acquisition of a Light radio/TV station, and the establishment of a Light university and vocational schools for the training of the leaders of the church.

Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu
(Eglise de Jésus Christ sur la Terre par Son Envoyé Spécial Simon Kimbangu)

Church Family: African Instituted Church

Membership: 17,000,000*

Congregations: 8,082

Pastors: 3,758

Member of: WCC (1969) – AACC – OAIC

Periodical: *Kimbanguist Info* (en français)

After having received the mission and the authority from Jesus Christ to carry out a spiritual ministry that would emanate from Nkamba (Lower Congo, DRC) and spread out to the entire world, the Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu began his mission with the miraculous healing of a young woman, Maman Kiantondo, at Ngombe-Kinsuka, on 6 April 1921. The prophecies, healings and resurrections that followed were considered by the Belgian colonial authorities as a messianic movement that could destabilize the colonial fabric. Extreme repressive measures largely approved by the Catholic as well as Protestant missionaries were adopted by the colonial government against the "movement". The visible prophetic mission of Papa Simon Kimbangu only lasted five months. He was arrested at Nkamba, judged and sentenced to death on October 3, 1921 by a military court, after a parody of justice; the sentence was commuted into life imprisonment by King Albert 1 of Belgium. Papa Simon Kimbangu was deported to Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi), 2000 kms from his native village, where he died 30 years later, on October 12, 1951. Thirty-seven thousand families were deported between 1921 and 1951 for the same religious cause and their faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour through the work and teaching of his Special Envoy, Simon Kimbangu. The only result of these measures was to strengthen the movement which spread rapidly. On December 24, 1959 the Kimbanguist Church was finally recognized by the colonial power, on an equal basis with the Catholic and Protestant churches. It was led by the youngest son of Papa Simon Kimbangu, H.E. Joseph Diangienda Kuntima, spiritual chief and legal representative. As the supreme

authority, the spiritual chief has under him a general assembly, a body in charge of the general policy of the church and an executive board.

Today the Kimbanguist Church is universal. It reaches out all over the world, in Africa, Europe and America. The church accepts the Nicene Creed. Kimbanguists believe in God the Father, creator of all that is, in Jesus Christ, only Son of God, Lord and Saviour of the human race, in God the Holy Spirit, comforter, instructor, inspirer and protector. Four sacraments are recognized: baptism, eucharist, marriage and ordination. Baptism and eucharist take place three times a year: on 6 April, 25 May and 12 October. The Kimbanguist doctrine is summarized in the trilogy "Boling, Mibeko, Misala" which means "Love, Commandments, Work". While the Kimbanguist Church is developing and transforming itself socially, materially and in terms of its universal outreach, it has preserved a very profound spiritual activity which is reflected in the rigorous observance of the commandments of pilgrimage to Nkamba, spiritual retreats, daily morning and evening prayers, intercessions for the sick, the afflicted, the populations of troubled countries and all humanity, hymns, biblical meditation, fasting and confession of sins.

Since the death of H.E. Papa Dialungana Kiangani, spiritual chief and legal representative, who passed away on 16 August 2001, the Kimbanguist Church is led by H.E. Simon Kimbangu Kiangani.

*Of which several million in neighbouring countries, notably in the Republic of Congo and Angola, and elsewhere in Africa.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo (ELCCo) (Eglise évangélique luthérienne au Congo, EELCo)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 52,000

Dioceses: 5

Congregations: 96

Pastors/ Vicars: 71

Evangelists/Deacons: 15

Member of: WCC (1998) – AACC – LWF – LUCCEA

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo (ELCCo), formerly Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zaïre, was founded in the early 1960s at the initiative of lay people who followed the Bible studies offered by the former Radio Voice of the Gospel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Some congregations were opened, some committees established and the structure of the church was progressively formed. A young evangelist who, with three others, started the church, received his pastoral training at the Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) in Makumira, Tanzania and asked the ELCT for support in 1968. Some Tanzanian pastors were sent to Zaïre to take care of the flock. The church was growing, and the number of pastors and evangelists increased. In 1980 the church was officially recognized by the state and registered as a non-profit making association. The church became a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in 1986.

Until 2002 the ELCCo was structured in nine ecclesiastical regions coinciding with nine administrative regions of the DR Congo in which it was represented, under one bishop. Because of the vastness of the country, the inefficient infrastructure of communication and the expansion of the ELCCo, it became already clear to the church leaders in 1996 that a reorganization was due. However the process was delayed because of the political circumstances in the country. In September 2002 the synod approved the restructuring of ELCCo into five dioceses as

of 1 January 2003 and the election of four additional bishops. The new bishops were installed in November and December 2002. A presiding bishop was elected in February 2003 for a period of six years, renewable once. The national office in Lubumbashi, which is headed by the general secretary, has the task to coordinate and supervise the activities of the dioceses in order to guarantee the unity of EELCo.

Due to the political situation in the country it is very difficult to gather correct statistics concerning the number of church members. During the civil war and its aftermath many people were killed or uprooted. Many are still hiding in the bush without shelter, medical care and provisions, in fear of military aggressions and tribal wars. In the occupied areas at the borders of Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania freedom of movement is hardly possible, and the situation is still unstable despite all the peace-talks.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Population: 520,833

Surface area: 28,050 sq.km

Capital: Malabo

GNI per capita: 2,700 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Spanish, French

Religions: Christian 88%; Muslim 4%; African traditional 3%

Christianity: Catholics 435,000; Protestants 20,890; Independent 24,650

Equatorial Guinea was one of the few Spanish colonies in Africa. It achieved independence in 1968. Until 1979, the country was ruled by a dictatorial regime that plundered its resources and oppressed the population. The Christians and the churches were harassed, atheism was actively promoted, and freedom of worship was restricted. A coup d'état brought an end to this period. Since then, Equatorial Guinea has had the same president, who has established an authoritarian system of government. Offshore oil reserves have made Equatorial Guinea a major oil producer, but for the majority of the population agriculture remains the main source of livelihood, and there has been little improvement in living standards. Christianity was brought to the area at the time of Spanish colonization, and the Catholic Church is the majority church. There are a few small Protestant churches, which have formed a council. Since the 1980s, there has been an influx of Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Evangelical groups. They constitute about 5 percent of the population and form, together with the Protestants, about 10 percent of the total number of Christians.

***Council of Evangelical Churches of Equatorial Guinea**

Founded in 1995.

Basis: The Council of Evangelical Churches of Equatorial Guinea is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Methodist Church
 Evangelical Crusade Church
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea*

(Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana de Guinea Equatorial, IRPGE)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 8,230

Congregations: 29

Preaching points: 89

Pastors: 21

Elders: 206

Member of : WCC (1965) – AACC – CIEGE – WARC – ARCA

A group of missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in the USA (Synod of New Jersey) established itself on the island of Corisco in the Gulf of Guinea in 1850, after having worked in Liberia and Gabon. From there they moved to the mainland where they founded the first congregation in Bolondo (now Mbini). They spread into the interior of the continent setting up more congregations, as they did also in the coastal area. The presbytery of Rio Muni celebrated its centennial in 1960. In 1900 France yielded the territory of Rio Muni to Spain. This resulted in the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church, marked by an attitude of inquisition. Intolerance and persecution produced an unavoidable change in the circumstances of the church which had to give up its schools and medical work. In 1924 all the missionaries were obliged to leave the country.

In order to revitalize the work, the American Presbyterian Mission sent a missionary couple in 1932 who prepared young people for the seminary and organized the dynamic Women's Association, which up until today remains the life and soul of the church. There came a time of revival with the establishment of the Republic in Spain, which continued until the outbreak of the Spanish civil war in 1936. During this period the Youth Association was set up.

In 1952 the Spanish government, which was close to the Catholic hierarchy, closed all the Protestant churches, allowing only those which existed before the establishment of the Franco regime to re-open. In 1957 the presbytery of Rio Muni joined the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon as part of the MUNICAM synod. A year later it withdrew for reasons which had to do with the process of decolonization, and integrated the Synod of New Jersey (USA). Several American missionaries worked in the church during this period, but left in 1968 shortly before independence. Between 1936 and 1962 the church was strengthened by the activities of a number of pastors sent by the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon.

In 1960 about twenty delegates met for the last time as the presbytery of the Synod of New Jersey. They approved a new constitution and the church became autonomous as the Evangelical Church of Equatorial Guinea. The independence of the country on 12 October, 1968, brought with it religious freedom, legalized and guaranteed by the state which is secular. Today this ecclesiastical community, which labours with total freedom, defines itself as the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea. It is Reformed by its theology and Presbyterian by its form of government, as stated in its constitution.

ERITREA

Population: 4,456,086
 Surface area: 117,600 sq.km
 Capital: Asmara
 GNI per capita: 190 US\$
 Classification: Least developed country
 Languages: Arabic, Tigrinya
 Religions: Christian 51%; Muslim 45%; Other 4%
 Christianity: Orthodox 1,906,200; Catholics 151,000; Protestants 55,170;
 Independent 18,200

In its centuries-long history, Eritrea was successively part of Ethiopia, of the Ottoman empire, an Italian colony (1890), occupied by the British (1941), federated with Ethiopia (1952), and annexed by Ethiopia, in 1962. After long years of war, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and a coalition of Ethiopian resistance movements defeated in 1991 the dictatorial regime of Ethiopia. In 1993, in a referendum supported by Ethiopia, the Eritrean people voted almost unanimously in favour of independence. Tensions with Ethiopia remained, and border conflicts in 1998 led to a war which ended in 2000 under UN auspices. The final demarcation of the border was still on hold in 2005. Eritrea's economy has suffered from the war, and the country is facing major problems of poverty. Up to 80 percent of the population lives from subsistence farming. The overwhelming majority of Eritrean Christians are Orthodox (Oriental). Before independence they came under the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church became autocephalous in 1994, with the help of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and joined the WCC in 2003. Another WCC member church present in the country is the Mekane Yesus Church (Lutheran), from Ethiopia. Catholic and Protestant presence dates from the 19th and 20th century. More recently, some Pentecostal and Evangelical groups have entered the country.

Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Church Family: Orthodox (Oriental)
 Membership: 2,000,000
 Congregations: 1,500
 Clergy: 15,000
 Member of: WCC (2003) – AACC
 Periodical: *Finote Birhan A.Bisrate Gazan* (monthly magazines)

Christian practices in the land of Eritrea began through interaction of traders and visitors who traveled to and from the Mid-Orient, using the ancient port at Adulis on the Red Sea. Evidence of ruins such as of prayer houses can still be seen today. The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church was formally founded in 329 AD under the fatherhood of St Frumentius (Abba Selama) the first bishop assigned by St Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria.

The church is organized under the supreme body of the holy synod, which is the council of all the bishops and archbishops of the church, presided over by the patriarch, and whose executive arm is the office of the administrator general. Under this governing body are the dioceses in the various regions of the country. These in turn guide the activities of the sub-dioceses and the congregations under them, down to the village parish. This administrative chain is the communication link for both channels of the hierarchy. Under the office of the administrator

general are several departments, e.g. for development (including education and health), spirituality, foreign relations, etc.

Apart from the clergy, over 3000 other full-time workers serve the traditional church schools located at every church and monastery, in agricultural development projects and other activities. The church has its own theological formation and is planning to build a modern theological college that will provide education in both traditional and modern theology. The number of students currently preparing for the priesthood is 1250. Women are enabled to participate in all aspects of the life of the church except priesthood. They are active in monastic life and are freely allowed to acquire traditional and theological education in the church.

ETHIOPIA

Population: 74,188,932

Surface area: 1,1 million sq.km

Capital: Addis Ababa

GNI per capita: 90 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Amharic; Oromo; Tigre; other

Religions: Christian 62%; Muslim 33%; African traditional 5%

Christianity: Orthodox 38,956,642; Protestants 10,446,017; Catholics 550,000;

Independent 1,418,900 (double affiliation)

Ethiopia has a record of resistance against foreign attempts to colonize it, except for the Italian occupation of 1936-1941. The monarchy embraced Christianity in the 4th century. Already in the 7th century there was Muslim influence. Tensions and conflict have been recurrent between the Christian and Muslim communities. In the 19th century the Amhara monarchy extended its reign to the south of present-day Ethiopia. In 1974 the emperor was deposed and assassinated by a military junta. The coercive regime was overthrown in 1991 by the Ethiopian People's Liberation Front. Democratic elections were held for the first time in 1994. Ethiopia faces a difficult economic situation with frequent droughts, and poor agriculture. Coffee is the main export product. As one of the most ancient nations of Africa, Ethiopia has a prominent place in the continent. It hosts the headquarters of the African Union. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is one of the churches that does not accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon on the nature of Christ. It was the state church under the monarchy but has lost this position. Catholic presence goes back to the 16th century, and Protestant missions arrived in the 20th century. The largest non-Orthodox church is the World of Life Church (Evangelical), followed by the Mekane Yesus Church (Lutheran and Presbyterian). There are also two large Pentecostal churches. Most of these churches belong to the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Fellowship, which is affiliated with the WEA.

Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)

Church Family : Lutheran

Membership: 4,033,413

Synods: 19

Congregations: 5,514

Pastors: 1,287

Member of: WCC (1979) – AACC – LWF – WARC – FECCLAHA

Periodical: *EECMY Information* (in Amharic and English)

At the turn of the 19th century, Ethiopian Christians began proclaiming the gospel with the help of the Lutheran missions in the country. From these joint efforts the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) was instituted as a national church in 1959. It takes its name from its first congregation in Addis Ababa, Mekane Yesus, meaning the “Place of Jesus”. The EECMY believes that she has been called by the triune God to proclaim Christ to his people in diverse social and cultural contexts. The church professes that the holy scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments are the holy word of God and the only guiding source and infallible method/doctrine of all the church’s principles and practices. The EECMY believes that all powers and duties exercised by the church are committed to her for the furtherance of the gospel through the word and the sacraments. She therefore lives and acts to fulfill the great commission.

Under the central office, the church is organized in synods and work areas, a gospel ministry department (Christian education, youth, Sunday school, theology, evangelism, counselling, Christian-Muslim relations, Bible translation, music ministry and university students’ ministry), a development and social services commission, a peace commission, and communication services. In the 1970s the EECMY developed the theme “Serving the Whole Person”, later on often quoted and referred to as holistic ministry. This has been a guiding principle throughout the years for all church work, be it evangelism or development. The concern is for the spiritual needs of the human being as well as for their physical and human needs. Therefore the EECMY has been integrating physical development and spiritual services. The 1972 statement of the national synod of the EECMY in which these views were expressed was an important contribution to the ecumenical reflection on development cooperation.

In the spirit of holistic ministry, the gospel ministry departments at the levels of the synods and the central office have been charged to coordinate the spiritual ministries of the church, to produce Christian educational materials, to conduct consultations on theological and doctrinal issues and formulate statements to guide the life and ministries of the church, to develop curriculum guides for Bible schools, to focus on discipling and training youth leaders, to do leadership training, to visit synods, presbyteries and work areas to advise and encourage on matters related to theological issues and church ministries. The priority areas of the development and social services commission are: integrated rural and urban development through community-based and gender-balanced projects towards food security, assistance to needy children, youth, disabled and destitute people through education, rehabilitation, skill-training and social support, Christian and academic education through formal and non-formal training, preventive and curative health care services, community water supply, environment conservation, appropriate technologies, sustainable development, social health programmes with a focus on HIV/AIDS and family planning, emergency assistance to the victims of natural and human made calamities.

The peace, justice and advocacy commission, established in 1998, aims at making the prophetic voice of the church heard and equipping the members of the church for peace-building. This is achieved through training, integrating peace education into development and evangelism programmes, lobbying, conflict management, interreligious cooperation, etc.

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Church Family: Orthodox (Oriental)
 Membership: 38,956,642
 Dioceses: 44
 Bishops: 57
 Parishes: 31,481
 Monasteries: 1,056
 Priests (Congregation leaders, pastors and
 Deacons etc): 364, 769
 Member of: WCC (1948) – AACC

Ethiopia was introduced to the Christian faith by the Ethiopian eunuch who was baptized by the apostle Philip (Acts 8). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was founded on a synodal level in 328 AD. The first bishop of the church was Frumentius, a Syrian by birth brought up in Ethiopia in the palace of Axum. He went to Alexandria and returned after being consecrated as bishop by Saint Athanasius. The faithful in Ethiopia call him Abba Salama Kassate Berhan (Father of Peace and Revealer of Light). Nine saints from the Middle East and Asia Minor migrated to Ethiopia 150 years later. They introduced monastic life, translated many religious books from Aramaic and Hebrew into the Geez language, and expounded the One-person, One-nature doctrine of St Cyril. Since the schism of 451, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church shares the same faith with the Coptic, Syrian and Armenian Orthodox Churches and the Syrian Orthodox Church of India (Tewahedo is a word that reflects the Ethiopian understanding of one nature).

The church has suffered greatly from various religious persecutions down the centuries. The reign of Queen Yodit in the 9th century lasted for forty years and caused great damage to the life of the church. The invasion of Mohammed the Left-Handed in the 16th century was even more destructive. Again during the 17th century, the church suffered persecution at the hands of the Jesuit Alphonzo Mendez and his followers. During the fierce five-year struggle against the invasion of Mussolini from 1935 to 1940, several bishops, many priests and thousands of faithful lost their lives. More than 2,000 churches were destroyed and numerous church manuscripts taken away.

Since 1950 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has been autocephalous. The church has 81 canonical books and 14 anaphoras. The language of the divine service is Geez, the ancient language of Ethiopia. Today, however, portions of the liturgy are also rendered in Amharic. There are seven official fasting periods: (1) all Wednesdays and Fridays (except during the 50 days after Easter); (2) the Lenten fast; (3) the Neneveh fast; (4) the vigils or Gahad of Christmas and Epiphany; (5) the fast of the apostles; (6) the fast of the prophets; (7) the fast of the Assumption.

The supreme authority in matters of church administration and justice – legislative, administrative and judicial – belongs to the holy synod which meets twice a year, under the chairmanship of His Holiness the Patriarch. The diocesan archbishop is the chairman of the diocesan parish council. The national parish council meets once a year in the patriarchate, also under the chairmanship of the patriarch. The church has two kinds of clergy: the regular priests, who administer the sacraments, and the learned lay clerks, who are entrusted with the chant of the church offices and teaching in the schools. There are six clergy training centres and one theological seminary. The current administrative structure has been most conducive for both the clergy and the laity to meet the vital needs of the whole human being and to work together for the development of the church, both spir-

itually and socially, through the respective parish councils. The Sunday school programme unit is very active.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church exists in the Sudan and Djibouti, in Jerusalem, Europe and North and South America. Eight of its bishops serve the church outside Ethiopia.

GABON

Population: 1,375,223

Surface area: 267,700 sq.km

Capital: Libreville

GNI per capita: 3,340 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: French, Bulu Fang, other

Religions: Christian 91%; Muslim 5%; African traditional 4%

Christianity: Catholics 690,000; Protestants 199,800; Independent 236,600

The area of what is today Gabon was inhabited by the Bantu people when Europeans began to explore the west coast of Africa. The population was subjected to the slave trade, and the territory was colonized by the French in the 19th century. Gabon became independent in 1960. It has remained in the French sphere of influence. Rich offshore resources have made it a major oil producing country. However only a minority of the population benefit from the income. The traditional economy of Gabon is based on timber, coffee, cocoa, palm oil and subsistence agriculture. The country has been governed by the same president since 1967. In the early 1990s, some democratic reforms were introduced. About half of the population belongs to the Catholic Church. The Evangelical Church is the largest Protestant church, followed by the Christian Alliance Church. Several African indigenous churches exist which have about the same number of followers as the Protestant churches together. Gabon is the country where Albert Schweitzer exercised his ministry.

Evangelical Church of Gabon

(Eglise évangélique du Gabon, EEG)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 205,000

Congregations: 108

Preaching stations: 16

Pastors: 153

Member of: WCC (1961) – AACC – Cevaa – COFCEAC

The Evangelical Church of Gabon has its origins in the work of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which worked in the area from 1842 to 1870, and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, from 1870 to 1913. From 1889 onwards, the Paris Missionary Society gradually took over the work until 1961 when the Evangelical Church of Gabon became autonomous. Unfortunately, beginning in 1970, the church suffered numerous divisions, which lasted until 1997 and had painful consequences for its mission and witness. Several attempts to settle the disputes were undertaken by

different external partners, in particular the CEVAA, which played a leading role in the efforts to mediate between the parties in conflict. In 1997 the two main factions met as one synod and elected a joint leadership. In April 2005 all the various dissident groups met at a large gathering and accepted the reunification of 1997. This happened without any outside intervention. It was the result of the will of the Gabonese pastors themselves to put an end to their disputes and divisions, and was perceived by all as a sign of God's grace and power. The Evangelical Church of Gabon is one again, and is at work to consolidate its unity and to respond to its missionary calling in the country and beyond. Since 2002, the church has extended its apostolic action to the south of Gabon and is present in all nine provinces of the country.

The Evangelical Church of Gabon, faithful to the principles of faith and freedom which are its foundation, and in communion with all other Christian churches, affirms the Christian faith as expressed in the Apostles' and Ecumenical Creeds and in the confessions of the Reformation, in particular the Confession of La Rochelle. It believes in the authority of the holy scriptures as the rule of faith and life.

Current activities and priorities of the church include its expansion to cover the whole national territory, administrative, financial and juridical reforms, the formation of church workers (pastors, evangelists, catechists), and the continuation of its educational work. The EEG cares for almost 25 percent of all primary school education in Gabon, and runs seven secondary schools and a teacher training college. It has as a theological school for the training of its pastors, which also provides theological formation for lay people and is involved in theological reflection and animation. Since 2004 women can be ordained for the ministry. There is currently one woman pastor. Youth and women movements are very active.

THE GAMBIA

***The Gambia Christian Council**

Founded in 1965.

Basis: The Gambia Christian Council is a fellowship of churches and Christian organizations that worship one God in the Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; accept as scriptures the Holy Bible comprising the Old and the New Testament; have an established organization that teaches the Christian way of life and exercises discipline; are prepared to encourage their members to participate in ecumenical activities.

Member churches:

Anglican Church
Methodist Church
Catholic Church

Associate members:

Baptist Union
Young Men's Christian Association
Young Women's Christian Association
Youth With A Mission

GHANA

Population: 21,832,963
 Surface area: 238,500 sq.km
 Capital: Accra
 GNI per capita: 320 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: English, 56 local languages
 Religions: Christian 55%; African traditional 24%; Muslim 20%; other 1%
 Christianity: Protestants 5,232,930; Catholics 2,500,000; Anglicans 265,000;
 Independent 3,530,000

Ghana, in West Africa, was formerly known as the Gold Coast because of the gold mining that began some 500 years ago. Its history includes that of the Ashanti kingdom and of being a centre of the slave trade. The Gold Coast became a British colony in 1873 and, in 1957, was the first sub-Saharan country in colonial Africa to attain independence, when it adopted the name Ghana. Ghana has experienced both democratic and military governments since its independence. Currently, the government (president and parliament) is democratically elected once every four years. The economy is based on cocoa, mining, timber and some industry. The majority of the population live from subsistence farming. The strong and large Anglican, Protestant and Catholic churches of Ghana grew out of 19th century mission work. Ghana is also a centre of African indigenous churches, and charismatic churches. Ghana's churches are experiencing some growth. The number of Evangelical and Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians was estimated in 2000 at 30 percent of the total number of Christians. The main line Protestant churches are grouped in the Christian Council of Ghana, the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have formed the Ghana Pentecostal Council, and there is an Association of Evangelicals of Ghana, affiliated with the WEA. These together with the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference work together collaboratively vis-à-vis issues that affect the entire nation.

***Christian Council of Ghana**

Founded in 1929.

Mission statement: The mission of the Council is to strengthen the capacity of our members to contribute to achieving justice, unity, reconciliation and integrity of creation among various sectors of the Ghanaian society, and provide a forum for joint action on the issues of common interest. In seeking to achieve this, we are guided by the Holy Bible and, in all matters of national interest, remain non-partisan.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
 Christ Evangelical Mission
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
 Eden Revival Church International
 Evangelical Church of Ghana
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana
 Ghana Baptist Convention
 Ghana Mennonite Church

Greek Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Alexandria)
Methodist Church, Ghana
Presbyterian Church of Ghana
 Religious Society of Friends
 Salvation Army

Member organizations:

Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association

The Council has an office in Tamale, in the northern sector of Ghana.

Church of the Province of West Africa

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 300,000
 Parishes: 700
 Bishops: 12
 Priests: 900
 Member of: WCC (1953) – AACC – CCG – ACC – CAPA

The Church of the Province of West Africa was formed in 1951 by five West African Anglican dioceses holding mission from the See of Canterbury, in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. The dioceses of Liberia and Guinea were added in 1982 and 1985. Nigeria became a province in 1979. Cameroon became a missionary diocese under the province in 2003. The province has currently 14 dioceses, of which eight in Ghana and two in Sierra Leone. The process is in motion for Ghana to become an autonomous province, once it has fulfilled the conditions and guidelines set by the Anglican Communion. The five other countries will make up the Continuing Province of the CPWA.

Article I of the constitution of the province states: "In conformity with Christian principles, the Church of this Province proclaims that all men have equal rights, value and dignity in the sight of God and while mindful to provide for the special needs of different people committed to its charge, it shall not allow any discrimination in the membership and government of the Church." The primary mission of the province is to witness for Jesus Christ through its life and work in all aspects of the lives of people in the various countries, in order to achieve the abundant and holistic life envisaged in the gospel. The method of achieving this mission is evangelism through teaching, preaching and other pastoral services. The chief objective is to bring into submission to Jesus Christ the members of the church and those with whom they come into contact. That includes proclamation of the gospel, living a common life, and striving to create a just and fair society. In pursuing this goal the church carries out a variety of programmes that could be classified as evangelistic, educational, agricultural, medical and pastoral. The province supports four theological seminaries (two in Ghana, one in Liberia and one in Sierra Leone) and a lay training centre in Ghana.

For the past fifteen years the church in the sub-region existed in an atmosphere of tension, civil strife and armed conflict which made growth a slow process. But things are improving and even Sierra Leone and Liberia, the two most badly war-torn countries, are beginning to enjoy some peace.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 26,000
 Congregations: 150
 Preaching stations: 300
 Pastors: 25
 Evangelists and lay Leaders: 50
 Member of: WCC (2001) – AACC – CCG – LWF – ILC

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana was established in 1958 by missionaries from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and formally registered with the Ghana government in 1964. Since then the church has established congregations and preaching stations in ten regions of Ghana. Four American missionaries are working with the ELCG along with the Ghanaian pastors, evangelists and lay leaders trained to lead the congregations and preaching stations throughout the country. The church accepts the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only rule and norm of faith and practice, the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasias Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Large and Small Catechism of Luther. The church believes and teaches the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and confesses God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The ELCG is not only interested in the spiritual life of Ghanaians but is also involved in social services in the country. Presently the church has day-care, primary and junior secondary schools in nine locations. Special programmes have been established for the blind and the deaf in several regions. The church also offers free eye testing and free eye glasses to people in all walks of life. In the northern parts of the country the church is seriously involved in agricultural programmes. It has introduced a crop improvement scheme based on the use of lime to control soil acidity, which has had a marked effect on improving crop yield (statistics show an increase of harvested crop of over 35 percent). In addition the church is involved in a water project with several rural communities to provide clean drinking water for the people. It runs an ambulance service to support its clinics in the northern region for people who do not have means of transport to go to hospital.

The church has set up the Lutheran media ministry and runs a series of programmes including a Bible correspondence course with a registration of 18,000. "This is the Life" of the Lutheran Church is telecast every Sunday on Ghana television. Another ministry has been the support of Liberian refugees since their arrival in 1990. In recent years the ELCG has opened mission stations in Uganda, Benin and Ivory Coast. The church since its inception relied on a seminary in neighbouring Nigeria for its needs of properly trained pastors and evangelists. By the grace of God, since 1998 the church has been blessed with a Lutheran seminary, known as Lutheran Clergy Study Programme, located adjacent to the head office in Accra. The objective of this seminary is to further train our local evangelists to become pastors.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 200,000

Presbyteries: 9

Congregations: 787

Pastors: 176

Member of : WCC (1963) – AACC – CCG – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *EP News* (monthly, in English)

In 1847 missionaries of the North German Mission Society (Bremen Mission), closely cooperating with the Basel Mission, started work among the Ewe people in the east of present-day Ghana. After a period of rapid growth, at the outbreak of World War I, the church had two stations in the British Gold Coast Colony and seven in the German territory of Togoland. After the war German Togoland was divided into two mandated territories of the League of Nations, the western part under the British (The Gold Coast, now Ghana) and the eastern part under French rule (now Togo). In May 1922 the first synod of the mission at Kpalime declared itself the supreme governing body of the Ewe Church and elected the first moderator. The Congregational order of the North German Mission became the church order. In 1923 Scottish missionaries began to work in British Togo and in 1929 the Paris Mission took over in French Togo. For practical reasons, separate synods had to be set up in the two territories which led to separate development. To this day however, the two churches share the same constitution and hold a joint synod meeting every three years. In 1926 the name *Ewe Hame* (*Ewe Church*) was changed to *Ewe Presbyterian Church*. In 1954 the Ghana part of the church adopted the name *Evangelical Presbyterian (EP) Church* as a result of the expansion of the church beyond Eweland. The church is strongest in the Volta region of Ghana but has congregations all over the country.

The life and witness of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are defined by its vision: *Renewal & Transformation* and its mission statement: *Bringing light where there is darkness*. As part of its evangelism programme the church undertakes completion of church building projects started by congregations in deprived areas.

The EPC runs 196 nursery and 341 primary schools, 89 junior secondary and five senior secondary schools and two teacher training colleges. It is actively involved in quality health delivery services at strategic places in the country, with two hospitals and seven clinics as well as a very effective mobile clinic. An agricultural extension programme gives technical guidance to farmers and small self-help projects aim at empowering the marginalized through revolving loans. The Family Life Education programme seeks to enhance marriage and family life and addresses the ugly problem of violence against women and children. Through the Good Samaritan vocational training is provided for teenage mothers and school dropouts and street children who are able and willing to pursue formal education are motivated and helped financially. A Spiritual Resource Centre open to the general public is under construction. It serves already as a sacred and peaceful space for spiritual guidance and faith development and will offer retreats, Bible studies, opportunities for meditation, prayer, fasting, etc. A National Counselling Centre is meant to be a place for specialized care and cure of souls, helping people facing stress, trauma and crisis. The church is planning to build an Evangelical Presbyterian university with special emphasis on agriculture, business management, theological studies and graduate studies.

Methodist Church Ghana

Church Family: Methodist
 Membership: 800,000
 Congregations: 2,905
 Preaching stations: 514
 Pastors: 700
 Member of: WCC (1960) – AACC – CCG – WMC
 Periodical: *Methodist Times* (bimonthly, in English)
Christian Sentinel (magazine, in English)

The Methodist Church Ghana was established through the collaboration of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and a band of local Christians dedicated to the study of the Bible. At their request the first missionary arrived in 1835. He and many others died of malaria. All these pioneer missionaries are buried under the pulpit of Wesley Chapel at Cape Coast. The Methodist Church Ghana, which used to be under the British Conference, became autonomous in 1961. Methodism has since spread throughout the country and beyond. The Methodist approach to evangelization in Ghana has always included formal education and other social services including medical care. The church has several hospitals and health care facilities in the country. It also has a school for the visually impaired, and two of the best secondary schools in the whole of West Africa. In addition, the foremost teacher training college in Ghana, Wesley College, is also a Methodist institution with more than 80 years of history behind it. In 2000, the church established the Methodist University College Ghana that is accredited by the government to offer courses in business administration, economics and information technology.

In 1999, the church adopted a “Biblical Pattern of Episcopacy”. The head of the church was re-designated “presiding bishop” instead of “president” and the “district chairman” is now “diocesan bishop”. The presiding bishop is assisted directly by a lay president and each diocesan bishop also has a lay chairperson as assistant. Through this system of church government, the Methodist Church Ghana has maintained its belief in the teaching of John Wesley that sees the ministry as belonging to both the clergy and the laity. The expression “superintendent minister” has been maintained for ministers in charge of circuits, that is, groups of congregations around a specific geographical area constituting an administrative unit. The highest decision-making body of the church is the Conference, made up of equal numbers of lay and clergy representatives from the 15 dioceses in the country. The work of the church is facilitated through boards including the board of ministries, board of social responsibility and development, board of education and youth, and the board of administration.

In 1942 the church together with the Presbyterian and Evangelical Presbyterian churches of Ghana co-founded the Trinity Theological Seminary for the training of ministers. Over the years it has expanded its team of sponsoring churches to include the Anglican Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. It also accepts self-supporting candidates from other ecclesial communions like the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches into its programmes.

Methodist Church Ghana maintains fraternal links with the British Conference and United Methodist churches worldwide. Within the last decade Ghanaian Methodists in several cities in Western Europe and the USA have established “Ghanaian Methodist Churches” in order to provide a more relevant worship context for themselves in the diaspora. The church remains one of the strongest Christian communions in Ghana and indications are that it will continue to grow both in numbers and influence mediating God’s kingdom among his people.

Presbyterian Church of Ghana

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 565,637

Presbyteries : 14

Congregations: 2,181

Pastors: 538

Elders: 13,607

Member of: WCC (1952) – AACC – CCG – WARC – ARCA

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana represents the harmonious blending of several traditions, primarily through the Basel Mission and the Scottish Mission. The Basel Mission started the work in 1828. After difficult beginnings the mission was firmly established by 1854, with the help of Christians from the West Indies. A seminary was founded and the Twi language put in writing. By the end of the century the mission achieved its long-cherished goal of working among the Asante people. In 1917 the Basel missionaries had to leave because of the war situation in Europe. The Church of Scotland responded to a call for help. This explains why the Reformed Church in Ghana adopted the presbyterian organizational model. In the 1940s the church extended its work to the northern parts of the country. In 2000 the church adopted the general assembly system for its governance.

The PCG has six departments. Church life and nurture deals with various ministries: children and youth, women, men, ministry of the aged, worship, Christian education, training, scholarships and counselling. Mission and evangelism is responsible for global mission and specialized ministries. The department of development and social services is in charge of development and environment, general education, agriculture and small-scale technology, and publications. Ecumenical relations looks after the involvement of the church in ecumenism, in the society and with people of other faiths. Two other departments take care of finance, human resources, information, and planning. The church runs 487 nursery schools, 984 primary, 399 junior secondary and 27 secondary schools, 40 private schools, six vocational institutions, five training colleges, a research centre and a university college. In the area of health care, the PCG is the third largest provider in the country, with four hospitals, 11 primary health care programmes, eight health centres, 13 clinics, two nurses' training colleges and a technical unit. Agricultural services are offered in nine stations throughout the country. Media work is done through two printing and publishing houses, three newspapers and eight bookshops. For lay training the PCG has three centres. It also runs four guest houses and three conference halls.

GUINEA

Population: 8,788,030

Surface area: 245,900 sq.km

Capital: Conakry

GNI per capita: 430 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: French, other

Religions: Muslim 84%; African traditional 11%; Christian 5%

Christianity: Catholics 150,000; Protestants 88,510; Anglicans 1,400;

Independent 7,000

The people living in the territory of Guinea when it was colonized by the French in 1891 were the Mandinga, who were Muslim. Islam has remained the majority religion. Guinea achieved its independence in 1958, refusing the kind of “commonwealth” proposed by France at that time, and cutting all its ties with the former colonial power. It opted for a socialist model of development, but became isolated, and gradually the economic and social conditions deteriorated. Guinea was still struggling in 2005 with setting up a viable democratic system. The civil wars in neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s created instability in the border areas, and an influx of refugees. Guinea has large bauxite reserves and is the second-largest bauxite exporter. The great majority of the population lives from subsistence farming. The Christian churches are a small minority in Guinea. The largest Protestant group, the Protestant Evangelical Church of Guinea, joined the WCC in 2005. Together with the small Anglican community – part of the Province of West Africa – and the Catholic Church, it has formed a Christian Council. There is also a Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions, affiliated with the WEA. An inter-religious council facilitates dialogue and relationships between Christians and Muslims.

Christian Council of Guinea

(Conseil chrétien de Guinée, CCG)

Founded in 2001.

Basis: To be a member a church must confess the Holy Trinity, one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and accept the authority of the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament. It must teach its members to listen and obey the word of God so that they may have a good Christian conduct, and exercise the Christian discipline as instituted by Christ, and according to the confession of faith of its members. The church must also be involved in the holistic development of the human being, and in emergency assistance to meet the needs of those who suffer.

Member churches:

Anglican Diocese of Guinea (Church of the Province of West Africa)

Protestant Evangelical Church of Guinea

Roman Catholic Church

Protestant Evangelical Church of Guinea

(Eglise protestante évangélique de Guinée, EPEG)

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 65,000

Congregations: 550

Pastors: 330

Member of: WCC (2005) – CCG

The church grew out of the work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, an evangelical mission body that belongs to the Holiness tradition of American Methodism. The missionaries came from neighbouring Sierra Leone. They founded the EPEG in 1918. The church became autonomous in 1962. It is today entirely under the responsibility of Guinean leadership and is also financially self-supporting. The church practises a baptism of confession (minimum age of twelve years); of its 65,000 members, 38,000 are baptized. The EPEG confesses the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and believes in the divinity, humanity, bodily resurrection, ascension, mediation and glorious return of Jesus Christ as

only Saviour. The holy scriptures are inspired and have authority in matters of faith and conduct. Holy communion is celebrated every first Sunday of the month. The EPEG is a church belonging to the evangelical tradition with its emphasis on the sinful nature of the human being, the need for personal salvation in Christ, eternal life for the saved and eternal punishment for the lost. But the leadership is aware that the church needs a broader understanding of the gospel for its witness in Guinean society, which is still suffering from the long period of isolation under Sekou Touré.

The highest governing body of the church is the general assembly. The EPEG has its own biblical institute for theological training. There are no women pastors yet but the church is not opposed to it. In the social field the EPEG runs 20 nursery, 15 primary and 11 secondary schools, four health clinics and some rural development projects. The church has also actively participated in work with refugees in the border area with Sierra Leone, and has recently started working on HIV/AIDS. It has good relationships with other churches in Guinea. Together with the Roman Catholic Church and the small Anglican Church the EPEG has formed the Christian Council of Guinea. It is also a member of the Association of Evangelical Churches and Missions in Guinea and of the Inter-religious Council, an important body in a majority Muslim country. The EPEG practises evangelization among Muslims, but seeks to avoid confrontation and to promote good neighbourly relations. One of its major goals is to have congregations in all parts of the country, so that there is a Christian witness in all towns and villages.

IVORY COAST (Côte d'Ivoire)

Population: 17,164,505

Surface area: 322,500 sq.km

Capital: Yamoussoukro

GNI per capita: 770 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: French, Baoule, Bete, and other

Religions: African traditional 38%; Christian 32%; Muslim 30%

Christianity: Catholics 2,950,000; Protestants 1,491,670; Orthodox 38,500;

Independent 1,311,900

Before colonization, the coastal area of today's Ivory Coast was settled by groups who migrated from the north to the forest. In the 15th century, French and Portuguese traders explored the area, in search of ivory and slaves. France extended its influence inland in the 19th century, and the territory became a French colony at the Berlin conference in 1884. Ivory Coast achieved its independence in 1960. Under the one party regime of president Houphouët-Boigny, the country maintained close political and economic ties with France. It had one of the most developed economies of sub-Saharan Africa, based on the production and export of cocoa and coffee, and remained stable until the 1990s, when tensions between population groups and regions became manifest. In 2002 a rebellion divided the country in two: the less developed north, and the south where the plantations are concentrated. In 2005, negotiations were still going on to settle the conflict. Christian missions began working in the area in the 19th century. The Catholic Church is the majority church. Most of the Protestant churches are Pentecostal and Evangelical. There are also several indigenous and independent churches. The Protestant Federation was dissolved in 1963. Plans to create a

Christian Council had not yet materialized in 2005. A Forum of Religious Confessions, set up in 1997, brings together the Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and African churches. The north of the country is predominantly Muslim.

Church of Christ – Harris Mission (Harrist Church)

(Eglise du Christ – Mission Harris dite Eglise Harriste)

Church Family: African Instituted

Membership: 197,515

Congregations: 750

Preachers: 2,000

Member of : WCC (1998) – OAIC

The Harrist Church has its origins in the work of an evangelist and prophet from Liberia, William Wade Harris, who preached the gospel in the coastal areas of what is now Ivory Coast, in the years 1913-15. He was expelled by the colonial power, which saw his activities as dangerous. In 1928, a delegation from the communities of believers which had grown out of his preaching visited the Prophet Harris in Liberia, and received his blessing to continue his work. They called the church Church of Christ – Harris Mission. Since that time the Harrist Church has gradually taken its religious and spiritual place among the churches in the country, and in the sub-region. It is present in several neighbouring countries, and is actively involved in questions of environment and development. Each year in July, the church organizes “The Spiritual Week of the Environment”.

The Harrist Church confesses Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, baptizes in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and regards the holy scriptures (the Bible) as the only reference in doctrine and faith. Holy communion is celebrated on the Christian feast days, and on other important days of the church calendar. Each local congregation is governed by a church council, presided over by a preacher. In each local church, the college of apostles is in charge of administrative, material and financial matters. In all, there are 8000 apostles (men and women) in the 750 local congregations. The head of the Harrist Church is the patriarch, who is the spiritual leader. The Harrist Church is a founding member of the Forum of Religious Confessions in Ivory Coast.

In 2000, the extraordinary general assembly decided 1) to modify the name of the church (see above), and 2) to dissolve the National Harrist Committee and replace it with the presidency of the church. The assembly also appointed the leadership of the church, of which the patriarch is the president.

United Methodist Church of Ivory Coast

(Eglise méthodiste unie de Côte d'Ivoire, EMUCI)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 1,018,402

Congregations: 850

Pastors: 84

Evangelists: 26

Member of: WCC (1987) – AACC – FECCIWA – WMC – Cevaa

The British Methodist Mission began working in what is now Ivory Coast in 1924, ten years after the pioneering evangelization by Liberian Prophet William Wade Harris in 1914 of several groups that already existed. Coordination developed between the Methodist Mission and missionaries from England, France and

Switzerland, which included also Ghana, Togo, Benin and Cameroon. In 1985 the Protestant Methodist Church in Ivory Coast separated from the church in Great Britain and became autonomous. In 2001 it decided to integrate with the United Methodist Church, which took place in 2003 without affecting its autonomy. The name was changed to United Methodist Church of Ivory Coast.

The EMUCI is a founding member of the Protestant University of West Africa in Porto Novo (Benin, former Protestant Theological Institute), of the Protestant Faculty of Yaoundé (Cameroon) and of the Centre for Evangelical Literature (CLE), also in Yaoundé. It has a higher institute of theology in Abidjan which was opened in 2002, for the training of pastors, and a Christian Training Centre in Dabou. It runs 46 primary and six secondary schools, a hostel for girls, an engineering college, a hospital, youth centres, an agricultural centre and a guesthouse for students. There are several associations, for the training of laity, for students, for Sunday schools, for the promotion of Protestant music, and a women's department. These associations take part regularly in seminars at the Christian Training Centre. Evangelism teams are at work in the congregations. Other social programmes include a school for nurses, a centre for the detoxification of drug addicts and reintegration of alcoholics, training centres for the physically disabled, care for refugees and migrant workers and agricultural cooperatives for young unemployed people in the rural areas.

Ecumenical cooperation at the national level has become more difficult since the dissolution of the Federation of Protestant Churches in 1963. The EUMCI maintains good relationships with the Roman Catholic Church but less with the conservative fundamentalist churches. The church continues its contacts aiming at the creation of a Christian Council in Ivory Coast. There are positive signs encouraging this project. The EUMCI is an observer member of the Forum of Religious Confessions created in 1997, which brings together Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Muslims and other African churches.

KENYA

Population: 32,849,169

Surface area: 580,400 sq.km

Capital: Nairobi

GNI per capita: 460 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Swahili, English, Kikuyu, other

Religions: Christian 80%; African traditional 12%; Muslim 7%; Baha'i 1%

Christianity: Protestants 10,717,500; Catholics 8,000,000; Anglicans 3,500,000; Orthodox 621,200; Independent 6,555,820 (double affiliation).

The territory of today's Kenya was inhabited by groups like the Kikuyu, the Masai, and many others when the British colonized it in 1895. Through the Mau Mau uprising in the early 1950s the Kenyan people recovered their independence, in 1963, under Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. From 1969 onwards the country had a one-party system. The 1990s were characterized by political oppression, violence and misuse of state resources. The economy, mainly based on agriculture and the export of tea and coffee, was adversely affected by mismanagement, and severely hit by drought in 1999 and 2000. Kenya has played a key role in the peace settlements in Somalia and in the southern Sudan, in 2005. It has borne the brunt of the impact of refugees and prevalence of arms from the two countries. The Chris-

tian churches in Kenya are strong. The Protestant and Anglican churches, through the national council, and the Catholic Church have repeatedly spoken out and acted against the mismanagement and corruption of political leaders, and contributed to the democratic changes in 2002. Besides these churches, there are many other large African Instituted, Pentecostal, Evangelical, and independent churches. The Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya is affiliated with the WEA. Orthodoxy in Kenya comes mainly under the Patriarchate of Alexandria and the Coptic Orthodox Church. Some of the pressing challenges are high rates of poverty, as most Kenyans live below US\$1 per day, and the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

National Council of Churches of Kenya

Founded in 1943 as Christian Council of Kenya, which became National Christian Council of Kenya in 1966, and National Council of Churches of Kenya in 1984 (forerunners: Kenya Missionary Council founded in 1924, Alliance of Missions in 1918, United Conference of Missionary Societies in 1913).

Mission statement: The mission of the Council is to facilitate the united mission of the Christian Church in Kenya by promoting fellowship, building the capacities of its membership, and enhancing the creation of a sustainable society.

Member churches:

African Brotherhood Church
African Christian Church and Schools
African Church of the Holy Spirit
 Africa Interior Church
Africa Israel Nineveh Church
Anglican Church of Kenya
 Church of Africa Sinai Mission
Coptic Orthodox Church
East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers)
 Episcopal Church of Africa
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya
 Kenya Assemblies of God
Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Kenya Mennonite Church
 Lyahuka Church of East Africa
 Maranatha Faith Assemblies
Methodist Church in Kenya
 National Independent Church of Africa
 Overcoming Faith Centre Church of Kenya
 Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa
Presbyterian Church of East Africa
 Reformed Church of East Africa
 Scriptural Holiness Mission
 The Salvation Army
 Zion Harvest Mission

Associate members (organizations):

Bible Society of Kenya
 Christian Churches Educational Association
 Christian Health Association of Kenya
 Christian Hostels Fellowship
 Kenya Ecumenical Church Loan Fund
 Kenya Students Christian Fellowship
 Kenya United Independent Churches
 Public Law Institute
 St Paul's United Theological College

Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association

Fraternal associates:

World Vision
 Trans World Radio
 Trinity Fellowship
 Fellowship of Christian Union Students
 Daystar University
 Africa Evangelistic Enterprises

The NCCK is organized in nine regions: Central, Coast, Lower Eastern, Nairobi, North Rift, Nyanza, South Rift, Upper Eastern and Western Region.

Website: www.ncck.org

African Christian Church & Schools

Membership: 200,000
 Church Family: African Instituted
 Congregations: 150
 Pastors: 80
 Member of: WCC (1975) – AACC – NCCK – OAIC

This church has its beginnings in the work of the Africa Inland Mission from 1905 onwards. A conflict arose in 1947 when Kikuyu (one of the main ethnic groups in Kenya) pastors and elders urged the missionaries to provide institutions for higher education, besides the existing primary schools. As the request was refused, the African Christian Church and Schools (ACC&S) proclaimed its independence in 1948. All its elementary and secondary schools were later recognized officially and partly taken over by the government. The pastoral role in these schools has remained the responsibility of the ACC&S. Although differing in educational policy, the church has maintained the traditions of its parent mission in matters of faith, church order and rules of conduct. Originally confined to the Agikuyu tribe, it has now extended to seven of the eight provinces in Kenya.

The church has a Bible college that trains the ministers to the diploma level. For higher learning, the ACC&S sends its candidates to the local theological colleges and to Canadian and US universities. Four health centres for preventive and curative care are run by the church. It is also actively involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS which is a major challenge for the Kenyan people.

The structure of the ACC&S is essentially democratic. Each local church sends three delegates to the parish council and the parish council sends three delegates to the regional council. Delegates from the regions form the supreme governing body called the ACC&S general council, which elects the moderator, the general secretary and the other officers. Various departments look after the Sunday schools, the Girls and Boys Brigade, the choir and youth. Canadian Baptist missionaries assist the church in leadership training.

African Church of the Holy Spirit*

Church Family: African Instituted

Membership: 700,000*

Congregations: 1,260

Pastors: 3,780

Member of: WCC (1975) – AACC – NCCCK – OAIC

The African Church of the Holy Spirit came into being in 1927, as the result of a split in the Friends African Mission. This was caused by a Pentecostal revival led by a missionary who baptized people in the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Converts spoke in tongues. They were expelled from the mission and the ACHS was officially established as an independent church in 1933. In the years following, the church faced great hardships and persecution. It was registered as a religious community in 1957. The ACHS is a Trinitarian church which believes in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and confesses Jesus Christ who died and rose again for the salvation of humankind. The church accepts the scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and life and the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as containing the substance of faith of the church. It practises baptism in the Holy Spirit of adult persons upon repentance. Holy communion is not celebrated because the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer takes the place of the eucharist as a constant remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. The ACHS believes in dreams, visions and prophecies and takes African culture and tradition positively.

The leaders of the church are elected by the members and carry the title of high priest. Members are identified by a cross on their clothes. Men wear beards and turbans. Apart from the regular Sunday services, each congregation holds a monthly meeting. Quarterly meetings bring people from several congregations together, and a yearly meeting is held at the headquarters of the church. Sunday services start with the singing of hymns and reciting of Psalm 1:1–6, and the collection of alms. Drums and clapping of hands are used to accompany the singing. Church elders drive out the evil spirits while the congregation kneels. The pastor preaches a sermon, which is followed by prayers and hymns. The order of the service may change under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who inspires prophecies and visions. It is believed that the Holy Spirit can heal all cases of sickness. Those who are not healed are allowed to go to the hospital for treatment.

The church takes part actively in the ecumenical organizations to which it belongs. It runs several schools and is involved in relief work in the border region between Kenya and Sudan. Among its priorities are evangelization in remote areas, the training of the clergy and the construction of a Bible college. The membership of the ACHS comes from a range of different ethnic groups.

*These statistics differ considerably from data sent earlier by the church, which corresponded with its status as associate member church.

African Israel Nineveh Church

Church Family: African Instituted

Membership: 500,000

Congregations: 4,800

Pastors: 3,500

Member of: WCC (1975) – AACC – NCCCK – OAIC

The African Israel Nineveh Church was founded in 1942 by David Zakayo Kivuli, who received his education at the mission of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (now Pentecostal Assemblies of God) in western Kenya. Ten years earlier he had a conversion experience, began to prophesy and speak in tongues and performed miraculous cures. Many signs and wonders occurred, and his confession of sins and worship in public places which contradicted the teachings of the missionaries made it clear that he was not operating under the Pentecostal Church. He was allowed to leave and start his own ministry known as Nineveh Ministry, which later became the Africa Israel Nineveh Church. Today the AINC followers are found in every large town in Kenya. Though the majority are members from two tribes, the Luhya and the Luo, the church has spread among many other tribes in the country. It has communities in the USA and the UK (London). The spiritual head of the church resides at Nineveh headquarters where a large church was built in 1958, called "The Ark". When David Kivuli died in 1974 he was succeeded as spiritual head by the high priestess Mama Rebecca Kivuli, who retired in 1983. In the AINC the spouse of every church leader is co-leader and the two are ordained together. The administrative and spiritual line begins with the church elder in every local church, a pastor in charge of a pastorate, a senior minister in charge of a centre, a chief minister in charge of a region or division, a moderator or missionary bishop in charge of a central regional office or province, a national bishop in charge of a country and the archbishop as the spiritual head.

The AINC holds the Trinitarian doctrine, and believes in the second coming of Jesus Christ and his final judgment. The church does not practise infant baptism. Infants are dedicated on their eighth day by the local pastor and given Christian names by their parents or guardians. Adult baptism is done after attending baptism classes for three months. It is considered as baptism of the Spirit and is done without water. This does not imply that water as a means of baptism is bad or prohibited. The AINC offers opportunities for water baptism to any member who asks for it. In the tradition of the AINC, Friday is the day for repentance and is also celebrated as the holy day when the church remembers the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his forgiveness of sins. Long sessions of prayer and meditation take place on this day. Sunday is also a holy day, mostly celebrated by processions. In the realm of Christian ethics, all members are expected to practice monogamy, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and adopt simple styles of dress.

At the beginning, the AINC faced many difficulties as an independent church in Kenya. Now it operates more than thirty primary schools and sixty nursery schools. Various women's groups are responsible for education in home economics and handicraft. The church has various departments and programmes catering for the needs of the youth, recreational activities, women, men, small-scale businesses, mission, evangelism, health, development, legal and human resources, HIV/AIDS programmes, education, counselling services, etc.

Anglican Church of Kenya

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 5,000,000

Dioceses: 29

Parishes: 1,244

Bishops: 29

Priests: 2,200

Member of: WCC (1948/1971) – AACC – NCCCK – ACC – CAPA

Periodical: *ACK Fortnight Electronic News Bulletin*

Website: www.ackkenya.org

The history of the Anglican Church of Kenya goes back to 1844 when the first missionaries of the CMS (Church Missionary Society) arrived in Mombasa. The Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa was formed in 1884, including today's Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The mission spread to central and western Kenya as of the year 1900. The work benefitted greatly from the East Africa Revivals in the first half of the 20th century, when mass conversions occurred. In 1927 Kenya became a diocese on its own. The first Kenyan bishops were consecrated in 1955 and in 1960 the Province of East Africa was established covering Kenya and Tanzania. The two countries became separate provinces ten years later. That same year, 1970, the first African archbishop of Kenya was installed. In 1998 the name of the province was changed to Anglican Church of Kenya.

The vision of the ACK is a strengthened Anglican Church built on the foundation of the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ with the ability to equip all God's people to face the challenges of the new millennium. Its mission is to bring all people into a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ, through preaching, teaching, healing and social transformation and enabling them to grow in faith and live life in its fullness.

The church runs many educational and other institutions, e.g. a language school for expatriate and local staff, a community development centre for orphaned and destitute children, several theological colleges and a provincial programme of theological education by extension. St Paul's United Theological Colleges (now University) in Limuru, near Nairobi, was jointly established by the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists in 1954. The Church Army Africa is the evangelistic and social welfare arm of the ACK. The church has developed a five-year strategic plan which mainly focuses on evangelism and social transformation.

Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church*

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 30,000

Parishes: 8

Pastors: 18

Evangelists: 17

Deacons: 3

Member of: WCC (1995) – AACC – NCCCK – LWF

Periodical: *Mjumbe* (in Swahili)

The Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church was formerly known as the Kenya Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The church owes its origins to the work that German and Swedish Lutheran missionaries started prior to the first world war, in the former German colony of Tanganyika. They left the area in the early 1940s. Lutheran services were established in 1965 in Nairobi and Mombasa at the request of Tanzanian members of the ELCT working in Kenya. The ELCT-Kenya synod was officially registered in Kenya in 1968. The work expanded over a much wider area and steps were taken to become autonomous. In 1989 the Kenya synod was given permission to register as an independent entity. It was officially inaugurated as the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC) in 1992. The church currently has nine mission areas in Kenya. In addition to the pastors, evangelists and deacons, it employs ten parish workers. It is in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Elbia (both in Germany), and with the ELCT.

Methodist Church in Kenya

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 450,000

Synods: 10

Circuits: 106

Congregations: 919

Pastors: 357

Member of: WCC (1968) – AACC – NCCK – WMC

Periodical: *Methodist Digest* (in English)

The British Methodist Church entered Kenya in 1862 through the work of the then United Methodist Free Church. It started at Ribe station which was the base from where the mission was launched. Today the work is concentrated in several of the main areas of the country as well as in Uganda and Tanzania. The church has ministers from almost all the ethnic groups and currently a Masai bishop is in charge of Western Kenya synod. The church became autonomous in 1967. Membership at that time stood at about 8,000. Recent statistics show a growth rate of 7.8 percent. This points to a great need of pastors to care for the members of the church and to look after the mission areas in Tanzania and Uganda. Membership is growing faster than the number of ministers. The church sponsors over 140 schools, one main hospital, ten clinics, three agricultural training centres, fifteen youth polytechnics, the Kenya Methodist University and two guest houses. It also shares with other churches in St Pauls United Theological College at Limuru, near Nairobi.

The vision of the Methodist Church in Kenya is to know Jesus Christ and to make him known. The doctrinal standards are those of the Methodist tradition:

- a) The Methodist Church claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church which is the body of Christ. It rejoices in the inheritance of the apostolic faith and loyally accepts the fundamental principles of the historic creeds and of the Protestant Reformation. It ever remembers that in the providence of God Methodism was raised up to spread scriptural holiness through the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith and declares its unfaltering resolve to be true to its divinely appointed mission.
- b) The doctrine of the evangelical faith, which Methodism has held from the beginning and still holds, is based upon the divine revelation recorded in the holy scriptures.
- c) Christ's ministers in the church are stewards in the household of God and shepherds of his flock.
- d) It is the universal conviction of the Methodist people that the office of the Christian ministry depends upon the call of God who bestows the gifts of the spirit, the grace and the fruit, which indicate those whom he has chosen.
- e) Those whom the Methodist Church recognizes as called of God and therefore received into its ministry shall be ordained by the imposition of hands as expression of the church's recognition of the minister's personal call.
- f) The Methodist Church holds the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.
- g) Preachers itinerant and lay are examined, tested and approved before they are authorized to minister in the holy things. For the sake of church order and not because of any priestly virtue inherent in the office, the ministers of the

Methodist Church are set apart by ordination to the ministry of the word and sacraments.

- h) The Methodist Church recognizes two sacraments namely: baptism and the Lord's supper as of divine appointment and of perpetual obligation of which it is the privilege and duty of members of the Methodist Church to avail themselves.

The mission of the church is to respond in obedience to the divine call of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to proclaim the holistic gospel in word and deed in the power of God's Holy Spirit. Currently the Methodist Church in Kenya is planning to evangelize in Southern Sudan, in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Presbyterian Church of East Africa

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 4,000,000

Parishes : 310

Pastors: 450

Member of: WCC (1957) – AACC – NCCCK – WARC – ARCA

Website: www.pcea.or.ke

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa grew out of the work of the Church of Scotland. In 1891, the first missionaries settled at Kibwezi, some 250 km from Mombasa. Later it was decided to continue further inland to Thogoto, from where the Presbyterian Church spread out. The first Kikuyu convert was baptized in 1907. In 1910 there were 53 Christians. The number rose to 5,369 by 1929. Shortly after, there was a division in the church arising from disagreements on the question of female circumcision: some felt that the practice was medically wrong and therefore the church should discourage it; others, who felt that the issue had nothing to do with the church, broke away to form their own schools and churches. From 1908, the Church of Scotland began to take a greater interest in the many Scots scattered all over Kenya as settlers and government officials. For a long time the two wings, European and African, were one church but they separated in 1936. In 1956, they came together again and formed one general assembly. Since 1935, the church's pastors have been trained at St Paul's United Theological College along with Methodists and Anglicans. The church has a lay training centre at Kikuyu.

The PCEA has been playing an important role in Kenya. It pioneered in education and medical work. It founded the first hospital in the country. It now maintains three hospitals and several health centres, two schools for deaf children, a home for old people and a home for destitute children. It sponsors 700 schools, both primary and secondary. The church participates in nation-building and operates several projects such as community centres, rural development projects, centres for weaving, homecraft, secretarial training for girls, HIV/AIDS control programmes, relief efforts and refugees.

In spite of its meagre resources and paucity of personnel, the church faces the future with confidence. Among its primary concerns are: seeking a still greater role in the political life of society, the better training of pastors and lay people, the reaching of the unreached tribes with the gospel, the preparation of youth for the future and the search for ways and means to make the church self-supporting.

The PCEA maintains relations with the Church of Scotland, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Reformed Church of America and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

LESOTHO

Population: 1,800,000

Surface area: 30,350 sq.km

Capital: Maseru

GNI per capita: 1,431 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Sesotho, English, other

Religions: Christian 91%; African traditional 8%

Christianity: Catholics 900,000; Protestants 302,560; Anglicans 110,000;

Independent 254,060

Lesotho came into being as a kingdom in the 19th century, when the Basotho leader Moshoeshe I resisted the attacks of the Zulu empire. It became a British protectorate in 1864, at the request of the king, to avoid being taken over by the white Afrikaners. Called Basutoland, the kingdom recovered its independence in 1966 under the name Lesotho. It is a mountainous country, entirely surrounded by South Africa. From 1986 onwards, it was governed by the military who cooperated with apartheid South Africa and sent the king into exile. In 1993, it became a democratic constitutional monarchy. Economically, Lesotho has been dependent on the employment of its workforce in South Africa's mining industry. A local manufacturing industry is developing, compensating for the decrease of employment opportunities in the mines. The Catholic Church is the majority church in Lesotho, and is a member of the Christian Council, which is the ecumenical body. Besides the Lesotho Evangelical Church, which is the largest Protestant church, other WCC members include two Methodist churches, which belong to the African Methodist Episcopal Church (USA) and the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, and the Anglicans who are part of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. There are several African Instituted and Pentecostal churches.

Christian Council of Lesotho

Founded in 1965.

Basis: To be a member a church must confess the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and the only Saviour according to the scriptures.

Mission statement: The Council exists for the renewal and empowerment of the local church as an agent of reconciliation within the church and society, in the reign of God. It also exists as the voice of the voiceless, the poor and the marginalized.

Member churches:

Anglican Church in Lesotho

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Lesotho Evangelical Church

Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Roman Catholic Church

Associate member:

Student Christian Movement

The CCL is organized in eight regional committees: Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, and Thaba-Tseka Regional Committee.

Lesotho Evangelical Church

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 340,500

Parishes: 107

Pastors: 64

Member of: WCC (1965) – AACC – CCL – WARC – ARCA – Cevaa

Periodical: *Leselinyana la Lesotho* (fortnightly newspaper, in Sesotho)

The Lesotho Evangelical Church traces its origins back to the work of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society which began in 1833. The LEC became autonomous in 1964 under Basotho leadership. Like other parts of the body of Christ, the church preaches the good news of salvation that comes from God through his only Son Jesus Christ, who was crucified and risen from the dead, who sits at the right hand of God the Father, from where he shall come to judge the living and the dead in the fullness of time. The church seeks to carry out its mission through the preaching of the word of God, the publication of its newspaper, Radio Lesotho, and other appropriate ways. With its limited means, the LEC tries to express its obedience to the Lord through medical and educational services. It has two hospitals which are involved in primary health care, and a centre for the rehabilitation of alcoholics. The church runs 500 primary and 75 post-primary schools. Other departments of the LEC include a lay training service, a printing press and book depot (at Morija, established in 1863), youth work, guidance and counselling (on family and social matters). A planning commission gathers and identifies the critical ministry issues and opportunities from the various boards and other commissions of the church and advises the synod. The women's desk was established in 1988. A department of justice, peace, integrity of creation and ecumenical relations was set up in 1991 to provide leadership, communication and education on JPIC and ecumenical issues. The LEC has a museum (the only one in the country) and archives which are an important resource for students from different faculties. Pastors are trained at the theological seminary founded in 1882, also at Morija.

The organization of the LEC is made up of church councils at the local level, parish councils (consistories), presbyteries and the national synod. At each level clergy and laity are represented, and the various commissions, departments and boards are also represented in the national synod. The church has a strong tradition of ecumenical commitment and has followed a policy of joining in "a fellowship of conversation, mutual enrichment, common purpose and common action" with other churches and ecumenical bodies. It sees this fellowship as the best way to express the oneness of the church.

LIBERIA

Population: 3,602,847

Surface area: 111,400 sq.km

Capital: Monrovia

GNI per capita: 110 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: English, other

Religions: African traditional 43%; Christian 40%; Muslim 16%

Christianity: Protestants 439,200; Catholics 161,885; Anglicans 34,000;

Independent 562,000

Liberia was founded in the early 19th century by the American Colonization Society, for liberated slaves returning from the USA. The territory was inhabited by the Mandingo and other groups. During the 1930s, it was discovered that slavery continued in Liberia, leading to a new American-Liberian government that abolished slavery, but continued to withhold rights from the indigenous peoples. It was overthrown in 1980 in a bloody coup, which brought into power a corrupt regime. From 1989 to 2003 Liberia was devastated by a civil war. Many people were killed, others were displaced or fled to neighbouring countries, and the economy was destroyed. A transitional government was formed in 2003, for a period of two years, and a UN mission put in place. Liberia's economy was mainly based on the production and export of timber and rubber, and farming. In 2005, recovery was still slow, and the security situation remained difficult. The main Protestant churches in Liberia are the Methodists, the Lutherans, and the Baptists. There are also some large Pentecostal and indigenous churches. Besides the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches, the Methodists (part of the United Methodist Church), the Church of the Lord (Aladura, headquartered in Nigeria), and the Anglicans (part of the Province of West Africa) are WCC members. The churches have played an important role in peace and rehabilitation, through the Liberian Council of Churches, and in inter-faith cooperation with the Muslim community. The Association of Evangelicals of Liberia is affiliated with the WEA.

***Liberian Council of Churches**

Founded in 1982.

Basis: To be a member a church must confess faith in the blessed Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, faith in Jesus Christ, true God, true Man, as Lord and Saviour in whom is the fullness of revelation, faith in the unity of the church as the Body of Christ, and faith in the Bible as the inspired word of God.

Mission statement: to realize its vision, the Liberian Council of Churches shall unite, empower, reconcile and group its constituencies through strategic networks and alliances as well as cooperate with national and international ecumenical bodies and governments.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
 Catholic Church in Liberia
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of the Lord (Aladura)
 Don Stewart Christ Pentecostal church
Episcopal Church in Liberia
 Liberia Baptist Missionary & Educational Convention
Lutheran Church in Liberia
 Pentecostal Assemblies of the World
Presbyterian Church of Liberia
United Methodist Church

Associate member churches:

Little White Chapel
 New Apostolic Church
 Redeemed Fellowship International Church
 Three Brothers Ministries of Faith Church
 United Church of God in Christ
 United Pentecostal Churches of Christ

Fraternal members (organizations):

Christian Association of the Blind
 Christian Awareness Counseling Center
 Christian Health Association of Liberia
 Christian Media Center
 Concerned Christian Community
 Ecumenical Women Organization of Liberia
 Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Programme
 National Grassroot Pastors' Association of Liberia
 Universal School of Health/ Christian Religion
 Young Men's Christian Association of Liberia
 Young Women's Christian Association of Liberia

Lutheran Church in Liberia

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 71,196
 Congregations: 350
 Bishops: 1
 Pastors: 85
 Member of: WCC (1968) – AACC – LCC – LWF

Lutheran work began in Liberia in 1860 by missionaries of the former Lutheran Church in America (now ELCA). The mission advanced slowly in the early years, but recently the church has been growing rapidly. Over the last twenty years membership has almost tripled. It has spread from among the Kpelle and Lorma-speaking people to other groups in Liberia. The Lutheran Church in Liberia became fully autonomous in 1965. Its organization combines congregational, episcopal and synodal features. The constitution, which was revised in 1997 and 1999, provides for a balance of local responsibility and common action. The LCL urban ministry that began in Monrovia, Liberia's capital city, is very vital and has spread to central Liberia. The lay training programme at the Lay Training Centre is also important and is providing lay leaders, deacons and evangelists of the church. The church runs a few schools and two hospitals. Future pastors are formed at the Gbarnga School of Theology, which is a joint venture with the Methodist and Episcopal churches.

The goal of the LCL was to make central and parish administration self-supporting by 1992. However, due to the 14 years of devastating civil war, this goal was not achieved. The church is now in the process of trauma-healing, peace-building and reconciliation. This is a new programme that is known throughout Liberia. It also has an HIV/AIDS programme, which was established a few years ago.

Presbyterian Church of Liberia*

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 1,083
 Congregations: 13
 Pastors: 12
 Member of: WCC (1969) – AACC – LCC – WARC – ARCA

The beginning of the evangelization process by the church and the founding of Liberia by the American Colonization Society (ACS) went hand in hand. While the ACS focused on the generation of funds to repatriate Africans to their native

land, the church concentrated on the raising of resources to begin evangelizing among the indigenous people who continued to inhabit the land now identified as the future home of those repatriated. The First Presbyterian Church was established in Liberia in 1833, by a pastor who later became Associate Justice of Liberia. Under the auspices of the Western Foreign Missionary Society the first Presbyterian missionary arrived in 1834 and started the first Presbyterian missionary work in the country. In 1837, the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, successor of the Western Missionary Society, took over the mission in Liberia. Twelve years later the church established the Alexander High School in Monrovia, which was later moved elsewhere for financial reasons.

The impact on Liberia of the Presbyterian Church is demonstrated by the fact that a significant number of the independence and post-independence leaders were either leaders of the Presbyterian Church or educated at the Alexander High School. The fifth moderator of the PCL wrote in the late 1870s to his counterparts in the New York Presbytery: "In announcing the fact that I have been nominated by an almost unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees to the Presidency of Liberia College, I cannot help calling your attention to the influence which Presbyterianism has exerted and is still exerting in Liberia. All the leading men of the country are now either Presbyterians or have been educated by Presbyterians."

The PCL has been actively involved together with the other churches in Liberia in the efforts to end the armed conflicts of recent years and continues to take part in reconciliation and care for the displaced and other victims, and in the building of a democratic society.

MADAGASCAR

Population: 18,408,559

Surface area: 578,000 sq.km

Capital: Antananarivo

GNI per capita: 300 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Malagasy, French

Religions: Christian 52%; Malagasy traditional 46%; Muslim 2%

Christianity: Protestants 5,637,000; Catholics 4,226,000; Anglicans 330,000;

Orthodox 23,200; Independent 828,520

Madagascar is the fourth island in the world by size. It was settled by people who had migrated from the Indonesian archipelago, probably in the 9th or 10th century. In the early 19th century a king established a monarchy covering most of the island, which lasted until France invaded Madagascar in 1895. Armed resistance went on for several years, especially in the south, and in the 1920s a movement of young intellectuals militated for political autonomy. In 1947 an uprising in the east of the island was crushed by the French, killing some 100,000 people. Madagascar became independent in 1960. The population consists of 18 ethnic groups, with marked differences between the central highlands and the coastal areas, but culturally close to each other and speaking one language. Politically the country has gone through several stages, from close cooperation with France to a socialist regime and strong nationalist orientations in the 1970s and '80s, and democratization in the 1990s. After a political crisis in 2001-02, a more liberal-minded government emerged. The economy is based on subsistence farming,

export of coffee and vanilla, and some manufacturing industry. The churches have played a major role in the formation of national identity, and since independence, in the political situation and the development of the country. The two large Protestant churches and the Catholic and Anglican churches have formed the Christian Council. Since the 1990s there has been an influx of Pentecostal, Charismatic and independent churches, which continue to grow.

***Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar**

Founded in 1980.

Basis: To be a member a church must confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and only Saviour according to the scriptures.

Member churches:

Catholic Church
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
Malagasy Episcopal Church (Anglican)
Malagasy Lutheran Church

Federation of Protestant Churches in Madagascar

Founded in 1958 (forerunner: the Missionary Conference, founded in 1913).

Basis: Mindful of their union with Jesus, King and Saviour, of their duty to spread the gospel, and of their communion with the universal church, the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar and the Malagasy Lutheran Church work together in the Federation of Protestant Churches in Madagascar.

Member churches:

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
Malagasy Lutheran Church

The Federation of Protestant Churches in Madagascar is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 505,000
 Synods: 7
 Parishes: 86
 Priests: 114
 Member of: WCC (1975) – AACC – CCCM – ACC
 Periodical: planning to publish *Le Phare* (in French)

The first Anglican missionary arrived in Madagascar in 1864, sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1874 the diocese of Madagascar was founded. It was divided into three in 1969, and two more dioceses were created in 2003. The number of Anglicans in Madagascar began to grow rapidly as of 1991 (Anglican Decade of Evangelism) and is estimated at close to 500,000. The church is open to cooperation and social activities: dispensaries, schools, orphanages, training centres and various types of development work. It is committed ecumenically and endeavours to put its talents at the service of the ecumenical movement. The clergy are trained at St Paul's College, near the capital.

The Anglican Church in Mauritius started as the "Church of England in Mauritius" after Great Britain took over the country from France in 1810. At first its

ministers were civil chaplains serving the colonial administration. The church undertook educational, social and medical work and was supported by two English missionary societies, the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. As the church grew, indigenous pastors were trained and ordained to the ministry. Mauritius is a microcosm of different cultures and faiths, eastern and western, Asian, African and European. The Anglican Church embraces the different cultures and strives to be relevant to the society, in spite of its minority position. It maintains a theological college and centres for the care of old people and blind and unwanted children, and two secondary schools. Besides its commitment to mission and evangelism, it seeks to be involved in interfaith dialogue.

Until 1973 when it became a diocese in its own right the Anglican Church in the Seychelles was part of the church in Mauritius. The diocese has a theological training centre.

The province of the Indian Ocean was formed in 1973, comprising the islands of Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and La Réunion. The see of the province depends on where the primate resides. La Réunion is not a diocese, it is a missionary area placed directly under the care of the province.

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM)

Church Family: Uniting and United

Membership: 3,500,000

Regional Synods: 36

Congregations: 5795

Pastors: 1,200

Member of: WCC (1969) – AACC – CCCM – WARC – ARCA – CWM – Cevaa

Periodicals: *Vaovao* FJKM (news bulletin, in Malagasy, French and English);

Mpanolotsaina (in Malagasy); *Marturia Vavolombelona* (newspaper, in Malagasy)

Radio station: Radio Fahazavana

After 18 years of negotiations, the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar was founded in 1968 through the union of three churches which arose out of the work of the London Missionary Society, the Paris Missionary Society and the Friends Foreign Mission Association. These historic links continue in a new sense of partnership in mission through the church's membership of CWM and Cevaa and Quaker Peace and Service.

The first missionaries sent by the London Missionary Society landed in the country in 1818. Between 1820 and 1835 some schools were opened, the first church was founded and the entire Bible was translated into Malagasy. For a period up to 1861 the missionaries were unwelcome, and the Malagasy Christians were severely persecuted. In 1862, under a more liberal reign, LMS missionaries were allowed back in Antananarivo. When they came, they found a very active indigenous church. In 1864, a small group of Quakers came to work in cooperation with the LMS. They finally constituted a "Friends Church" in the south-west of the capital. The Society of Evangelical Missions (Paris) did not arrive until the French conquest of the country in 1896. It is interesting to note that the Malagasy union negotiations were begun by missionaries but led to completion by Malagasy church leaders.

The FJKM is the largest Protestant church in the country. It has adopted the presbyterian-synodal polity. The congregations are grouped into regional synods which meet at least once a year. The national synod gathers every four years and

the national council of 80 members meets twice a year. The offices of the church are situated in the capital, Antananarivo. The FJKM has three theological colleges, and one theological faculty. It owns 552 schools. In its involvement in the fight against poverty the church gives high priority to evangelism, Christian education, and development in the training of its leaders. With its three departments, eight branches, different units, one orphanage, one printing house, development department, and permanent committees (such as finance, patrimony, national affairs and fight against injustice and corruption, fight against HIV-AIDS, etc.), the church witnesses to Jesus Christ in the national context.

At the national level, the church maintains close contact with the Lutheran Church with which FJKM has been in partnership since 1913 through the Federation of Protestant Churches. Together with the Roman Catholic, the Anglican and the Lutheran churches, the FJKM founded the Christian Council in 1980, a significant expression of Christian solidarity and integrity in the country.

Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 3,000,000

Congregations: 5,000

Pastors: 1,200

Member of: WCC (1966) – AACC – CCCM – LWF

The Lutheran faith was brought to Madagascar by Norwegian and American missionaries. The Norwegian Missionary Society began its work in the centre and the south of the country in 1866, and the Mission of the American Lutheran Church in the south-west in 1888. The church grew and spread, and became autonomous as one body in 1950, under the name Malagasy Lutheran Church and under Malagasy responsibility and leadership. The FLM is in the forefront of the preaching of the gospel and evangelization campaigns, and especially the work of the revival movement against the worship of idols and the traditions and beliefs that contradict the gospel. Its pastors are trained and prepared at six Lutheran theological seminaries and the Lutheran Theological Faculty which belong to the church, and some receive their training and preparation abroad.

The FLM is organized in 20 regional synods. The national synod is the body that holds the work of the church together. The national synod committee meets every four years and has the authority to decide on all matters related to worship and the spiritual life of the church, the administration, the departments and associations, and the mission of preaching and announcing the gospel that is carried out by the church. The executive board implements the decisions, under the leadership of the president and the general secretary who both work full-time at the national office.

Social work, development and evangelism are held together by the FLM and constitute together its witness in society. The church continues and expands the work that was started by the missionaries who were the pioneers. It runs seven hospitals and 25 dispensaries throughout the country, two leprosy hospitals, and schools for the deaf. Eighty percent of the population of Madagascar are peasants. The development work of the FLM is an important means to reach the people in their daily life and bring them to Jesus. The church has three large farm schools, and a training programme for peasants aimed at promoting agriculture and animal husbandry. It runs many primary and secondary schools, and is planning to set up a Lutheran university in the south of the island.

The cooperation with other churches through the Protestant Federation and the Council of Churches is very important for the FLM, especially in the areas of social work and evangelization. The church pays much attention to its participation in ecumenical efforts and the formation of its members who are entrusted with responsibilities in this area of work. The present government of Madagascar provides space for the churches and accepts their collaboration. This is also an opportunity for announcing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

MALAWI

Population: 12,572,372

Surface area: 118,500 sq.km

Capital: Lilongwe

GNI per capita: 170 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Chichewa, English, other

Religions: Christian 77%; Muslim 16%; African traditional 7%

Christianity: Protestants 3,381,700; Catholics 2,997,000; Anglicans 255,000;
Independent 1,796,150

The region of today's Malawi has been inhabited since prehistoric times. The Maravi, a Bantu people from southern Congo, settled the area in the 14th century and established a kingdom. They are the ancestors of two of the main ethnic groups, the Chewa and Nyanja. Other groups include the Yao, the Tumbuka, Tonga and Ngoni. In 1891 the British established the Central Africa Protectorate, and in 1907 the Nyasaland Protectorate. Pressure for independence developed in the 1940s. In 1953 Nyasaland was joined with Northern and Southern Rhodesia (today's Zambia and Zimbabwe) to form the Central African Federation. After various transitions, Malawi recovered full independence in 1964. For three decades it was ruled by its first President, Dr Banda, as a one-party state. Since 1994 the country has a multi-party democracy. Economically, Malawi depends on subsistence agriculture and the export of tobacco, tea, and sugar. In 2005, the southern part of the country suffered severe drought. Malawi is struggling with a high HIV/AIDS infection rate. Christian missions came to Malawi in the 19th century. The Catholic Church is the largest church, followed by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Other large Christian groups are the Pentecostals, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Anglicans, and the African independent churches. The Malawi Council of Churches is the ecumenical body. There is also an Evangelical Association of Malawi, which is affiliated with the WEA.

***Malawi Council of Churches**

Founded in 1942 as Christian Council of Nyasaland, Christian Council of Malawi as of 1964, changed to Malawi Council of Churches in 1998 (forerunner: Consultative Board of Federation Missions, founded in 1939).

Basis of membership: The members of the Malawi Council of Churches are united in confessing the faith to which the church, the body of Christ, has ever witnessed in the one triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; worshipping the Father revealed to humanity in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, owing obedience to Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life, trusting the guidance of

the holy and labouring for the advancement of the kingdom of God through the word. The Council accepts the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the record of God's revelation of himself to humanity, as containing all things necessary for salvation, and as being the ultimate standard of faith and conduct.

Member churches:

Africa Evangelical Church
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Anglican Diocese of Lake Malawi
Anglican Diocese of Northern Malawi
Anglican Diocese of Southern Malawi
Anglican Diocese of Upper Shire
 Baptist Convention of Malawi
 Central Africa Conference of Seventh Day Baptists
 Church of Africa Presbyterian
 Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Blantyre Synod
 Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Livingstonia Synod
 Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Nkhoma Synod
 Church of Nazarene
 Churches of Christ
 Evangelical Church of Malawi
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi
 Free Methodist Church
 Independent Baptist Church
 Providence Industrial Mission
 Salvation Army
 Zambezi Evangelical Church

Affiliate members (observers):

Association of Christian Educators in Malawi
 Association of Pre-School Play Groups
 Bible Society of Malawi
 Christian Health Association In Malawi
 Christian Literature Association in Malawi
 Christian Service Committee
 Life Ministry
 Monrovia Church
 Scripture Union of Malawi
 Student Christian Organization in Malawi
 Theological Education by Extension
 Zomba Theological College

The Malawi Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Church of the Province of Central Africa

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 900,000
 Dioceses: 15
 Parishes: 250
 Bishops: 15
 Priests: 400
 Member of: WCC (1956) – AACC – BCC – CCZ – MCC – ZCC – ACC – CAPA
 Periodical: *Epifania*

The Province covers Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It was inaugurated in 1955. The first Anglican missionaries arrived in Nyasaland (now

Malawi) in 1882. When Malawi became independent in 1964, the diocese of Nyasaland changed its name to diocese of Malawi. Now there are four dioceses. In Zimbabwe the Anglican Church dates back to missionary efforts from South Africa which began in 1811, when the diocese of Mashonaland was created. This diocese became part of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and included part of Botswana and Mozambique, as well as the whole of Rhodesia, until the formation of the diocese of Matabeleland in 1953. The countries forming the present province are different from one another, and face different problems. Zimbabwe is relatively industrialized, while Malawi is almost entirely rural. Zambia produces much of the world's copper. Botswana's main industry has been, until recently, cattle ranching. But there are diamonds, copper and nickel mines now. Malawi and Zimbabwe are predominantly Christian, while in Botswana and Zambia Christianity is a minority religion. Christianity is expanding; for example Zimbabwe now has five dioceses and so has Zambia.

The constitution of the province is similar to that of other provinces in other parts of Africa but, unlike most of them, it has a floating archbishopric. A recent development has been the creation of territorial councils in countries where there are more than one diocese. The Zambian Anglican council has extensive administrative and financial powers; the Anglican council in Malawi controls pension and trust funds; the Zimbabwe Anglican council is purely consultative. The major task for the church in Zimbabwe is to be involved in reconciliation, reconstruction and development after years of fighting for independence. The church in all four countries has developed indigenous leadership and is striving towards financial independence.

MOROCCO

Council of Christian Churches in Morocco

(Conseil des Eglises Chrétiennes au Maroc, CECM)

Member churches:

Anglican Church in Morocco

Catholic Church

Evangelical Church in Morocco

Greek Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Alexandria)

Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)

To be a member a church must be accepted by the other member churches, and be recognized by the government of Morocco.

MOZAMBIQUE

Population: 19,495,185

Surface area: 801,600 sq.km

Capital: Maputo

GNI per capita: 250 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Portuguese, Makua, Tsonga, other

Religions: African traditional 50%; Christian 40%; Muslim 10%

Christianity: Catholics 4,150,000; Protestants 2,457,800; Anglicans 125,000;

Independent 1,221,200

Bantu people migrated into the area of today's Mozambique in the 4th century. Arab trade posts were established along the coast several centuries before the Portuguese began to colonize the territory in the 16th century, seeking slaves and gold. Portuguese colonial influence was mainly exercised through private companies until after World War II, when thousands of Portuguese settled in Mozambique, officially a province of Portugal. In 1964, the liberation struggle began, and in 1975 Mozambique achieved its independence under the socialist regime of FRELIMO, the liberation front. A resistance movement, RENAMO, backed by South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, began a civil war which lasted until 1990, when a new constitution was enacted. One million Mozambicans died, 1.5 million fled to neighbouring countries, and 4 million were displaced. A peace agreement was reached in 1992 with the help of the UN. Since then, Mozambique has consolidated political stability and put in place conditions for economic recovery. The majority of the population live from subsistence farming. Export products are cash crops, aluminium and electricity. The Catholic Church is the largest church. It played an important role in bringing the civil war to an end. The Pentecostals make up about 40 percent of the Protestant and Independent churches. The Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, and African independent churches are also large. The Methodists belong to the WCC through the United Methodist Church, and the Anglicans through the Province of Southern Africa. The Christian Council of Mozambique is the ecumenical body. The Evangelical Association is affiliated with the WEA.

Christian Council of Mozambique

Founded in 1948.

Mission statement: To promote justice in the light of Jesus Christ's teachings (Matthew 25:31–46), consolidating Christian unity and ecumenism through participatory and sustainable programmes in gender and socio-economic development.

Member churches:

- African Episcopal Church of Light
- African Methodist Episcopal Church*
- Anglican Church of Mozambique*
- Bible Society of Mozambique (an association of people and churches)
- Church of Crete
- Church of the Nazarene
- Emmanuel Wesleyan Church
- Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique (Zambézia)
- Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique (Nampula)
- Evangelical Church of the Good Shepherd
- Free Methodist Church
- Full Gospel Evangelical Church in Mozambique
- Lutheran Evangelical Church
- Presbyterian Church of Mozambique*
- Reformed Church of Mozambique
- Salvation Army
- Scripture Union of Mozambique (an association of people and churches)
- United Baptist Church
- United Congregational Church*
- United Methodist Church*
- United Church of Christ (ex–American Board)
- Wesleyan Methodist Church in Mozambique
- Zion United Christian Apostolic Church in Mozambique

The Christian Council of Mozambique has nine provincial councils: Gaza, Inhambane, Manica, Tete, Sofala, Zambézia, Nampula, Niassa, and Cabo Delgado Provincial Council.

Website: <http://www.ccm.co.mz>

Presbyterian Church of Mozambique*

(Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 24,000

Parishes: 40

Pastors: 42

Member of: WCC (1981) – AACC – CCM – WARC – ARCA – Cevaa

The history of the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique goes back to 1882 when Josefa Mhalthala was sent to preach the gospel in present-day Mozambique by the Church of Valdezia/Spelonken in South Africa, belonging to the Swiss Mission. Rev. Paul Berthoud, the first missionary sent by the Swiss Mission arrived in 1887. Ricatla, where today the theological seminary is located, was the first mission station. In 1948 the church assumed its own financial responsibilities. At a meeting of representatives of the church and the Swiss Mission in 1962 the autonomy of the church was officially recognized, and the status of the missionaries serving the church was clarified. An important synod of the church was held in 1963, in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo), where a new constitution was adopted and five pastors were ordained. In 1970 autonomy became a reality when all mission stations became the property of the church. The Portuguese government was not happy to see these changes. Between 1972-74 the church suffered greatly at the hands of the colonial authorities. Many Presbyterian church leaders were imprisoned in 1972. The president of the synod council, Rev. Zedequias Manganhlea and one of the elders were killed in the infamous Machava concentration camp.

The Presbyterian Church of Mozambique is growing. Before independence it was working in only two provinces of the southern part of Mozambique. At that time Protestantism was mostly concentrated in the south, the centre was more Catholic and the north more Muslim. Now the church is preaching the gospel in all ten provinces and the number of Christians is increasing. Other independent churches and some new churches like the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God are also moving from the south to the north.

Evangelization has always been accompanied by the social work of the Presbyterian Church, for example, hospitals, schools, etc. The church has had a profound influence on the cultural, social and political life of the people. The founder of the Liberation Front of Mozambique, Edouard Chivambo Mondlane was a member of this church, as is the newly-elected president of the country. The Presbyterian Church of Mozambique continues to search for new forms of Christian presence within society by equipping its community with a mature, biblical faith. The training of the laity and the education of youth through various programmes are priorities on the agenda of the church.

NAMIBIA

Population: 2,032,215
 Surface area: 824,300 sq.km
 Capital: Windhoek
 GNI per capita: 2,370 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: English, Afrikaans, Ovambo, Herero, other
 Religions: Christian 92%; African traditional 6%
 Christianity: Protestants 1,052,440; Catholics 335,000; Anglicans 64,400;
 Independent 232,720

Namibia was since early times inhabited by the Bushmen, and as of the 14th century by Bantu groups. The territory was attributed to Germany at the Berlin Conference of 1884, as South-West Africa. In 1904, some 50,000 Hereros were massacred by the German colonial army. South Africa administered the territory after World War I, and annexed it after World War II, imposing its apartheid regime. From 1966 to 1988 the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) under president Sam Nujoma fought a liberation war against the South African occupant. Namibia achieved its independence in 1990 and since then has been governed by SWAPO. Namibia's economy is based on mining and export of diamonds, uranium, and other minerals. Most of the population depend on subsistence farming. Protestant, Anglican, and Catholic missions began working in Namibia in the 19th century. The largest churches are the two Lutheran churches, among the Ovambo people in the north, and among other groups in the centre. These churches, as well as others, supported the struggle for liberation and against apartheid. Several WCC member churches based in South Africa are present in Namibia: the Anglicans, Methodists, United Congregationalists and Uniting Presbyterians. The African Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Methodists are part of the WCC through their church structures in the USA. All of these belong to the Council of Churches, which also includes the Catholic Church. There are various Pentecostal and independent churches. The Evangelical Fellowship of Namibia is affiliated with the WEA.

***Council of Churches in Namibia**

Founded in 1978 (forerunner: the Christian Centre, founded in the early 1970s).

Vision: The Council of Churches in Namibia is a reconciling, healing, and caring fellowship of Christian churches united in service to society.

Mission statement: The CCN is an ecumenical body, which exists to support and enable member churches to respond in faith to the spiritual and socio-economic needs of all God's people, commissioned to be a prophetic voice to the poor and other vulnerable people in society.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
Anglican Diocese of Namibia (CPSA)
Dutch Reformed Church in Namibia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (GELK)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
Protestant Unity Church (Oruano)
Methodist Church of Southern Africa (Namibia Mission)
Rhenish Church in Namibia

Roman Catholic Church
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Namibia Synod)
United Methodist Church in Namibia
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (Namibia Regional Synod)

Associate member church:
Coptic Orthodox Church

Observer member churches:
 Apostolic Faith Mission
 Pentecostal Protestant Church
 Reformed Churches in Namibia

Observer member organizations:
 Ecumenical Institute of Namibia
 Students' Christian Movement
 Young Women's Christian Association

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 609,093
 Parishes: 123
 Bishops: 2
 Pastors: 143
 Evangelists: 27
 Member of: WCC (2001) – CCN – LWF – LUCSA

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia grew out of the work which the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission began in 1870 among the Ovambo and Kavango people, in the north of what became in 1884 German South West Africa. Formerly known as the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church, the name was changed to ELCIN in 1984. Historically concentrated in the north, the church is now spreading to other parts of the country. In 1992 the ELCIN was divided into two dioceses, the Eastern diocese and the Western diocese, each led by a bishop.

The church runs a range of activities: a printing press, a public library, a rehabilitation centre, an institute for the training of deacons and lay preachers, a museum, two high schools, small community projects such as those for HIV prevention, nurseries, and a sewing workshop. The Lutheran Medical Services, under the supervision of the ELCIN, is running a wide spread of health and medical service programmes including primary health care and two large hospitals. Over 5000 staff and volunteers are working in these institutions. Theological training takes place at the United Lutheran Theological Seminary in Windhoek, jointly owned by the ELCIN and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia. The ELCIN is a founding member of the Council of Churches in Namibia.

The ELCIN played a significant role in the resistance against the South African apartheid regime and in the struggle for liberation and independence. A name to be mentioned in this regard is former presiding bishop Dr Kleopas Dumeni. Because of its geographical location close to the border with Angola, the church found itself for many years in the middle of this war zone where the South African army opposed SWAPO.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 350,000
 Congregations: 54
 Pastors: 80
 Diaconists: 8
 Member of: WCC (1992) – CCN – LWF – LUCSA
 Periodical: *Immanuel*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia grew out of the work of the Rhenish Missionary Society from Germany which began working in the area in 1842. The church was constituted in 1957 and named the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa (Rheinische Mission). After the independence of Namibia in 1990 the ELCRN took its present name.

The church runs several institutions and programmes spread over the country, as part of its witness in society and service to the people of Namibia. It has a centre where women are trained to take leadership in nursery schools and hostels; over 200 women are employed by the church in these functions. The Martin Luther High School offers opportunities for young people to prepare for higher education. The ELCRN Media Centre runs a book and media depot and is the editorial office of the church. Pastors are trained at the Paulinum Theological Seminary jointly owned with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. The Evangelical Lutheran Church AIDS programme was established in 1999 in response to the increasing HIV/AIDS pandemic. It seeks to provide a comprehensive approach with focus on caring and counselling for infected persons, care and support for orphans and family members, prevention through awareness-building and education, outreach to all congregations and areas where the ELCRN is present, and networking with other organizations. More than 30 home-based care groups have been established.

In 2003 the ELCRN launched a social development programme to address issues of mass poverty, especially in view of HIV/AIDS. The programme looks at the root causes as well as the broader social implications of the pandemic. It is to provide vision and direction and to facilitate strategies and structures for the church's involvement towards social development in Namibia. The first phase of the programme is research, which is done in close cooperation with the regional offices and congregational committees of the AIDS programme.

The ELCRN Business Trust manages several guesthouses and conference centres in order to generate income for the church. The mission, evangelism and humanitarian services programme looks after the inner life of the church, e.g. catechism, Sunday schools, women, men, youth, Bible studies, church music, etc. It is also in charge of evangelization.

NIGERIA

Population: 130,235,642
 Surface area: 923,800 sq.km
 Capital: Abuja
 GNI per capita: 390 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: English, Yoruba, Hausa, other

Religions: Christian 45%; Muslim 45%; African traditional 10%
 Christianity: Protestants 20,504,400; Anglicans 19,500,00;
 Catholics 18,700,000; Independent 26,490,000 (double affiliation)

Nigeria is the most populous and largest oil-producing country of Africa. A former British colony, Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, as a federation. The federal system, imposed by the British, has been a source of conflict, the worst of which was the Biafra secession war from 1967-70, which took more than a million lives. Nigeria has gone through a succession of military and civilian regimes, marked by corruption, violence, and human rights abuses. In 1999, elections brought back a more stable government. Economically, Nigeria has remained a poor country. The oil revenues only benefit the ruling minority. The WCC has supported the Ogoni people in their struggle against the oil companies. The north of Nigeria is predominantly Muslim, the south Christian. Violence between Muslims and Christians has occurred frequently, especially in the northern states which have established Sharia'h law, but also in the south. Besides the large mission-founded churches such as the Anglicans, Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, etc., Nigeria has a large number of African Instituted, independent, and Pentecostal churches, which are very active in evangelism and church planting in neighbouring countries, in Europe, North America, and other parts of the world. The churches are organized into five distinct groups namely the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria; Christian Council of Nigeria; Organization of African Instituted Churches; the Evangelical Church of West Africa (TEKAN/ECWA); and the Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, who make up the membership of the Christian Association of Nigeria, an umbrella body representing all Christians.

***Christian Council of Nigeria**

Founded in 1929.

Mission statement: To facilitate and build the capacity of member churches that ensures a sustained Christian lifestyle, witness and transformation of the Nigerian society.

Member churches:

Christ Church, Beachland Estate
 Church of Christ in Nigeria
Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Church of The Lord (Aladura) Worldwide
Ekklesiyar Yanuwa A. Nigeria
 Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim
 Lutheran Church of Christ In Nigeria
Methodist Church Nigeria
Nigerian Baptist Convention
Orthodox Church of Nigeria
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
 Qua Iboe Church of Nigeria
 Salvation Army
The African Church
 The First African Church Mission

Member organizations:

Christian Education Advisory Council
 International Bible Reading Association
 Student Christian Movement of Nigeria
 The Boys' Brigade Nigeria
 Young Men's Christian Association of Nigeria
 Young Women's Christian Association of Nigeria

Christian Association of Nigeria

Founded in 1976.

Objectives:

- a) To serve as a basis for response to the unity of the church, especially as contained in our Lord's pastoral prayer "That all may be one" (John 17:21).
- b) To promote understanding, peace, and unity among the various peoples and strata of society in Nigeria, through the propagation of the gospel.
- c) To act as a liaison committee, by means of which its member churches can consult together and when necessary, make common statements and take common actions for the common good.
- d) To act as a watch dog of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation.

Member churches and church bodies:

Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
 Christian Brethren / Evangelical Churches of West Africa Fellowship
 Christian Council of Nigeria
 Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
 Organization of African Instituted Churches

Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 17,500,000
 Ecclesiastical Provinces: 10
 Dioceses: 91
 Parishes: 5,000
 Archbishops: 10
 Bishops: 91
 Priests & Deacons: 5,100
 Member of: WCC (1980) – AACC – CCN – CAN – ACC – CAPA
 Website: www.anglican-nig.org

Nigeria's first link with the Church Missionary Society was through a slave boy Ajayi, who was baptized in 1852 and later became the first African bishop in Sub-Saharan Africa. The first CMS missionary entered Nigeria through Badagry in 1842. A stronger missionary team arrived in 1845. The work of evangelization progressed so well that the Yoruba Mission was founded in 1852. The Niger Mission started its work at Onitsha in 1857. By 1935, there were five dioceses in West Africa. Two of them were in Nigeria: the Diocese of Lagos (1919) and the Diocese on the Niger (1920). These two, together with the other three dioceses: Sierra Leone (1852), Accra (1909) and Gambia (1935) formed the Province of West Africa (1951).

By 1977 there were 21 dioceses in the province of West Africa, 16 of which were from Nigeria. In 1979 the province of Nigeria was inaugurated. Since then, the Church of Nigeria has had a rapid growth. In 2000, under the leadership of Archbishop Akinola, primate of the Church of Nigeria, a new vision for the church has evolved. The vision statement in summary is that: "The Church of Nigeria shall be Bible-based, spiritually dynamic, united; disciplined; self-supporting; committed to pragmatic evangelism, social welfare and a church that epitomizes the genuine love of Christ". The machinery for achieving the set goals and establishing a caring church has been put in place with committees and depart-

ments coordinating the achievement of set goals. The Church of Nigeria has since continued to grow in leaps and bounds.

Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN)

Church Family: Free Church
 Membership: 160,000
 Districts: 44
 Congregations: 403
 Preaching stations: 611
 Pastors: 450
 Member of: WCC (1985) – CCN – CAN

The Church of the Brethren in Nigeria has its origins in the work of missionaries sent by the Church of the Brethren in the USA which started in 1923. In 1955 the first Nigerian pastor of the church was ordained, and in the same year the first Nigerian chairman of the synod was elected. The Basel Mission started in 1959 in Nigeria and has been in fellowship with the Church of the Brethren since 1963. In 1972, the Church of the Brethren, USA, recognized the autonomy of the church (at that time called the Church of Christ in the Sudan, Eastern District), and in 1976 the name was changed to Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, or *Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN)*. Each district of the EYN has a full time district secretary. The church has eight Bible colleges which train pastors for the ordained ministry. Bible schools at district level provide a certificate for Christian ministry. There is a theological education by extension programme with some 600 students. The church runs also 50 nursery and 17 primary schools. Activities include church choirs, youth work, Sunday school, boys and girls brigades, and a spiritual movement: “new life for all”.

Among the current problems and opportunities of the EYN are secularization and urbanization, which make it necessary for the church to improve the training of pastors and formation of the laity. Integrated community-based development calls for the training of leadership in the areas of agriculture and health. Other concerns are evangelism in rural areas and among Muslims, the development of new Bible schools, and the need for spiritual, religious and moral education.

Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide

Church Family: African Instituted
 Membership: 3,600,000
 Parishes: 1500
 Dioceses: 98
 Pastors: 2000
 Member of: WCC (1975) – AACC – CCN – CAN – OAIC
 Website: www.aladura.de

The Yoruba word “Aladura” means “Prayer Fellowship” or “The Praying People”. The members of the Aladura churches believe in the power of praying and fasting (Yoruba is a major language of the south-western region of Nigeria). The founder of the Church of the Lord (Aladura), the late prophet Dr Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu, received his calling in 1925 and the independent church was officially established in 1930, in Ogere. Prophet Oshitelu preached the gospel of

repentance and regeneration from town to town. Right from the beginning he started training Christians for active ministry. In 1937 he established through divine revelation the Holy Mount Tabieorar (pronounced Taborah) Festival, which since then is celebrated every year on 22 August and attracts thousands of believers. Despite opposition from other Christian churches and resistance from traditional African religions, the church grew steadily. In 1947, after spiritual inquiry, Prophet Oshitelu sent two apostles to Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively to bring the good news to the west coast of Africa. Today the church is spread over the whole of West Africa, in Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The church also has parishes in Europe and the United States of America. Many politicians and public servants are today members of the church.

The Church of the Lord (Aladura) is one of the first three Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, which have brought considerable revival among African Christians. It has introduced a good deal of African culture and many African customs – singing, drumming, clapping and dancing – into its liturgy and church life. This is now becoming a common phenomenon among many churches on the African continent. The church is of the opinion that these customs and traditions of the Africans, or of any other peoples of the world, are to serve as beautiful complements to the Christian faith and belief, and are not opposed to it. The church subjects itself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is engaged in evangelical ministry and has an ecumenical outlook – it accepts all who believe and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, as brothers and sisters. The church is also biblical in pattern and Pentecostal in power. Its major concerns in the 21st century are to train more efficient church workers, and to expand its social contributions to the society at large. The church's seminary – Aladura Theological Institute – has now been affiliated with the Lagos State University (LASU), and offers graduate and post-graduate degree courses in theology and Christian education.

Administratively and spiritually, the Church of the Lord (Aladura) as a worldwide organization has its headquarters in Ogere Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. The primate is head of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide.

Methodist Church Nigeria

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 2,000,000

Congregations: 2,000

Circuits: 400

Archbishops/Bishops: 47

Ministers/Pastoral staff: 2000

Member of: WCC (1963) – AACC – CCN – CAN – WMC

Periodical: *Methodist News* (quarterly, in English)

Christianity was established in Nigeria with the arrival in 1842 of a Wesleyan Methodist Church missionary. He had come in response to the request for missionaries by the ex-slaves who returned to Nigeria from Sierra Leone. From the mission stations established in Badagry and Abeokuta, the Methodist church spread to various parts of the country west of the River Niger and part of the north. In 1893 missionaries of the Primitive Methodist Church arrived from Fernando Po, an island off the southern coast of Nigeria. From there the Methodist Church spread to other parts of the country, east of the River Niger and also to parts of the north. The church west of the River Niger and part of the north was known as the Western Nigeria District and east of the Niger and another part of the north as the Eastern Nigeria District. Both existed independently of each

other until 1962 when they constituted the Conference of Methodist Church Nigeria. The conference is composed of seven districts. The church has continued to spread into new areas and has established a department for outreach/evangelism and appointed a director of evangelism. An episcopal system adopted in 1976 was not fully accepted by all sections of the church until the two sides came together and resolved to end the disagreement. A new constitution was ratified in 1990. The system is still episcopal but the points which caused discontent were amended to be acceptable to both sides.

The Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) has been at the forefront of spiritual and social transformation, by spreading spiritual holiness and investing in medical-health services and social-economic welfare of the people. The church has established various institutions like the leprosy centre, three mentally ill-destitute centres, and an orphanage centre, for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. These centres reach out to the rejected and less privileged members of society. They also ensure reintegration of those previously treated as outcast and subjected to various societal abuses. In the area of health MCN has established the Wesley Guild Hospital and several Methodist hospitals spread over the country which provide good healthcare services in their environments. In addition to all other services MCN has from the beginning placed a very strong emphasis on the need for education. Throughout the country the church has established numerous schools, from kindergarten through primary to senior secondary schools and theological institutions which have produced men and women who have contributed and are still contributing very significantly to all spheres of human endeavour. The decision has now been taken to establish the Wesley University of Science and Technology (WUSTO) in Ondo, south-western area of Nigeria, with satellite campuses in the six geo-political zones of the country.

The Methodist Church Nigeria is headed by the prelate, who presides over the conference, the overall governing body of the church. This conference meets every two years to deliberate and take decisions on all issues affecting the life of the church. The conference area is divided into eight archdioceses. Each archdiocese is composed of not less than four dioceses over which an archbishop presides at the archdiocesan council meetings. There are 44 dioceses, each made up of a number of circuits and headed by a bishop who presides over the annual synod. The constitution of the church provides for lay participation in the leadership of the church from the local church through to conference level.

Nigerian Baptist Convention

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 3,000,000

Conferences : 24

Local churches: 8,500

Pastors: 4,000

Member of: WCC (1971) – AACC – CCN – CAN – BWA – AABF

The Nigerian Baptist Convention grew out of the work of the Southern Baptist Convention (USA) in Nigeria which began in 1850. The formal organization started with the creation of the Yoruba Baptist Association in 1914, which later changed to become the Nigerian Baptist Convention when the missionary enterprise spread beyond the south-western region to other parts of Nigeria. The Convention accepts the Bible as authority for faith and practice, confesses the deity and lordship of Jesus Christ, and believes in salvation only by grace, through faith.

It practises believers' baptism, church membership of believers and the priesthood of all believers. The local community of believers is autonomous and church government is congregational. The Convention seeks to fulfil the great commission through mission and evangelism. It is in favour of religious freedom, the separation of church and state, and voluntary cooperation between churches.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention is involved in spreading the faith and planting churches in Nigeria and beyond, in Africa, Europe and the United States of America. Theological education, liberal arts education and leadership development are part of the ongoing activities. The Convention has established a new university called Bowen University. It is also active in the campaign against the HIV/AIDS scourge, called Baptist Aids Awareness Prevention Programme, as well as in the poverty alleviation education programme.

Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 500,000

Synods: 9

Presbyteries: 52

Parishes: 520

Pastors: 600

Member of: WCC (1961) – AACC – CCN – WARC – ARCA

Periodicals: *The Presbyterian Today*

Website: www.pcn-ng.org

Presbyterian witness in Nigeria began in 1846 through the initiative of freed slaves from Jamaica, Scottish missionaries and the kings of Calabar. The church initially operated as a presbytery of Biafra, with its constitution in 1858, then as a synod of Biafra with its constitution of 1921, and following that as the Presbyterian Church of Biafra with the constitution of 1945. In 1952 the name was changed to Presbyterian Church of Eastern Nigeria, and with Nigerian independence in 1960, it became the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. It now runs a four-court system of session, presbytery, synod and general assembly. The parishes are comprised of one to nine congregations, depending on their size.

The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria is part of the world-wide tradition of Reformed churches, and so believes in the gospel of God's sovereign grace in Christ over all realms of life. The PCN has adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith and other confessions of the Reformed tradition as part of its doctrinal standards, subordinate only to the scriptures. The church is open to the ministry of women. The first woman minister was ordained in 1982. Today there are well over 50 women ministers serving the church.

The church is currently engaged in mission work to traditionally non-Presbyterian and non-Christian parts of the country and to Cotonou in the Republic of Benin and Lomé in Togo. This move into mission is coordinated by the national directorate of missions established in 1998. At present the PCN has 15 ordained ministers and eight un-ordained missionaries across Nigeria, apart from those outside the country. The PCN has churches in all the 36 state capitals of the country including Abuja, the federal capital territory. The present concerns of the church include the improved training and re-training of her ministers and members, the establishment of a Presbyterian university, and the movement of the church's headquarters to Abuja, the federal capital territory.

The partner churches of PCN are the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Protestant Church of

the Netherlands. It is also in fraternal relations with other Presbyterian and Reformed churches in Africa.

Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 250,000

Congregations: 60

Districts: 11

Pastors: 64

Evangelists: 160

Member of : WCC (1998) – CAN – REC – WARC – ARCA

The Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria grew out of the missionary work of the Christian Reformed Church in North America through the Sudan United Mission. The church became autonomous in 1973 (self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating) with the name Ekklesia Kristi A Nigeria. By 1979 the church was formally registered with the federal government of Nigeria. In 1993 the synod resolved that the name be changed to Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria, to truly reflect her national identity, vision, Christian belief, doctrine and Reformed persuasion and tradition. The RCCN accepts the Bible as the authoritative word of God, confesses Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and believes in the sovereignty and grace of the triune God. It puts much emphasis on a holistic proclamation of the gospel and the formation of its members.

The RCCN has grouped its activities and programmes under 1) community development ministry (CDM), taking care of community projects, health and literacy; 2) evangelism, discipleship and mission (EDM); 3) Christian education development (CED), which takes care of schools; the Bible school falls also under this programme; and 4) national resources development (NRD) which oversees the mobilization and utilization of resources. Each of the four has a board.

The RCCN trains its pastors in the Bible school called Veeastal Bible College and Seminary Lupwe. In addition some of the pastors study at the Theological College of North Nigeria, a Reformed theological seminary. The church operates a three tier system of government namely: local church council, district church council and synod. The synod meets twice a year. The RCCN has its offices in a remote part of the country which makes communication difficult and slow.

The African Church

Church Family: African Instituted

Membership: 108,000

Dioceses: 29

Parishes: 720

Priests: 580

Member of: WCC (2005) – AACC – CCN – CAN

Periodicals: Several diocesan magazines (in English)

Website: www.theafricanchurch.org

The African Church is an African Instituted Church founded in 1901, as the result of a disagreement in the Anglican Church between missionaries and a group of African Christians over indigenous leadership. In its doctrine and liturgy The African Church has remained close to the Anglican tradition. Its mission

statement reads: "The African Church receives and accepts the Bible as the standard of its faith. She also accepts the Old Testament and the New Testament as being canonical, and sufficient for salvation. She accepts and believes in the Fatherhood of God and the Holy Trinity". The church practises the sacraments of baptism and holy communion. It has a spiritual head, the primate, who is also the head of the clergy, and a lay president who is the head of the laity. Any major decision affecting the church is always taken by both the clergy and the laity. The highest governing body is the general conference. Since 1983 clergy are trained at the African Church College of Theology which since 1992 has been affiliated with the University of Ibadan. The church runs three schools, two hospitals and some social centres and development projects. It publishes a guide for daily Bible reading (in English and Yoruba).

RWANDA

Population: 8,606,604

Surface area: 26,340 sq.km

Capital: Kigali

GNI per capita: 220 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Kinyarwanda, French, English

Religions: Christian 85%; Muslim 13%

Christianity: Catholics 4,000,000; Protestants 2,963,700; Independent 345,100

The original inhabitants of today's Rwanda are the Batwa, Bahutu, and Batutsi. The territory was attributed to Germany at the Berlin conference in 1884, and became a Belgian protectorate after World War I. The colonial powers fomented and exploited rivalries between the population groups. The history of Rwanda before and since independence, in 1962, has been dominated by the conflict between the Bahutus and the Batutsis, which culminated in the 1994 genocide. About 1 million Batutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred. The Patriotic Front took power, and some 2 million Hutus fled to neighbouring Congo and other countries. The new government invaded Congo, in pursuit of the perpetrators of the genocide, and to support the rebellion against Congo's president Mobutu. Rwanda has continued to play a major role in the conflict situation in the Great Lakes region. Elections in 2003 helped to stabilize the internal political situation. The Catholic Church is the majority church in Rwanda. Among the other churches the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and the Seventh-day Adventists are the largest. The churches have struggled to come to terms with their responsibility in the genocide. Some Christians and local churches stood up against the killings, others were party to it. Many new churches and Christian groups have proliferated, especially Pentecostals. Some are establishing themselves and have sought association with the Council of Protestant Churches. There is also an Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

***Protestant Council of Rwanda**

(Conseil Protestant du Rwanda, CPR)

Founded in 1963.

Basis: To be a member a church must accept the holy scriptures as the authoritative word of God, and the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as the common and prin-

cial expression of the Christian faith. It must accept that Jesus Christ is God, that his death and resurrection are the basis of our salvation, by the power of the Holy Spirit and for the glory of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and accept salvation by grace, through the confession of sins and believing that only the blood of Jesus Christ can purify us from all sin.

Vision and mission statement: The vision of CPR is to work for a Rwanda where all people live in unity, justice, peace and prosperity, in obedience to God and at peace with one another. The mission of the Protestant Council of Rwanda is to promote the unity of action and vision of Christian churches in Rwanda (John 17.21) for the evangelistic witness and for the well-being of the Rwandan population.

Member churches:

Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda
 Church of the Nazarene in Rwanda
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Butare)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Byumba)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Cyangugu)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Gahini)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Kibungo)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Kigali)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Kigeme)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Shyira)
Episcopal Church in Rwanda (Diocese of Shyogwe)
 Evangelical Church of the Friends in Rwanda
 Free Methodist Church in Rwanda
 Lutheran Church in Rwanda
Presbyterian Church in Rwanda
 Union of Baptist Churches in Rwanda

Associate members:

African Evangelistic Enterprise
 Association of Churches of Pentecost in Rwanda
 Association Foundation BARAKBAHO
 Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda

Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda

(Association des Eglises baptistes au Rwanda, AEBR)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 257,613

Regions: 23

Local churches: 167

Pastors: 152

Member of: WCC (2001) – CPR – BWA – AABF

The churches which form the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda came into being through the work of a pastor from the Baptist Church in Congo and missionaries of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society. They came to Rwanda escaping the war of 1964 in then Zaïre (now DRC). They began the work of God in the northern part of Rwanda (Gisenyi and Ruhengeri) in 1966. Official registration took place in 1967. The churches which belong to the ABCR believe in: the holy scriptures, both Old and New Testaments; the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit; the nature of the human being created in the image of God without sin, and the fall after disobeying the divine law, becom-

ing a sinner in the eyes of God; salvation found only in Jesus Christ. Those who repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are forgiven and saved. Those who are born again will inherit eternal life. Those who do not receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour will be condemned to the eternal destruction. Since its creation, the ABCR has been very active in evangelization to fulfill the great commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to his church. The Association has a Bible institute, a theological seminary and a theological university.

Apart from evangelism, the AEBR is also involved in other activities like education and health care. It has 20 secondary schools, 42 primary schools, two vocational training centres and three health centres. It is also active in community-based projects whereby local communities are grouped into small associations for income-generating activities. This is where the different needs of the people are addressed and come together to look themselves for adequate solutions.

Presbyterian Church in Rwanda

(Eglise Presbytérienne au Rwanda, EPR)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 300,000

Parishes: 92

Areas of evangelism: 57

Regional Synods: 16

Pastors: 81

Evangelists: 56

Member of: WCC (1981) – AACC – CPR – WARC – ARCA – UEM

Periodical: *Twubake* (quarterly, in Kinyarwanda)

The gospel was first preached in Rwanda at the beginning of the 20th century by Catholic missionaries. They were followed in 1907 by Protestants from the German Bethel Mission who came together with Tanzanians to start what became the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda. After the first world war, German missionaries were replaced by Belgians and Swiss, who were joined later by Dutch missionaries. From the very beginning, the evangelistic work was done by Rwandan people who accepted the gospel. Until 1957 the church was concentrated around three main stations, Kirinda, Rubengera and Remera. After it became autonomous in 1959, with the name Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, the priority became to extend its presence throughout the whole country. In the process of growth the church changed its name to Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, which was motivated by the refusal to claim the title “evangelical” for itself while it is deeply engaged ecumenically. As the credibility of the church’s message depends on its response to misery, poverty, hunger, illness and ignorance, the EPR tries to maintain a balance between the teaching of the biblical message and social engagement through its hospitals, schools and development projects. In the area of evangelism, the church stresses the teaching of a transformative gospel, in a situation where many new churches and groups preach a message which takes people away from the current realities of the country and the society and invites them to flee to heaven.

Like other institutions in Rwanda the 1994 genocide affected the church which lost 16 of its pastors and many other members. In the period consecutive to the genocide much emphasis has been placed on the preparation of the younger generation in peace-building and reconciliation, while the church also faces the challenge of caring for the many orphans and widows, most of whom still suffer from trauma.

The leading organ of the church is the general synod to which all the programmes, institutions and congregations are accountable. It is coordinated by the president of the church assisted by the general secretary. The EPR maintains close relationships with its traditional partners in Rwanda, Africa, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands and plays an active role in many ecumenical organizations of which it is a member.

Province of the Episcopal Church in Rwanda

(Eglise Episcopale au Rwanda, EER)

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 1,000,000

Dioceses: 9

Parishes: 276

Bishops: 9

Priests: 400

Member of: WCC (1961/1994) – AACC – CPR – ACC – CAPA

Periodical: *Episcopal Newsletter* (quarterly, in English and Kinyarwanda)

Website: www.peer-hq.org.rw

Two missionary doctors of the Church Missionary Society evangelized the eastern region of Rwanda in 1914-16. The first station of the Rwanda mission was established in 1925. The work grew with the revivals in the 1930s and 1940s. The first Rwandan bishop was appointed in 1965. That same year the church was called the Anglican Church of Rwanda, which became the Episcopal Church of Rwanda and was part of the Province of Rwanda, Burundi and Boga-Zaire. In 1992 the church became an autonomous province within the Anglican Communion.

Like all strata of Rwandan society, the church suffered through the genocide, and one of its major priorities is to replace clergy through training. The church has a role as a healing ministry to the many traumatized people in Rwanda and in reconciliation, restoration, and rehabilitation. The church has also been involved in rural development, medical work, vocational training, education, and in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

SIERRA LEONE

Population: 5,339,564

Surface area: 71,740 sq.km

Capital: Freetown

GNI per capita: 200 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: English, Krio, Mende, other

Religions: Muslim 60%; African traditional 28%; Christian 10%; Other 2%

Christianity: Protestants 338,800; Catholics 85,200; Anglicans 25,000;

Independent 176,830

The territory of Sierra Leone was an important centre of the slave trade. Freetown, the capital, was founded in 1791 by freed slaves, and became a British protectorate in 1808. Britain consolidated its colonial power inland in 1896. Sierra Leone reached independence in 1961. In 1991, the Revolutionary United Front

began a rebellion against the government, which degenerated into a vicious and cruel war for the control of diamonds and other natural resources. The population was terrorized, thousands were killed or maimed, and hundreds of thousands fled to neighbouring countries. A military coup in 1997 prompted the intervention of the African Union led by Nigeria, and the president was reinstated in 1998. In 1999 a peace agreement was signed, but the situation deteriorated again in 2000. British troops under UN mandate were able to stabilize the country. The civil war ended officially in 2002. Sierra Leone has agricultural and mineral resources (diamonds, gold, bauxite) but the economy is badly developed, with a large gap between a rich elite and the majority of the poor who depend on subsistence farming. The churches, although a minority, have played an important role in healing, peace, and rehabilitation. The United Methodists (the largest Protestant group) and the Anglicans are part of the WCC through the UMC (USA) and the Province of West Africa. The Council of Churches is the ecumenical body. Pentecostals make up about 10 percent of the total number of Christians. There is an Evangelical Fellowship, affiliated with the WEA

***Council of Churches in Sierra Leone**

Founded in 1924.

Mission statement: We as a Council of Churches in Sierra Leone affirm our belief in the one-eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building of Christ's body and the glory of his name.

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone is the covenant enhancing the unity of our member churches on the basis of partnership and a guide as to how we undertake our mission.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
Anglican Diocese of Bo
Anglican Diocese of Freetown and Makeni
 Baptist Convention Sierra Leone
 Christ Apostolic Church
 Church of God of Prophecy
Church of the Lord Aladura
 Countess of Huntingdon Connection
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sierra Leone
 Evangelical Mission
Methodist Church Sierra Leone
 Missionary Church of Africa
 National Pentecostal Church
Nigerian Baptist Convention
 United Brethren in Christ
United Methodist Church
 Vine Memorial Baptist Church
 Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone
 West Africa Methodist Church

Affiliated members:

Bible Society in Sierra Leone
 Bo Christian Council
 Bonthe Christian Council
 Calvary Pentecostal Church
 Child Evangelism Fellowship of Sierra Leone

Christian Extension Services
 Christian Life & Work Organization
 Christian Literature Crusade
 Current Evangelism Ministries
 Gospel Recordings Sierra Leone
 Institute of Sierra Leonean Languages
 Kenema Christian Council
 Kono Christian Council
 Light of Faith Evangelistic Ministry
 Little Friends of Jesus Ministries
 Makeni Christian Council
 New Life Services
 Prison Fellowship Sierra Leone
 Provincial Literature Bureau
 Scripture Union
 Sierra Leone Diocesan Bookshop
 St Paul's Evangelical Church
 St Peters Healing Church
 Theological Hall
 United Church Women
 White Ribbon Youth Crusade Organization.
 Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Methodist Church Sierra Leone

Church Family: Methodist
 Membership: 50,000
 Circuits: 31
 Congregations: 244
 Preaching posts: 103
 Pastors: 85
 Member of: WCC (1967) – AACC – CCSL – WMC
 Periodical: *Almanac, Diary* and *Bulletin* (in English)

The missionary work of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Sierra Leone started in 1792, at the request of converted settlers from Nova Scotia who, on arrival in the country, had formed themselves into religious classes. A few people served as local preachers and class leaders. Personnel from the Methodist Church in Britain and Ireland developed the work in the provinces. The church was part of the British Conference, and became autonomous in 1967. It undertook to continue in partnership with the church in Britain. Church membership is widely representative of all sections of the nation. There is a strong lay leadership, with increasing participation by women in responsible positions. An indigenous liturgy has developed over the past thirty years among the Mende-speaking members. Traditional marriage customs are still practised in the Mende and other tribal family structures. There is an increasing political awareness throughout the connexion. Several lay persons hold high offices in government. Many are in the civil service, the judiciary and in medical services.

The church continues to manage many primary schools and 14 secondary schools. It also participates in the national adult literacy programme. The MCSL is greatly concerned about unemployment problems, heavy migration to urban areas and the consequent growth of slums, and the urgent need for low-cost hous-

ing, safe water supply and sanitation. It runs a programme on HIV/AIDS in three regions – Freetown, South and East. The church maintains the Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital with financial aid from the Methodist Church in Great Britain. The hospital runs a nurses' training programme in cooperation with the Roman Catholic hospital, and a community health project. The MCSL has opened a new community centre for youth empowerment and the promotion of the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is intended to build such centres in other urban areas in the country.

The Tikonko Agricultural Extension Centre teaches new skills to farmers. This is now at a low ebb as a result of the war and lack of funding. Through the joint theological hall and a lay training centre the church continues to prepare its members for the ongoing mission and outreach of the Christian community in Sierra Leone. The Bunumbu Press, which has been responsible for all Christian literacy work and publication, was destroyed during the war. Progress is being made to revive the work. This programme still continues to serve all the churches in Sierra Leone. The development arm of the church manages two projects in the south and east, helping communities to develop suitable food security programmes. Plans are on the way to rehabilitate the Kailahun Community Development Project, the Pendembu Women's Project, and the Kissy Mission Integrated project.

The war has left the people shattered but strong in faith. The effects of the war continue to pose evangelistic challenges to the church.

The MCSL maintains relations with several Methodist churches in West Africa: Gambia, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Nigeria and the Ivory Coast. The conference meets bi-annually. There is a proposal to divide the conference into five districts.

SOUTH AFRICA

Population: 45,323,008

Surface area: 1.2 million sq.km

Capital: Tshwane (Pretoria)

GNI per capita: 2,750 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: 11 official languages, including Zulu, Xhosa, English, Afrikaans, etc.

Religions: Christian 82%; Hindu 2%; Muslim 2%; Baha'i 1%

Christianity: Protestants 9,628,440; Catholics 3,173,000; Anglicans 2,750,000; Orthodox 105,500; Independent 17,583,080

The original inhabitants of South Africa were the Khoikhoi, later joined by Bantu groups migrating from the north. In 1652 the Dutch settled in the Cape, and slowly extended into the interior. The Boers, as they were called, fought the Africans until they were themselves defeated in 1902 by the British, who established the self-governing Union of South Africa. In 1948 the Nationalist Party of the Afrikaners (Boers), came into power and put in place the racist apartheid regime, based on total, legalized separation of the whites, blacks, coloured and the small Indian population. The white Reformed churches provided the theological justification of the system. They withdrew from the WCC in 1961. The African National Congress, formed in 1912, became the opponent of apartheid, later followed by other movements. The struggle against apartheid is marked by the Sharpeville shooting (1960), the Rivonia trial of Nelson Mandela (1964), the Soweto uprising (1976), the assassination of Steve Biko, countless other tragedies,

and the unflinching determination of a people to free itself from an evil yoke. Several churches in South Africa denounced apartheid more and more openly, led by Archbishop Tutu, Rev. Boesak, and many others. Key documents were the Belhar Confession, the Kairos document and Evangelical Witness in South Africa. The South African Council of Churches played a major role. In 1991 Mandela was released from prison; on 27 April 1994 in the first free and democratic elections of South Africa he was elected president. The current membership of the Council of Churches includes the Catholic Church, the Apostolic Faith Mission (Pentecostal), and the Dutch Reformed Church. There are many indigenous churches, the largest being the Zion Christian Church, with eight million members. Evangelical and Pentecostal churches are also active. The Evangelical Alliance of SA is affiliated with the WEA.

***South African Council of Churches**

Founded in 1936 (forerunner: the South African Missionary Conference, founded in 1904).

Mission statement: As a national council of churches and institutions, the SACC, acting on behalf of its member churches, is called by the triune God to work for moral reconstruction in South Africa, focusing on issues of justice, reconciliation, integrity of creation and the eradication of poverty, and contributing towards the empowerment of all who are spiritually, socially and economically marginalized.

Member churches:

African Catholic Church
African Methodist Episcopal Church
 Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa
 Baptist Convention
Church of the Province of Southern Africa
Coptic Orthodox Church
Council of African Instituted Churches
 Dutch Reformed Church
 Ethiopian Episcopal Church
 Evangelical Church in South Africa
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa (Natal/Transvaal)
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa
Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Johannesburg & Pretoria
 Hervormde Kerk in Suidelike Afrika
 International Federation of Christian Churches
Methodist Church of Southern Africa
Moravian Church in South Africa
Presbyterian Church in Africa
 Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
 Salvation Army
 Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa
 Volkskerk van Afrika

The South African Council of Churches has nine provincial councils: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape, Western Cape Provincial Council.

Website: www.sacc.org.za

The South African Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Church of the Province of Southern Africa

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 2,300,000
 Dioceses: 24
 Parishes: 938
 Bishops: 30
 Priests: 705
 Member of: WCC (1948) – AACC – SACC – ACC – CAPA
 Periodicals: Church newspaper – *Southern Anglican*
 Website: www.cpsa.org.za

The Anglican Diocese of Cape Town was established in 1847. It included the Cape, the Free State, Natal and the Island of St Helena. By 1870 several dioceses had been formed and organized into a self-governing Province of the Anglican Communion. In 1955 the dioceses of Mashonaland, Matabele, and the southern part of Botswana left the Province of South Africa when the Church of the Province of Central Africa was formed. The Province is now composed of 24 dioceses in the Republic of South Africa, the neighbouring countries of Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Angola and the Island of St Helena with Ascension Island. The name of the church was changed in 1982 to the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. The church forms the fourth largest Christian community after the Dutch Reformed Churches, the Methodist Church of South Africa and the Roman Catholic Church.

The church works in several countries and each has its own characteristics. In some countries it is the development of agriculture and the need to make people self-sufficient with regard to food; in others it is the need to empower people, providing them with skills to enable them to take their rightful place in the economic environment. In all instances education and schooling are of primary importance as a basis for social development. Not only is the church concerned with schooling for children, it is also looking carefully at improving and enhancing theological education.

The main priorities in the years ahead are renewal and evangelism, unity between people across barriers of work, class, status, race, political views and national boundaries, and a ministry relevant to the emerging society, in short, the strengthening and further development of a democratic society. The major programmes are eradication of poverty, working towards an HIV/AIDS-free generation as well as combating malaria and tuberculosis and the attainment of the Millennium Development goals.

The United Evangelical Church "Anglican Communion in Angola" has become the Angola Diocese of the CPSA since 2002.

Council of African Instituted Churches

Church Family: African Instituted
 Membership: 3,000,000
 Member of: WCC (1998) – OAIC – SACC

The Council of African Instituted Churches (CAIC) is a federative body made up of ten member associations. Each association groups a number of member

churches. Some of these are denominations, others are single, independent congregations. Together the member associations of CAIC cover the whole of South Africa. The CAIC is governed by an annual conference composed of representatives of the associations, and an executive committee.

The CAIC does not have a statement of faith or creed to which the member bodies must subscribe. The preamble to the constitution speaks of "propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by the African Independent Churches to the Black African masses", and the main constitutional objectives are: creating fellowship, fostering theological education, promoting unity, and mutual assistance. The churches belonging to the CAIC adhere to the basic doctrines of the Christian faith: the Nicene and Apostolic Creeds, the Holy Trinity, the lordship of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour. They accept the authority of the scriptures and practise baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These churches celebrate holy communion, but not very often. Their great strength is their spirituality, and their closeness to African cultures. Prayer, singing and dancing are prominent in the worship services. Healing through prayer and the use of blessed water is a powerful ministry of these churches. In the townships and rural areas, the independent churches meet the spiritual and physical needs of the people, and empower them to face the problems of their daily life, which is marked by poverty and hardship.

The CAIC member churches have archbishops, bishops, pastors (or priests), evangelists, deacons, etc. These ministers or spiritual leaders are people chosen by the community. There are no requirements in terms of theological formation or standards of education. Some churches admit women as spiritual leaders, others not. Almost all the bishops, pastors, etc., have a secular job and exercise their ministry in the evenings and during the weekends. Only a few of them have had some formal theological training. There are no reliable statistics on the number of churches, clergy, and Christians represented through the CAIC. The figure of three million members is an estimation.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 589,502

Dioceses: 7

Parishes: 423

Congregations: 2,300

Pastors: 460

Evangelists: 26

Deaconesses: 24

Member of: WCC (1976) – SACC – AACC – LWF – LUCSA

Lutheran mission work in South Africa started at the turn of the 19th century, from Europe and the USA. The ELCSA evolved from five regional churches within South Africa, reflecting various mission influences and traditions. The regional churches united to form one church in 1975, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. During the mission era, the then cooperating Lutheran regional churches in South Africa had many institutions in the areas of health and education, built and run by the churches. These institutions have since been taken over by the government. Presently the ELCSA is active in mission outreach work and is involved in new urban areas, including informal settlements. It has a very active Women's Prayer League in all its congregations, doing diakonia, stewardship and evangelism. A Men's League and a Youth League are simi-

larly present in the congregational life of the church. The ELCSA is involved in communication and development activities through the dioceses. Sunday schools, farm schools, hostel and youth work are part of the educational activities. The church is also strongly engaged in community-based social work. It runs 78 church schools, one Bible school, one hospital, 12 church centres-guest houses, 38 creches and two old age homes. Following a recent decision of the church, all candidates for the ministry must enroll with the University of KwaZulu-Natal through the Lutheran Theological Institute. The seminary has been moved from its old isolated location to Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal.

The political and socio-economic situation of South Africa has its impact on the life of the church. Since the end of the apartheid regime in 1994 major changes have taken place and new trends are emerging. An important instrument for building a united society of all races has been the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Even though set up by the government, the churches got involved in it by supporting the idea that there could be no reconciliation without confession and forgiveness. More women are holding top positions in society, and this has accelerated the process of ordaining women pastors in the ELCSA. The concept of the African Renaissance has encouraged the move towards africanization or indigenization of worship in many congregations. The new constitution has made South Africa a secular state. While this is normal it also brings new challenges to the church: the Christian communities are fast being secularized and the Christian ethos which used to be held up in all the schools has declined. There is a growing trend towards urbanization. The country is facing social problems such as poverty, crime and the breakdown of the moral fibre, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, etc. The general economic decline is adversely affecting the contributions from the parishes, some of which are no longer able adequately to support their pastors.

The unity discussions between the ELCSA and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (UELCSA), which is mainly and originally German-speaking, have not as yet yielded their fruits. The main partners of the ELCSA outside South Africa are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Church of Sweden, the Church of Berlin-Brandenburg-West (Germany) and the Hermannsburg Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Germany).

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 48,000

Presbyteries: 7

Congregations: 42

Preaching stations: 249

Pastors: 46

Elders: 2,320

Member of: WCC (1983) – AACC – SACC – WARC – ARCA

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa, formerly known as the Tsonga Presbyterian Church, is the result of the work of the Swiss Mission in South Africa which began in 1875 in Northern Transvaal. The gospel was first proclaimed to the Shangaan people by two Basotho evangelists seconded by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society. A network of mission stations was established in the northern and eastern parts of the Transvaal. As the rapid growth of the mining industry drew many people to the towns, congregations were established in the Pretoria Reef, in Orange Free State and also in Zululand. The church

became autonomous in 1962, but still relied for financial support on the Swiss churches. Tsonga is the official language of the EPCSA.

The church confesses the one faith held by the church universal, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world in whom God revealed himself. The church therefore worships the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Under the guidance of the Spirit she strives to foster the advent of the kingdom of God on earth and to prefigure God's new creation. She acknowledges her dependence on the word of God, as contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which stands in judgment over the church and constitutes the only foundation of faith and life. She confesses the faith proclaimed by the early church as embodied in the declarations of the ecumenical synods and represented by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

The synod is the supreme body of the church. An executive committee acts on its behalf in between sessions of the synod. Several committees assist the synod, e.g. education, health, youth, literature, ecumenism, women's guild, men's guild. The EPCSA is a member of the Church Unity Commission. The activities and priorities of the EPCSA include evangelism and planting of new churches, promoting the spiritual growth of the church, playing a frontier role in the battle against HIV/AIDS, the empowerment of ministers, lay preachers and administrative staff with management skills, and improving the financial situation of the church.

Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 1,700,000

District Synods: 12

Congregations: 338

Pastors: 750

Member of: WCC (1948) – AACC – SACC – WMC

Periodical: *New Dimension* (monthly, in English)

Methodism arrived in South Africa with British soldiers in 1806 but the mission began in 1816. Missionaries ventured across the Orange River into present-day Namibia and what are now the northern provinces of South Africa. In the late 19th century the work was extended into the gold mining area in Gauteng and north through modern Limpopo into Zimbabwe. Six missionary districts of the Wesleyan Methodist church became an affiliated conference in 1883. An independent conference was constituted in 1927 and enlarged in 1931 to include the Transvaal Missionary District of the British Conference and the small Primitive Methodist Mission. The connexion operates today in six countries – Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

The mission statement of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa is: "*God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation*". Its vision is: "A Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations". The continuing goals of transformation are: a deepening spirituality; resolve to be guided by God's mission; a rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers; a commitment "to be one so that the world may believe"; a re-emphasis of servant-leadership and discernment as our model for ministry; a redefinition and authentication of the vocation of the clergy in the church. The MCSA rejected the apartheid ideology from the beginning and was a vocal critic of government policy throughout the nationalist supremacy. Faced by government pressure to divide along racial lines, the 1958 conference declared its "conviction that it is the will of God

for the Methodist Church that it should be one and undivided, trusting to the leading of God to bring this ideal to ultimate fruition". Six years later the first African to serve as president of conference was elected. The life of the MCSA reflects the strains and tensions of an apartheid society. In spite of this, the conference, connexional executive and synods have long since been non-racial. The ideal of a one and undivided church has still to be realized at the congregational level.

The MCSA was a major player in African education before the introduction of Bantu education in 1955. Its institutions were alma mater to many African leaders, including Nelson Mandela. A small but significant medical mission was also taken over by the apartheid government. An inventory of some of the ministries of the connexion include: pre-school, ministries to the homeless, ministries to informal settlements, hospice-type ministries, ministries to prisons, HIV/AIDS ministries, poverty alleviation projects. The church has provided leadership for church unity.

The direction of mission in the MCSA has been greatly influenced in recent years by a number of convocations, which have brought together laity and clergy to seek God's will for the church. "Obedience '81" set the church's course in South Africa's most troubled decade. "The Journey to a New Land" in 1992, followed by the 1995 Convocation and the 2004 Mission Congress, have shaped its mission policy in the challenging context of the new South Africa.

Moravian Church in South Africa

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 80,000

Congregations: 84

Pastors: 59

Evangelists: 14

Member of: WCC (1961) – AACC – SACC – MUB

Periodical: *"Die Huisvriend/Umhlobo Wekhaya"*
(quarterly, in Afrikaans and Xhosa)

The history of the Moravian Church in South Africa goes back to the founding of the first Protestant Church in Bohemia (now Czech Republic) as a breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church. In 1467 they met in the first synod as the *Unitas Fratrum*. The thirty years of religious wars (1620-1650) almost wiped out the church. Only a "hidden seed" remained who worshipped secretly in caves and forests. The church was renewed in 1727 after finding asylum in 1722 on the estate of Count Zinzendorf, a Pietist within the Lutheran Church. Many fugitives, mostly from Moravia, came to live at Herrnhut. Zinzendorf started to minister to them and later became a bishop of the Renewed Moravian Church. From 1732 to 1737 the Moravian Church became the first Protestant church to send out missionaries.

In 1737 Georg Schmidt was sent to South Africa to convert the Khoi-Khoi. The government of the Dutch colony opposed his work. Because of his success in teaching the Khoi-Khoi and the baptism of five converts he was obliged to leave in 1744. During the fifty years after his departure the work was continued by the converts. In 1793 the mission enjoyed official recognition and a hopeful new beginning was made. The mission settlement flourished with people from different tribes joining. An educated Xhosa woman, Wilhemina, fervently desired that the missionaries would proclaim the gospel among her people, in the Eastern Cape Colony. In 1828 the Moravians extended their missionary activities. The work expanded tremendously in the Western and Eastern Cape. At a general synod at

Herrnhut in 1868 it was decided to divide the work into two provinces, South Africa West & South Africa East. Language, distance and effective administration were some of the reasons mentioned. The decision had far-reaching implications for the work in South Africa.

Following the introduction of the apartheid policy and the homeland structures by the South African Nationalist government in 1948, an increased awareness developed among members that the division into two autonomous regions, predominantly developed along racial lines, was irreconcilable with the rich Moravian heritage and the biblical foundation of the church. Although the 1869 decision to divide was well-founded, the division caused deep-rooted long-term problems of alienation, separate structures, suspicion, etc. From 1969 the two boards mapped out a unity plan. In 1986 a unity commission was appointed and in 1991 the synods accepted the resolution for "one Moravian Church in South Africa", one province of the Unitas Fratrum. In 1998 a new constitution was accepted and since then the Moravian Church operates as one church with the following structures: synod, provincial board and twelve districts represented on the provincial board. Each district consists of a number of congregations. The provincial board has an executive composed of a president and two vice-presidents. The bishops fulfill a pastoral and oversight role. Synods are held every four years.

Presbyterian Church of Africa

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 3,381,000

Presbyteries: 9

Congregations: 242

Pastors: 175

Member of: WCC (1981) – AACC – SACC – WARC – ARCA

The Presbyterian Church of Africa was founded in 1898 by the Rev. James Phambani Mzimba, who broke away from the Free Church of Scotland because of a misunderstanding between the black and white clergy. It is one of the oldest independent churches in South Africa. Initially the new church was a small group of two presbyteries and four ministers but it grew steadily. Fifteen candidates for ministerial education were sent to the USA in 1915. At a later stage institutions for theological training in South Africa were used. The church has consistently stressed that all ministers must be trained before ordination. Since the church was all black, it had limited funds. Like other independent churches of its time it had to struggle with lack of financial backing and government recognition. The PCA has grown without any outside help. Several of its younger ministers have opted for a tent-making ministry, pursuing other professions along with their pastoral work.

In 1973, the general synod of the PCA accepted that there was no scriptural ground for remaining an exclusively black church. The synod decided that the PCA as an independent community should not remain isolated from the rest of the body of Christ. The church has a strong leadership, without being clergy-dominated. Its task is seen as belonging to the whole people of God, though it has a sense of its own charismatic gifts. The Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association are active groups in the church. The PCA runs several projects related to agricultural and community development, scholarships, work for the needy, human resource development, etc., without any outside assistance. Of the nine presbyteries, one is in Malawi, one in Zambia and one in Zimbabwe. In 2008, the Presbyterian Church of Africa will be celebrating its 110th anniversary.

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

Church Family : United and Uniting

Membership: 450,000

Congregations: 350

Preaching Stations: 2,400

Ministers: 300

Member of: WCC (1968) – AACC – SACC – WARC – ARCA

Periodical: *Congregational Chronicle*

The Congregational Church was established in Southern Africa by the London Missionary Society (LMS) which started work in Cape Town in 1799. Within a few years mission stations had been established throughout the Cape Province, in present-day Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. At the invitation of the LMS, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) came to South Africa in 1835 and commenced work in Natal and Mozambique. During the 19th century English-speaking congregations were also established in the major centres of South Africa. After the withdrawal of the LMS from the Cape, the churches it had established, together with the English-speaking congregations, formed the Congregational Union of South Africa in 1859. This church united in 1967 with the Bantu Congregational Church (ABCFM) to form the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, incorporating the work of the two bodies in South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. A further merger took place in 1972 when the UCCSA was reconstituted to include the congregations of the South African Association of the Disciples of Christ.

Theologically the UCCSA traces its roots back to the Reformation teachings of John Calvin. It also stands in the radical Anabaptist tradition that developed on the European continent and in England during the 16th and 17th centuries. The UCCSA governs itself in the belief that each local church is a “gathered” company of Christian believers, whose only credal statement is the biblical affirmation: “Jesus is Lord”. Each local church retains the right to govern itself in all matters that affect its life and work, but is inter-dependent on all other churches in the denomination, as they voluntarily pool resources and work to do together what they cannot do apart. The UCCSA is divided into regional councils composed of ministers and lay delegates from each local church. The regional councils have been organized to form synods in the different countries in which they are situated: Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The highest governing body of the church is the assembly, which meets biennially and consists of ministers and lay delegates elected by the regional councils and synods. It is presided over by a president who serves for two years. An executive committee which is representative of the synods is in charge in between meetings of the assembly.

Until the implementation of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, the UCCSA and its precursors were responsible for widespread educational work in Southern Africa. Since 1954 it has maintained one private school in South Africa, the historic Inanda Seminary, near Durban. The church is still responsible for two high schools in Botswana and two in Zimbabwe. Ministers are trained at the University of the Western Cape, Fort Hare University, Natal University and the Evangelical Seminary of South Africa, the United Theological College in Zimbabwe, Ricatla Seminary in Mozambique, and Paulinum Seminary in Namibia.

Itself the product of church union, the UCCSA is deeply committed to ecumenical endeavour. It is a founding member of the South African Council of Churches and the Church Unity Commission and is fully involved in their activ-

ities. It is equally active in the Christian Councils of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 500,000

Presbyteries: 18

Congregations: 472

Pastors: 419

Member of: WCC (1948/1954/2001) AACC – SACC – WARC – ARCA

The Uniting Church in Southern Africa was formed and constituted in 1999 as the outcome of the union between the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. These two churches shared the same origin dating back to the 19th century when Britain took over the Cape Colony. Their distinctive characters were that the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa was constituted among soldiers and settlers who arrived in the Cape in 1820. The Reformed Presbyterian Church on the other hand was a product of Scottish missions intended for the indigenous Africans, which started at Lovedale Mission in Alice. It became autonomous in 1923. Efforts to bring these two churches together have a long history which basically is a mirror reflection of the history of South Africa's macrocosm. Clearly the transition to democracy in the 1990s gave impetus to the union process so the link of union to democracy in South Africa is symbolic *sui generis*.

In 2004 the UPCSA celebrated its fifth anniversary after having spent much of that time in forging structures of union. Like any other church of Christ, the UPCSA in its efforts to create a new ethos and in response to her mission calling, envisions its journey beyond union negotiations through this vision statement:

A Church which is one:

- In obedience to its sovereign Lord.
- In celebrating its living heritage as a Reformed Church in Southern Africa.
- In celebrating its cultural diversity.
- In addressing injustices and poverty in church.
- In providing a model of racial reconciliation.

To achieve this wonderful dream the UPCSA has set itself a synergy of three priorities: evangelism, with a focus on training; stewardship also focusing on training; and HIV/AIDS with special focus on the caring of widows and orphans. Indeed, with the union willed by God as the church does believe, "the burning bush that was not consumed" is the source of its fiery zeal for mission as a church of Christ.

Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 496,744

Congregations: 758

Pastors: 536

Member of: WCC (1991/1995) AACC – SACC – WARC – ARCA

In 1994 the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) was established through the union of the former Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA). Both churches were the fruit of the mission work done by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Shortly after their arrival in 1652 the Dutch introduced slavery in the Cape and started a slave school to further the Christian religion, Dutch language and culture. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of the time had no organized mission activity and accommodated all racial groups. The baptism of slaves was left to the will of their masters. Very few baptized slaves were however confirmed as members of the church. In due course various mission organizations from abroad started working in South Africa, which led to a number of denominations amongst the indigenous people and slaves. This motivated the DRC to start its own independent mission work in 1824. Although the 1829 synod formally rejected discrimination on the basis of skin colour, in practice people of colour were discriminated against, particularly at worship services and holy communion. The synod of 1857 decided to allow separate services for coloured members "because of the weakness of some". The next logical step was the formation in 1881 of the DRMC as a separate church for the converts of the DRC's mission work. In each province of South Africa separate churches for blacks and coloureds were formed. All the coloured congregations eventually joined the DRMC, and the black churches the DRCA. Both remained under the control of the DRC for decades.

In 1966 the DRMC decided in favour of structural unity between the churches of the DRC family. The DRCA put a similar emphasis on unification in 1975. It took another 19 years for that ideal to be partially fulfilled. The DRC did not join the union of the DRMC and the DRCA. The name of the URCSA (in the continuous tense) and its logo (an incomplete circle) reflect the church's emphasis on and hope for the re-unification of the DRC family and the wider family of God.

In the process of unification, the Confession of Belhar with its strong emphasis on unity, reconciliation and justice was adopted in 1986 by the DRMC. This is very much the motivating power by which the URCSA lives. In addition, URCSA's confessional bases are the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, with the Canons of Dordt, the Confession Belgica and the Heidelberg Catechism. As a community of believers who are called together by the word of God and by his Holy Spirit, those who form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa are part of the church of Jesus Christ. Their mission is to effect the renewal of creation through the proclamation and witness of the kingdom of God as co-workers and followers of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The URCSA is divided into seven regional synods, including Namibia and Lesotho. Congregations are grouped together in presbyteries. The general synod determines the church's policy, and the regional synods reflect these policies in their various activities. URCSA's witness to humankind and the world is primarily expressed through its congregations. The congregation serves God, by witnessing and fighting against all forms of injustice; by calling upon the government and the authorities to serve all the inhabitants of the country, by allowing justice to prevail. URCSA's vision is "Dynamic in Unity, Reconciliation and Justice".

SUDAN

Population: 35,039,802

Surface area: 2,5 million sq.km

Capital: Khartoum

GNI per capita: 530 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Arabic, English, Dinka, other

Religions: Muslim 70%; Christian 17%; African traditional 10%

Christianity: Catholics 3,579,937; Anglicans 2,050,000; Protestants 1,254,800;
Orthodox 89,000; Independent 58,200

Sudan consists of two distinct regions, the north with a majority of Arabs, and the south where the population is African. The majority of the Christians live in the south. The north of Sudan was once home to the Nubia kingdom, and was islamized in the 14th century. The entire territory was a British colony from 1898 to 1956, but Britain neglected the south. Before independence, Southern Sudan launched a civil war. The WCC and the AACC played an important role in ending this conflict, in 1972, but efforts to find a political solution failed. The war resumed in 1983, between the Sudan People's Liberation Army in the south and the Muslim Arab government in the north. Introduction of Sharia'h law, and the control of oil production exacerbated the conflict. More than two million people died, more than four million were displaced or fled to neighbouring countries, and the infrastructure of the south was largely destroyed. In 2005, peace became effective after long negotiations mediated by Kenya, and a coalition government was formed. In 2003, another conflict erupted in the Darfur region (West Sudan), claiming thousands of lives and uprooting hundreds of thousands of people. The violence continued through 2005. The Catholic, Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox churches in the Sudan have been deeply involved in promoting peace and reconciliation, and caring for the victims of the violence. They are together in two councils, the Sudan Council of Churches which is based in Khartoum, and the New Sudan Council of Churches which operates in the south, and has its offices in Nairobi. The evangelical body is the Sudan Evangelical Christian Association, which is affiliated with the WEA.

***Sudan Council of Churches**

Founded in 1965.

Mission statement: The Sudan Council of Churches exists to engage churches and people of good will in advocacy for peace, justice, equality, and human rights in the Sudan, and to enable member churches to acquire relevant skills and resources for ministering in word and service to the Sudanese people in general, and the poor in particular, in multi-faith, multi-ethnic and conflict situations.

Member churches:

Africa Inland Church – Sudan

Catholic Church

Coptic Orthodox Church

Episcopal Church of the Sudan

Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Greek Catholic Church

Greek Orthodox Church (Patriarchate Alexandria)

Presbyterian Church of the Sudan

Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Sudan Interior Church
Sudan Pentecostal Church
Sudanese Church of Christ

The Sudan Council of Churches has five regional offices: Northern Sudan, Western Sudan, Upper Nile, Bahr E Ghazal, Equatorial Region Office.

New Sudan Council of Churches

Founded in 1989.

Basis: The New Sudan Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which profess Jesus Christ as Lord God and Saviour. The Council aims at providing visible expression of the unity of Christians in the task of proclaiming the gospel of salvation and at encouraging Christians to witness and serve their neighbours individually and collectively. As its basis, the Council has chosen the gospel according to Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit".

Member churches:

Africa Inland Church – Sudan
Episcopal Church of the Sudan
Presbyterian Church of Sudan
Catholic Church
Sudan Interior Church
Sudan Pentecostal Church

Africa Inland Church Sudan

Church Family: Free Church
Membership: 123,000
Congregations: 180
Pastors: 340
Member of: WCC (2001) – SCC – NSCC
Periodical: *News Bulletin* (in English)

The Africa Inland Mission was first founded in Machakos, Kenya in 1885 and later moved to what is now the DRC in 1912. From there the AIM started working in the southern Sudan in 1949. According to the Sudan Missionary Regulations of 1905, different missions should work in separate and clearly defined areas, with the exception of the eastern districts which were declared an "open space" where any mission could work. In good understanding with the Anglican Church in southern Sudan the AIM agreed to take up responsibility for the whole of Eastern Equatoria, releasing the CMS to concentrate on their rapidly growing churches on the west bank of the Nile. The new mission was staffed by American as well as Congolese missionaries. Medical work played a significant role. A clinic which began as a small health centre has now been developed into a big hospital. In 1955 all foreign missionaries had to leave Southern Sudan and the development of national leadership became an urgent priority, even though the mission was still young. The first Sudanese AIM pastor was ordained in 1956. In 1972 the church became fully autonomous, with a membership of about 1,000. Under its indigenous Sudanese leaders the church began to grow steadily as of 1973.

The African Inland Church Sudan is Trinitarian, confesses the divinity of Christ and accepts the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the absolute and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The highest governing body

of the AIC Sudan is the general assembly, under which exist regional, district and local church councils. A central church council, elected by the general assembly, is responsible for implementing the decisions of the assembly and for the overall administration of the church. Gospel campaign actions including church planting, discipleship training, seminars and conferences are core activities. The pastors of the church are trained at various evangelical institutions in Sudan and abroad.

Currently the church is running service programmes focusing on basic education and primary health care. Other programmes include skill training for displaced persons, especially women, and sanitation and housing development in camps around Khartoum. The church is also involved in relief work in the Darfur area. In the new peace era the churches in Sudan are required to give priority to counselling and reconciliation programmes for persons returning after the war as well as for those who remained at home throughout the war.

Episcopal Church of the Sudan

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 4,500,000

Dioceses: 24

Parishes*:

Priests*:

Member of: WCC (1977) – AACC – MECC – FMEEC – SCC – NSCC – ACC – CAPA

The Church Missionary Society began work in 1899 in Omdurman. Christianity developed among the Africans living in the southern part of the country. Until 1974 the diocese of Sudan was under the Jerusalem archbishopric. It reverted to the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Canterbury until the new province, consisting of four new dioceses, was established in 1976. The archbishop resides in Juba, Southern Sudan, where the provincial head office is located.

The Sudan has suffered from two civil wars, from 1955-72, and from 1983 up to the peace agreement in 2005. Apart from the effect of the wars on the church, in terms of large-scale displacement of people and destruction of many lives and property, the EPS went through an internal schism from 1987 to 1992. It was resolved through the creation of more dioceses. Thus the number of dioceses in 1992 doubled to 24. Most of these (16) are in the areas controlled by the SPLM (Southern Peoples Liberation Movement), eight are under the Sudan government. In spite of the problems caused by the armed conflict the archbishop has been able to travel freely in the country as a whole, with support from the two liaison offices in Khartoum and Kampala. The EPS has 15 theological colleges and Bible schools for the training of its clergy.

*The ECS is in the process of collecting statistical information after the years of civil war.

Presbyterian Church of the Sudan

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 1,000,000

Congregations: 500

Pastors: 265

Member of: WCC (1965) – AACC – MECC – FMEEC – SCC – NSCC – WARC – ARCA

The Presbyterian Church of the Sudan (PCOS) was established in the late 1890s by American missionaries who came to the Sudan from Egypt. They established a church in Khartoum and went down to the south in 1902, leaving the church in the north mainly under Egyptian Coptic Evangelicals (now known as the Presbyterian Evangelical Church of the Sudan). In the south the first station was established near Malakal, then the capital of Upper Nile Province. In 1962 all missionaries had to leave Sudan by decision of the government. The church remained under the leadership of a few Sudanese pastors and began to expand to other parts of the country. Today the PCOS is the third largest church in Sudan, after the Roman Catholic and the Episcopal churches.

Like other Christian denominations in the south, the church is divided into two administrations because of the war. The main administration is in the government-controlled areas, and the other in SPLA/M-controlled areas under an associate moderator. In both administrations, the PCOS is engaged in rendering services to the displaced communities in the form of education, health, relief and agriculture, with the help of partner churches and NGOs, and also in preaching the gospel. The church has two Bible schools, one theological college which is a joint venture with SPEC, and many primary schools in the camps for the displaced. After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005, the PCOS is now working on bringing the two administrations together, and is also involved in relief, repatriation, rehabilitation, reconstruction, resettlement and development.

The PCOS is in partnership with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Church of the Brethren (USA), the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed Church of America, Mission 21 (Basel), the Reformed Mission League of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, and has a close relationship with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

SWAZILAND

***Council of Swaziland Churches**

Founded in 1976.

Mission statement: To further the unity of God's church as a body of Christ by developing strategies that will enable us as Christians to be advocates of justice and peace in all circumstances and dealings.

Member churches:

- African Apostolic Faith Mission
- African Methodist Episcopal Church*
- Church of the Province of Southern Africa*
- Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Independent Methodist Church
- Kukhan'yokusha Zion Church
- Mennonites Central Committee
- Methodist Church in Southern Africa*
- Roman Catholic Church
- United Christian Church in Africa

TANZANIA

Population: 36,600,000

Surface area: 945,100 sq.km

Capital: Dodoma

GNI per capita: 330 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Swahili, English, other

Religions: Christian 54%; Muslim 30%; African traditional 15%; Hindu 1%

Christianity: Catholics 10,750,000; Protestants 7,152,770;

Anglicans 2,950,000; Orthodox 13,000; Independent 716,840

Tanzania's over one hundred ethnic groups are mostly of Bantu origin. Others are the Nilotic, Cushitic, and Khoisan groups. Arab trade posts were established along the coast and in the island of Zanzibar as early as the 10th century. Germany declared Tanganyika its colony at the Berlin Conference in 1884. Britain took over Zanzibar, and in 1919 also Tanganyika as a trust territory, until independence in 1961 and 1963. In 1964, Zanzibar and Tanganyika merged to form the nation of Tanzania. Its first president was Julius Nyerere, one of the great leaders of Africa's independence, and the artisan of *ujamaa*, an African expression of 'familyhood', emphasizing equality and justice (loosely translated as African socialism). Tanzania was deeply involved in the struggle in Southern Africa, hosting liberation movements such as the ANC and Frelimo (Mozambique), and caring for thousands of refugees. Since 1995, Tanzania has a democratic multi-party system. Economically it is a poor country, depending almost entirely on agriculture for subsistence and export of coffee, cotton, etc. Manufacturing industry and gold mining are beginning to develop. The Catholic Church is the oldest and largest church, representing about half of all the Christians. Other large churches are the Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, Africa Inland, and Moravian churches, which together with several others, form the Christian Council. The Orthodox in Tanzania belong to the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Pentecostals number close to 20 percent of the Protestants and Independents. Other large groups are the Seventh-day Adventists, and the New Apostolic Church.

***Christian Council of Tanzania**

Founded in 1964 (forerunner: the Tanganyika Missionary Council, founded in 1934).

Mission statement: To facilitate and coordinate the united witness of member churches and church-related organizations by building their capacity in evangelism, networking, advocacy and socio-economic development for the benefit of the community.

Member churches:

African Brotherhood Church
 Africa Inland Church Tanzania
Anglican Church of Tanzania
 Baptist Church in Tanzania
 Christian Brethren Assembly
 Church of God
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
 Kanisa la Biblia
 Mbalizi Evangelistic Church
 Mennonite Church of Tanzania
Moravian Church of Tanzania

Presbyterian Church of East Africa
 Salvation Army
 Tanzania Yearly Meeting

Associate members:

African Evangelistic Enterprises
 Emmanuel International
 Habitat for Humanity
 Life Ministry of Tanzania
 Mission Aviation Fellowship
 Scripture Union
 SIL International
 Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service
 Tanzania Bible Society
 Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association

Anglican Church of Tanzania

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 2,000,000
 Dioceses: 19
 Parishes: 1,800
 Bishops: 25
 Priests: 1,300
 Member of : WCC (1948/1971) – AACC – CCT – ACC – CAPA
 Website: www.anglican.or.tz

Formerly the Church of the Province of Tanzania, the Anglican Church of Tanzania was established as an independent province in 1970, when the former province of East Africa was divided into the province of Kenya and the province of Tanzania. The latter covers the geographical area of the United Republic of Tanzania with 18 dioceses in the mainland and one in the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. The Anglican Church of Tanzania has two distinct church traditions – Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical. This is due to the fact that, dating back to the mid-19th century, two British mission societies worked in Tanzania, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, UMCA (now United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, USPG), and the Church Missionary Society (CMS, now Church Mission Society).

The highest decision-making body in the ACT is the synod (general assembly). It meets every three years. The standing committee (general council) is the executive body in between synod meetings. There are also the house (council) of bishops, the officers, and board and committees. The ACT has three semi-independent associations: the Mothers Union (MU), the Tanzania Anglican Youth Organization (TAYO) and the Anglican Evangelistic Association (AEA). Some of the prominent institutions include the theological colleges (St Phillip's located at Kongwa, and St Mark's in Dar es Salaam); Mtumba Rural Women Training Centre, Vocational Training Centre, Central Tanganyika Press and the Literature Organization (also known as the Dar es Salaam Bookshop). Programmes on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and community development are among the ongoing activities of the church. Two major future projects are to establish a university by the end of 2006, and a nation-wide telecommunications and database network (2005-2007).

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania(ELCT)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 3,000,000

Dioceses: 20

Congregations: 1,104

Pastors: 1,500

Member of: WCC (1967) – AACC – CCT – LWF

Periodical: *Uhuru na Amani* (in Swahili)

Website: www.elct.or.tz

Lutheran mission work in today's Tanzania began in the 19th century, from Europe and the USA. By 1938 there were seven Lutheran churches in Tanganyika, which united and founded that year the Federation of Lutheran Churches. In 1963 these seven churches, under the umbrella of the federation merged to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, with a total membership of approximately 500,000 Christians. Lutherans are the largest Christian denomination in the country after Roman Catholics. The main language used in the church is Kiswahili, though local dialects are also used.

The church proclaims the word of God, both within the country and across borders, through mission work. Mission work within Tanzania is done by the dioceses. The ELCT had mission work in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which have now become autonomous churches. Currently, it is a member of joint mission boards with the Evangelical Lutheran churches in Malawi, Mozambique, DRC and Zambia, which help to undertake evangelization in these churches. The church is also involved in communicating the gospel through the radio studio in Moshi and the church magazine. Plans are underway to launch a newspaper – Tega Sikio. The church is also involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue for peaceful coexistence. Other activities include the work of diakonia, supporting widows, the disabled and disadvantaged in society. The church also undertakes several HIV/AIDS programmes, which aim at breaking the silence, education, care for victims, and administering ARVs. Major programmes of the church are in the area of training pastors, evangelists, deacons and parish workers for evangelism.

From the beginning the church has provided services through schools, hospitals and medical training to the society in general. Currently, provision of education ranges from primary school to education for the deaf, higher education from secondary school level to the university. The Tumaini University of the ELCT runs four constituent colleges, namely Makumira (Arusha), Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College (Moshi), Dar-es-Salaam College and Iringa University College. The main objective is to offer tertiary education in an environment imbued with Christian faith, traditions and moral values. Two management programmes, on health care and on education, develop policies with the objective to create sustainable, affordable and quality health care and education services. The church is also involved in various development projects, including sustainable agriculture, dairy, fish farming, water, renewable energy, reforestation and other projects.

The ELCT owns Lutheran Investment Company Ltd. (LUICO Ltd). The first business enterprise to be managed by LUICO is the New Safari Hotel (1967) Ltd, which is operational since July 2004.

Moravian Church in Tanzania

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 500,000

Congregations: 404

Pastors: 494

Member of: WCC (1982) – AACC – CCT – MUB

Periodical: *MOTHECO*

The first missionaries of the Moravian Church came to Tanzania in the late 19th century soon after Germany assumed control of the territory. The first Moravian mission station was established at Rungwe in Southern Tanzania in 1891. Another station in Western Tanzania was handed over to the Moravian Board in Herrnhut, Germany, by the London Missionary Society in 1897. As a result of active evangelism work, these two sister stations grew and became big churches extending over large areas in the southern and western parts of Tanzania. Each one constituted a province of its own. The need to establish cooperation between them was felt right from the beginning of their establishment. The founding missionaries had established communication through correspondence as early as 1899. Later they started meeting and exchanging experiences and the two provinces established cooperation on various matters. In 1965 it was agreed to establish formally a joint board to discuss and agree on matters common to both provinces. In 1968 the two provinces decided to establish a Moravian theological college as a joint venture for the training of ministers. In 1976 the southern province was divided into two, and the same was done with the western province in 1986. Since then the Moravian Church in Tanzania has four provinces.

With the creation of the new provinces the need to establish the Moravian Church in Tanzania as a national body to coordinate and unify the work became greater. The MCT as a church would run and oversee joint ventures and programmes and represent the provinces inside and outside the country. On August 4, 1986 delegates from the four Moravian provinces met at Sikonge and resolved to formally establish the MCT as a church to unite all Moravians in Tanzania. On November 23, 1986 the MCT was officially inaugurated and in April, 1987 it was registered by the government. The MCT was formally recognized by the Unity Synod of the Unitas Fratrum at its meeting in Antigua, West Indies in 1988.

The MCT coordinates and oversees the development and growth of the theological college, which has become, since 2004, Bishop Kisanji University. It is responsible for the publication of hymn books, liturgy and text books and other church literature produced by the Moravian Theological Commission. It represents the provinces before the government, other churches, agencies and ecumenical organizations. Above all, its major responsibility is, through the provinces, to preach the holy gospel of salvation within and outside the church. The church in Tanzania is growing and membership is increasing rapidly. Each province has a specific area for evangelization. Each province is also engaged in outreach work beyond the borders of the country, in the DRC, Malawi and Zambia.

TOGO

Population: 5,128,902

Surface area: 56,790 sq.km

Capital: Lomé

GNI per capita: 380 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: French, Ewe, other

Religions: Christian 43%; African traditional 38%; Muslim 19%

Christianity: Catholics 1,440,000; Protestants 607,400; Independent 138,110

The region of today's Togo was settled by various groups, among them the Ewé who came from the east, and the Mina from the west. Togoland became a German colony at the 1884 Berlin Conference, and after World War I was divided between the British and the French. British Togoland joined Ghana at independence, and the French colony became Togo in 1962. A year later, Togo was the first African independent nation to experience a military coup. From 1967 to 2005 it was ruled by president Eyadéma, who imposed an authoritarian regime, oppressing the democratic opposition and violating human rights. Many Togolese were killed, and hundreds of thousands became refugees in neighbouring Ghana and Benin. At his death, his son took over in elections marred by killings and torture, and democratization continued to be blocked by those in power through 2005. The economy of Togo depends on subsistence agriculture and export of coffee, cocoa and cotton, and on the production of phosphate. Catholic missions began in Togo at the end of the 16th century, and today more than half of the Togolese Christians belong to the Catholic Church. The Evangelical Presbyterian church is the largest Protestant denomination, followed by the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal). Both are members of the Christian Council of Togo, which brings together a broad range of Protestant, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. Several church leaders, Catholic and Protestant, have witnessed to democracy and justice in the tense internal political situation, with the support of international ecumenical partners.

Christian Council of Togo

(Conseil chrétien du Togo)

Founded in 1983.

Basis: The member churches believe that the holy scriptures are divinely inspired and entirely trustworthy. Their doctrinal basis is the Christian faith expressed in the Apostles' Creed.

The Christian Council of Togo is an institutional framework for exchange of experiences, research, and consultation between the member churches and associate members, in view of Christian witness. The Council is apolitical.

Member churches:

Assemblies of God Togo

Baptist Convention of Togo

Church of Pentecost Togo

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo

International Church of Pentecost Togo

Lutheran Church of Togo

Methodist Church of Togo

Seventh-day Adventist Church of Togo

Associate member church:

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Togo

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo

(Eglise évangélique presbytérienne du Togo, EEPT)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 180,000

Regions: 6

Districts: 90

Congregations: 591

Pastors: 119

Member of: WCC (1960) – AACC – CCT – WARC – Cevaa

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo is the fruit of the work of the North German Missionary Society (Bremen Mission) which began its activities in what is now the Volta region in Ghana. The church was established towards the end of the 19th century. All the missionaries except one had to leave the area at the end of the first world war. At that time the church had 22,000 members.

Under the first African leader the two churches in the anglophone and francophone parts of the territory were united in one synod in 1922, when the church became autonomous. From 1922 onwards the Paris Missionary Society assisted the church in its relations with the colonial government, the schools, the training of catechists and the evangelization of North Togo. In 1959 the church took full responsibility for all its activities.

The EEPT has introduced new forms of evangelism, hoping that these will lead to the liberation and identity offered by God in Jesus Christ, including the deliverance from physical illnesses. Each member of the church is encouraged to become a witness to the gospel by realizing that he or she is part of the church of the poor. These new ways of doing evangelization have resulted in several social projects, e.g. a hospital, several dispensaries, primary and secondary schools, centres for social and rural projects, associations of volunteers and chaplains for pupils and students, and for hospitals. Women are motivated and very active in several associations.

The church is organized in six ecclesiastical regions. Its synod meets once a year and the decisions are implemented by the executive board. A synodal committee which is composed of the representatives of the regions and the members of the executive board meets four times a year. The EEPT which is financially dependent on outside help, especially from Germany, is trying to achieve financial autonomy.

Methodist Church of Togo

(Eglise méthodiste du Togo)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 45,000

Circuits: 6

Congregations: 30

Pastors: 32

Member of: WCC (1996) – AACC – CCT – WMC

The history of the Methodist Church of Togo goes back to British Methodist missionary work which began in the area in 1843. It is the first Christian church established in what is now Togo. The MCT defines its mission as bringing the human being to accept the Creator, respect the creation and discern in the other the image of the Lord Jesus Christ; to contribute to building a more just and

humane society according to the example of the ministry of Christ; to safeguard the resources of the world recognizing the interdependence of peoples, societies and nations. The vision of the church is that of a more human world won for Jesus Christ, in peace and united in solidarity. The Methodist Church of Togo confesses one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as witnessed in the historical creeds of the church and in the fundamental principles of the Reformation. The doctrines of the evangelical faith adhered to by the Methodist Church are based on the revelation as contained in the holy scriptures which are accepted as the supreme rule of faith and practice. The church believes and proclaims the universality of the grace of God who saves and sets free whoever believes and repents before the Lord Jesus Christ. It teaches the possibility of entire sanctification through the continuous cooperation of the believer with the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies and leads to perfection. It believes in the universal priesthood of all believers. The Methodist Church of Togo is evangelical, affirming its belonging to the one holy, universal and apostolic church. It seeks in mutual respect to deepen the community of faith and action with other Christian churches. Through the conference, its supreme body, the MCT encourages all those who work for the unity of the churches.

The objectives of the church are 1) to propagate the Christian faith through the preaching of the gospel; 2) to take part in and outside Togo in the struggle against ignorance, illness, poverty, racism and all forms of social evil. The MCT runs 18 primary schools and two colleges. It has a medical centre and is involved in the struggle against HIV/AIDS. In the area of training the MCT has a dyeing centre for girls, courses for income generation, and courses for the production of consumer goods. It has created a cooperative society and provides micro-credit loans for women.

UGANDA

Population: 27,623,190

Surface area: 241,000 sq.km

Capital: Kampala

GNI per capita: 270 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: English, Nganda, Swahili, other

Religions: Christian 89%; Muslim 5%; Hindu 1%

Christianity: Catholics 12,000,000; Anglicans 10,155,400;

Protestants 1,381,290; Orthodox 27,000; Independent 991,040

Several kingdoms have existed in the area of today's Uganda, the largest being the Buganda, which has been restored recently. Uganda was a British protectorate from 1888 onwards. It recovered its independence in 1962. From 1966 to 1986, the country suffered coups and dictatorial regimes, the worst of which was Idi Amin's rule which was brought to an end in 1979, with the help of an intervention by Tanzania. Hundreds of thousands of Ugandans were killed, among them Anglican Archbishop Luwum, and the economy was wrecked. Uganda has regained political stability, except for the rebellion of the Lord's Army in the north, which forces thousands of children to be soldiers. The country has been involved in the conflicts in neighbouring east Congo, supporting some of the rebel factions, and in southern Sudan. Uganda's economy is based on agriculture. The country has fertile soils and considerable natural resources. The main export crop is coffee. Christianity came to Uganda in the 19th century. Among the first con-

verts, several were martyred by a king who opposed the new religion. The two largest churches, Catholic and Anglican, form the Joint Christian Council, together with the Ugandan Orthodox Church which is part of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Among the Protestant and independent churches, Pentecostal churches and groups form a sizeable part. More than half of them belong to the Pentecostal Assemblies of God. Uganda is one of the leading countries in Africa in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

***Uganda Joint Christian Council**

Founded in 1963.

Basis of membership: A church shall be eligible for membership on condition that it adheres to the authentic teaching of the Bible, the Apostles' Creed, and accepts baptism by water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church of Uganda
Roman Catholic Church of Uganda
Uganda Orthodox Church

Associate member bodies:

Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ECLOF) – Uganda.
 Uganda Joint Medical Stores
 Uganda Bible Society

Website: www.ujcc.org

Church of Uganda

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 8,100,000

Bishops: 29

Dioceses: 31

Parishes: 1,789

Priests: 4,000

Member of: WCC (1961) – AACC – UJCC – ACC – CAPA

Periodical: see website

Website: www.coupdr.co.ug

The Church of Uganda was established in 1887 by missionaries of the Church Missionary Society from England. For half a century it was called "The Native Anglican Church" until 1961 when it became an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion as the Province of the Church of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. In 1980 Uganda became a province on its own. The history of the church in Uganda has been marked by martyrdom and civil strife. The mission statement of the church reads: "The Church of Uganda is an independent Province of the Anglican Community worldwide which subscribes to the holy scriptures. It is part of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church worshipping the one true God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Church is commissioned to carry out Christ's mission of preaching, teaching, healing and nurturing her people so that they may have abundant life and build an evangelistic, loving, caring, worshipping, peaceful and just community."

Current activities of the church include spiritual nurture, development and conflict resolution through peace initiatives. Its priorities are to deal with HIV/AIDS through programmes of sensitization, to create a sustainable church, mobilizing

people to use their potential and utilize available resources, to promote Christian values, and to create room for the young generation in the church. Concerns of the Church of Uganda today are the issue of homosexuality at national and international levels, the desire to see the church rise and shine, and to achieve networking and sharing information through radio, newspapers, television and the internet.

ZAMBIA

Population: 11,043,312

Surface area: 752,600 sq.km

Capital: Lusaka

GNI per capita: 380 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: English, Bemba, other

Religions: Christian 78%; Muslim 1%; Hindu 1%

Christianity: Protestants 3,546,300; Catholics 3,250,000; Anglicans 235,000;

Independent 1,653,190

Zambia was settled by Bantu people from 800 AD and later by other groups from neighbouring regions. In 1890 the British South Africa Company took hold of the territory. In 1911 the British established the protectorate of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). The discovery of vast copper deposits led to intensive mining in the Copperbelt, the north-western part of the country. Zambia became independent in 1964, under president Kaunda. In the period of decolonization and the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, Zambia was one of Africa's leading young nations. Kaunda did much to unite the country, with the famous slogan "One Zambia, One Nation". Zambia's economy is growing again since 2004, after a long period of decline due to the drop in copper prices on the world market and poor management. The country is facing a high poverty rate, especially in the rural areas, and high rates of HIV/AIDS infection. Christian missions came to Zambia in the 19th century. The churches are strong and have an important place in the society. The Catholic Church is the largest church, followed by the United Church of Zambia. In 2000, it was estimated that 35 percent of the Christians were Evangelicals and Pentecostals/Charismatics. In 1991 Zambia was declared a Christian nation by its president, a born-again Christian. The matter was being reconsidered during a revision of the constitution in 2005. The churches were not united on the issue. The Council of Churches is the ecumenical body. The Evangelical Fellowship is affiliated with the WEA.

***Council of Churches in Zambia**

Founded in 1945 as the Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia, which became the Christian Council of Zambia in 1964, and the Council of Churches in Zambia in 2003 (forerunner: the General Missionary Conference of Northern Rhodesia, founded in 1914).

Basis: To be a member a church must confess the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour according to Scripture and therefore seek to cooperate with other Christians who confess the same Lord in fulfilling their common tasks of witnessing to the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
Anglican Church
 Apostolic Faith Mission
 Brethren in Christ Church
 Central African Committed Church
 Church of Central African Presbyterian
 Community of Christ
Coptic Orthodox Church
 Evangelical Lutheran Church
Greek Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Alexandria)
Kimbanguist Church
 Lutheran Evangelical Church
 Moravian Church
 Pilgrim Wesleyan Church
Reformed Church in Zambia
 Salvation Army
 Salvation Deliverance Church
United Church of Zambia
United Methodist Church
Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
 World Baptist Evangelistic Association

Affiliate member organizations:

Bible Society of Zambia
 Boys Brigade
 Churches Health Association in Zambia
 Girls Brigade
 Girl Guides Association
 Lutheran World Federation
 Makeni Ecumenical Centre
 Mennonite Central Committee
 Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation
 Theological Education by Extension
 True Youth Christian Outreach
 Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association
 Zambia Student's Christian Movement

Website: www.pansaka.com/partners/ccz

The Council of Churches of Zambia is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Reformed Church in Zambia

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 250,000
 Congregations: 152
 Pastors: 84
 Member of: WCC (1991) – AACC – WARC – ARCA – REC

The Reformed Church in Zambia grew out of the mission work of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Orange Free State, South Africa. In due course ten major mission stations and numerous smaller centres of evangelization were established. African evangelists and teachers played a significant part in the expansion of the mission. In 1943 the church became a synod, and in 1966 it was granted autonomy. The church emphasizes evangelism among all the people of Zambia.

Since 1982 it has spread its work to the Eastern Province, the Luapula Province, the Northern, Central and North-western provinces. By the year 2000, the church had expanded to cover all parts of Zambia.

Justo Mwale Theological College which used to be a training college for only RCZ pastors has now become an international college. It trains pastors from different churches and from different countries. There are two conference centres, one used to be a lay training centre but has, since 2004, developed into a conference centre. The second one is the youth centre which has also developed into a conference centre. The church runs two hospitals, four secondary schools and eleven primary schools. It employs one part-time youth worker and has embarked on various development projects with the aim of becoming fully self-reliant. The following are departments of the church: education, diakonia, women, health which includes HIV/AIDS, finance, youth, communications, outreach, economics and training. The synod headquarters has moved from Katete, Eastern Province to the capital city Lusaka, in Central Province.

According to an agreement signed in 1966, the DRC still assists the church by providing personnel and funding for the theological college and funding work in mission areas (areas where RCZ has no established congregations). Global Ministries of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) supports the theological college and the department of economics.

United Church of Zambia

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 3,000,000

Congregations : 1060

Pastors: 250

Diaconal workers: 45

Member of: WCC (1966) – AACC – CCZ – WARC – ARCA – WMC – CWM – Cevaa

The United Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia, now part of the United Church of Zambia, owes its beginnings to the work of the London Missionary Society, the Church of Scotland Mission, the Union Church of the Copperbelt and the Copperbelt Free Churches. In the Copperbelt, mining began in the early 1920s. Christians from various areas went to work in the mining towns, and interdenominational worship began in both the African and European housing areas. Helped by the fact that they were already cooperating in education and welfare, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Missionary Society, and the London Missionary Society came together in African areas to form the Union Church of the Copperbelt. Shortly after this, the congregations of the European areas came together in the Copperbelt Free Church Council. By 1945, the way had been prepared for the union of the London Missionary Society and the Church of Scotland Mission in Northern Rhodesia. These congregations, along with the Union Church of the Copperbelt, joined to form the Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia. In 1958, the act of union took place. In 1965, the church united with the Methodist Church and the Church of Barotseland to form the United Church of Zambia. It is the largest Protestant church in Zambia today and continues to grow rapidly.

The UCZ maintains good relations with the Methodist Church in Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the United Church of Canada, Global Ministries of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Board for World Ministries of the United Church of Christ (USA), and Cevaa.

ZIMBABWE

Population: 12,963,496

Surface: 390,800 sq.km

Capital: Harare

GNI per capita: 440 US\$ (year 2000)

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: English, Shona, Ndebele, other

Religions: Christian 68%; African traditional 30%; other 2%

Christianity: Protestants 2,124,060; Catholics 1,250,000; Anglicans 325,000;

Independent 5,825,600 (double affiliation)

Bantu groups settled the region several thousands of years ago. The Great Zimbabwe ruins attest to the existence of a powerful kingdom in the medieval era. In the 19th century the British established colonial control, in spite of Shona and Ndebele uprisings. Southern Rhodesia became a settlement of white farmers who resisted African majority rule when in 1964 neighbouring Zambia and Malawi became independent. The white farmers declared unilateral independence in 1965. After sixteen years of war the African people of Zimbabwe recovered their independence in 1980. The WCC supported the liberation movements ZANU and ZAPU with grants from its Programme to Combat Racism Special Fund. Since the late 1990s President Mugabe's rule of the country has become increasingly authoritarian. Most of the white farms were nationalized, but redistribution has not benefited the poor African peasants. Elections have been rigged and the opposition harassed. The economy, based on agriculture and once one of the strongest of Africa, has seriously deteriorated. The churches have an important place in Zimbabwe's society. Many have supported the liberation struggle, and some were still backing the regime in 2005. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches, which is the ecumenical body, has on occasion spoken out against the abuses committed by the government, as has the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, which is affiliated with the WEA. Some of the independent churches in Zimbabwe are very large, e.g. the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (Pentecostal) and the Zion churches (African Instituted).

***Zimbabwe Council of Churches**

Founded in 1964.

Mission statement: The mission of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches is to enable the member churches to proclaim the good news of Christ, to strive for a visible Christian unity in Zimbabwe, speak with one voice on issues of national concern, and to carry out a holistic, self-supporting, prophetic, relevant and contextual Christian ministry in an ecumenical spirit, with a focus on the preaching and teaching of the gospel in accordance with holy scriptures, on ecumenical worship and spirituality, on community service and renewal, on justice and peace in church and society, and on sound theological reflection/education.

Member churches:

African Methodist Church

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Anglican Diocese of Central Zimbabwe

Anglican Diocese of Harare

Anglican Diocese of Manicaland

Anglican Diocese of Masvingo

Anglican Diocese of Matabeleland

Christian Marching Church
 Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
 Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
 Dutch Reformed Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
 African Independent Church (Mushakata)
 Independent Church in Africa
Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
Reformed Church in Zimbabwe
 Salvation Army
United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
United Methodist Church
Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
 Ziwezano Church
Presbyterian Church of Africa

Observer members:

Roman Catholic Church
 Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa

Associate members:

Bible Society of Zimbabwe
 Ecumenical Arts Association
 Fambidzano Yemakereke Avatema
 FEBA RADIO Zimbabwe
 International Bible Society
 United Theological College
 Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association
 Zimbabwe Student Christian Movement
 Zimbabwe Women's Bureau

Service Arms:

Christian Care
 Zimbabwe Ecumenical Church Loan Fund
 Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 134,000
 Congregations: 396
 Pastors: 68
 Evangelists: 3
 Deacons: 26
 Member of: WCC (1990) – ZCC – LWF – LUCSA

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe was founded in 1903 by missionaries of the Church of Sweden Mission and African evangelists from Natal (South Africa). Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) was a mission field for the Lutheran Church in Natal. It began with educational work to enable converts to read the Bible. Medical work was added in 1915, thus completing the three-fold ministry of Christ of preaching, teaching and healing. The first trained African pastor was ordained in 1937. The Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe became autonomous from the Church of Sweden Mission and the Church in Natal in 1962.

The foundation of the church is (1) the word of God, namely the Old and New Testament, (2) the Creed of the Apostles, the Nicene and Athanasian Symbols and the pure Lutheran Doctrine in accordance with the Small Catechism of Martin Luther and the unaltered Augustana Confession. The church seeks to build on the foundation of this faith and doctrine unto a holy temple in the Lord through teaching and preaching the word of God and through the proper administration of the holy sacraments. It cooperates in mutual understanding with other churches for the extension of the kingdom of God. It aims at becoming a self-supporting and self-propagating church that cares for the sick and suffering and exercises the ministry of diakonia, and strives to overcome ignorance and superstition through sound education.

Eighty percent of the members are in the southern part of the country. This is the so-called Agro-Region IV and V, which is prone to drought. To equip God's people for the ministry of all baptized persons, the church has two Bible schools where deacons, lay leaders, and volunteers in HIV/AIDS ministry are trained, and retreats and refresher courses for pastors and their spouses are conducted. The church has four hospitals, two of which have been designated Districts-Referral hospitals by the government. One has also a nursing school. The church runs four primary and seven secondary schools, of which six have an "A-level" component. Nine of the schools have units for visually impaired and hearing-impaired pupils at primary, secondary and high school levels.

Some of the constraints and challenges the church is facing are the shortage of pastors and senior medical staff, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, unemployment, poverty and high inflation. The ELCZ is very grateful to its bilateral partners in mission and development (Church of Sweden, LWF, ELCA Division for Global Mission, Berlin Mission Society, VELKD, WCC and the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa-LUCSA), and to its service and development arm, the Lutheran Development Service (LDS-Zimbabwe).

Methodist Church in Zimbabwe

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 112,529

Congregations: 1,541

District Bishops: 8

Pastors: 165

Evangelists: 13

Member of: WCC (1985) – AACC – ZCC – WMC

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is the fruit of British Methodist mission activity in former Southern Rhodesia which began in 1891, while the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is of American origin. The church gained its autonomy from the Methodist Church in Britain in 1977. It suffered greatly during the military struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe. It is estimated that during the decade of the 1970s church membership declined almost 50 percent. Since independence in 1980, the MCZ has been making strong efforts to build up its membership again. One of its major problems is in fact at present its growth, which necessitates large efforts to nurture the new persons coming into the church and places heavy demands on the church leadership. Another major problem is the high death rate from HIV/AIDS and the many orphans who are in great need. In order to cope with the growing needs of the members there has been a great emphasis on training and about 90 percent of the MCZ clergy have been

trained since 1987. Currently there are 116 ordained clergy of whom 14 are women. There are 79 student ministers and probationers of whom 11 are women.

Whereas in 1982 there were just over 16,600 young people participating in church activities, in 2003 the number was almost 54,000. The MCZ has eleven primary and nine secondary schools. In addition, there are four multipurpose community centres which are used for work among women, youth and non-church groups. The schools and centres, though belonging to the MCZ, are used ecumenically. Currently there is one missionary from the UK working with the church.

Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 100,000

Presbyteries: 8

Congregations: 49

Pastors: 59

Evangelists: 17

Member of: WCC (1990) – AACC – ZCC – WARC – ARCA – REC

Concern for the evangelization of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was first felt by a pioneer missionary in Northern Transvaal (South Africa). Through his endeavours and intercessions, a number of Basuto evangelists were from time to time sent across the Limpopo river to evangelize. The first mission station was established in 1891 at Morgenster. From this point the missionary work of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa grew and spread over the whole country. As a result the African Reformed Church in Rhodesia came into being, as an indigenous and independent church, under the control of church councils, four presbyteries and a synod. In 1977 it became the fully autonomous African Reformed Church. Soon after the country's independence in 1980, the name was changed to Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

The RCZ has given high priority to Bible translation, production of literature in the vernacular, and to the training of pastors, evangelists and lay workers. An extensive educational programme, as well as medical services, have grown from the initial small beginnings. In addition to its various church activities, the church has a special concern for its school for the deaf and dumb at Morgenster, and the Margaretha Hugo School for the blind. The RCZ also has a number of secondary schools, a teacher-training college and a theological college, as well as two hospitals and several clinics.

Rapid changes in the political and social situation in Zimbabwe have meant that the church has had to find ways of adjusting itself so as to remain an effective spiritual force in the country.

United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 30,000

Congregations: 50

Pastors: 35

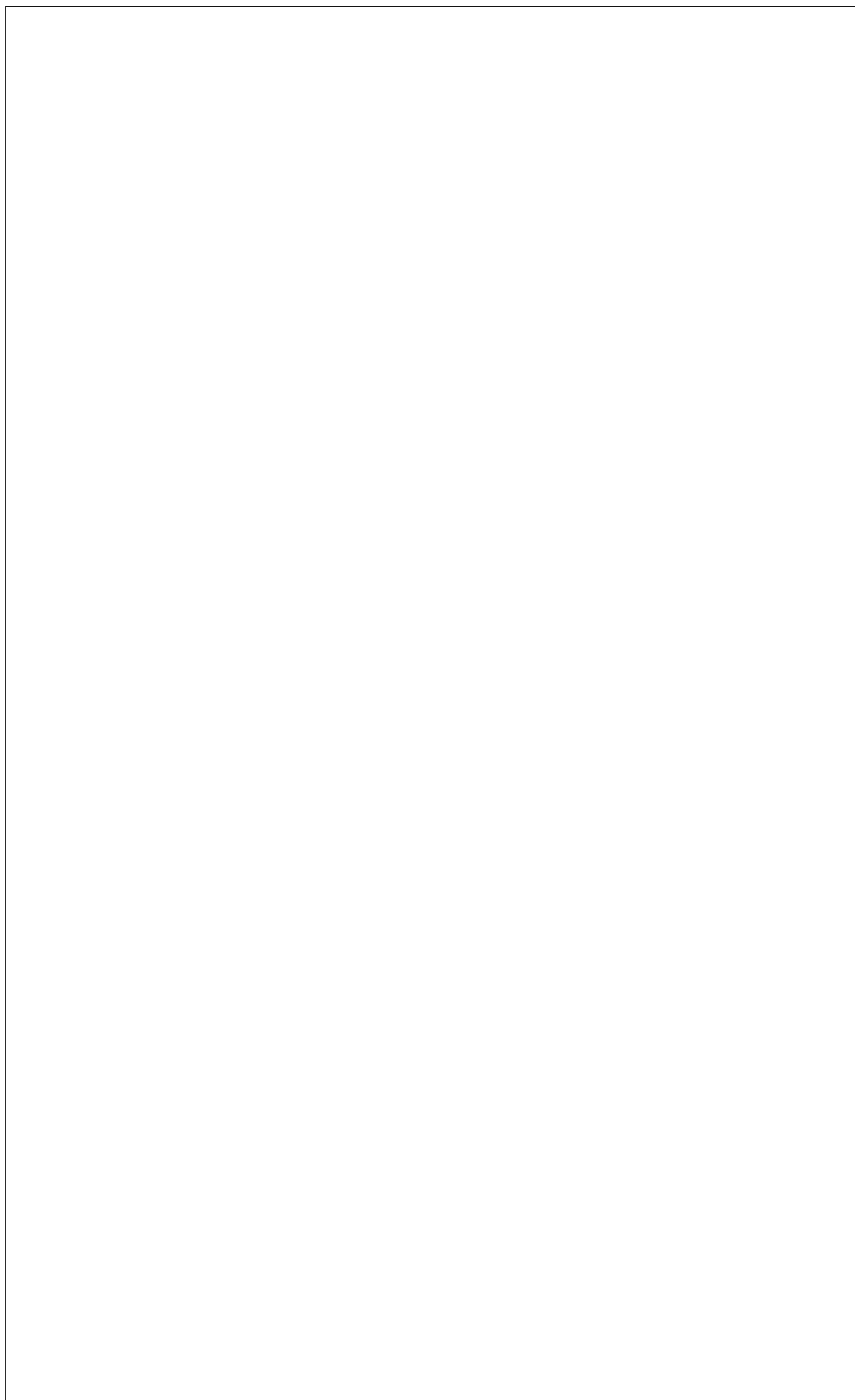
Member of: WCC (1998) – AACC – ZCC

The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe grew out of the work of the American Board of Foreign Mission of what is now the United Church of Christ (USA).

It became autonomous in 1973. The UCCZ acknowledges as its sole head Jesus Christ, Son of God and Saviour. It recognizes as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the word of God in the scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit for its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the church in each generation to make this faith its own in the reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's supper or holy communion.

The United Church of Christ is composed of local churches, councils, conferences and the general synod. It is active in evangelism, rural development, education and health care. Three vibrant evangelistic and revivalist movements contribute much to the life and witness of the church: the Volunteers (men's association), Ruwadzano (women's association) and the Youth Fellowship.

Asia



CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA

The Christian Conference of Asia began as the East Asia Christian Conference, which was constituted by a decision of churches, national councils of churches and Christian councils, whose representatives met at Prapat, Indonesia, in 1957. It was inaugurated at an assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1959, under the theme *Witnessing Together*. In the light of changing circumstances, the 1973 assembly, meeting in Singapore, agreed to change the name to Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). The purpose statement of the CCA says that CCA exists as an organ and a forum of continuing cooperation among the churches and national Christian bodies in Asia, within the framework of the wider ecumenical movement, believing that the purpose of God for the church in Asia is life together in a common obedience of witness to the mission of God in the world. In order to be a member of the CCA, churches must “confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill their common calling to the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. National councils or similar bodies joining the CCA must also approve this basis. The CCA strives for the unity of the church in Asia, joint action in mission, Asian contribution to Christian thought and worship, sharing and fellowship among the churches in Asia and beyond, effective Christian response to the challenges of the changing societies of Asia, relationships with people of other faiths in Asia, human dignity and care for the creation.

Since the founding event, the churches and councils that form the CCA have journeyed through ten more assemblies:

Bangkok	1964	<i>The Christian Community within the Human Community</i>
Bangkok	1968	<i>In Christ All Things Hold Together</i>
Singapore	1973	<i>Christian in the Asian Struggle</i>
Penang	1977	<i>Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope</i>
Bangalore	1981	<i>Living in Christ with People</i>
Seoul	1985	<i>Jesus Christ Sets Free to Serve</i>
Manila	1990	<i>Christ our Peace: Building a Just Society</i>
Colombo	1995	<i>Hope in God in a Changing Asia</i>
Tomohon	2000	<i>Time for Fullness of Life for All</i>
Chiang Mai	2005	<i>Building Communities of Peace for All</i>

The themes reflect the continuing desire of the CCA to relate the common Christian witness of the churches, which constitute a small minority in most Asian countries, to the wider context of the people, the nations and the religions in Asia. The biblical promise of “fullness of life”, not only for Christians but for all of Asia’s people, especially the poor and marginalized, has been a guiding concept in recent years. In pursuing this reflection, the CCA takes into account the rapid industrialization of Asia, in the framework of globalization, and its implications of increasing social and economic injustice.

Among the current priorities of the CCA are the strengthening of the koinonia of Asian churches and Christian communities, the healing of divisions in the churches and society, ecumenical formation, the expansion of the ecumenical fellowship in Asia to involve Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, and revitalizing the

ecumenical vision, thought and action in regard to the emerging challenges in Asia and Asia's place in the world. The core programmes of the CCA are Faith, Mission and Unity, Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Formation, Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service. Special concerns include the Congress of Asian Theologians, Ecumenical Theological Formation and the Decade to Overcome Violence (the DOV focus was on Asia in 2005). The CCA and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC, Roman Catholic Church) have formed an Asian Ecumenical Committee to monitor joint activities and programmes, e.g. in the field of ecumenical formation. The CCA has 95 member churches and 16 member councils in 17 countries, representing 55 million Christians in Asia. Councils (national councils of churches and national Christian councils) are full members of the Conference along with the churches. The 2005 assembly decided that the offices of the CCA should be moved from Hong Kong to Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2006.

Website: www.cca.org.hk

Member churches of the Christian Conference of Asia

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia
Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand
Methodist Church of New Zealand
Presbyterian Church of New Zealand
 Aotearoa New Zealand Yearly Meeting (Religious Society of Friends)
Anglican Church of Australia
Churches of Christ in Australia
Uniting Church in Australia
 Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship
Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha
Church of Bangladesh
 Evangelical Christian Church, Bangladesh
Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
 Anglican Church Hong Kong (Sheng Kung Hui)
 Methodist Church, Hong Kong
Church of North India
Church of South India
 Council of Baptist Churches in North East India
 Hindustani Covenant Church (India)
 Malabar Independent Syrian Church (India)
 Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church (India)
Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (India)
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (India)
Methodist Church in India
 Presbyterian Church in India
 Salvation Army (India)
Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches (India)
United Evangelical Church in India
Nias Protestant Christian Church (BNKP) (Indonesia)
Karo Batak Protestant Church (GKBP) (Indonesia)
Isa Almasih Church (GIA) (Indonesia)
Kalimantan Evangelical Church (GKE) (Indonesia)
Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)
Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (GKITP) (Indonesia)
Christian Church of Eastern Java (GKJW) (Indonesia)
Pasundan Christian Church (GKP) (Indonesia)
Protestant Christian Angkola Church (GKPA) (Indonesia)
Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) (Indonesia)
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI)
Simalungan Protestant Christian Church (GKPS) (Indonesia)

Central Sulawesi Christian Church (GKST) (Indonesia)
Christian Church of Sumba (GKS) (Indonesia)
Methodist Church Indonesia (GMI) (Indonesia)
Christian Evangelical Church of Bolang Mongondow (GMIBM) (Indonesia)
Christian Evangelical Church of Halmahera (GMIH) (Indonesia)
Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) (Indonesia)
Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud (GMIST) (Indonesia)
Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT) (Indonesia)
Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB)
Protestant Church of South East Sulawesi (GEPSULTRA) (Indonesia)
Batak Christian Community Church (GPKB) (Indonesia)
Protestant Church in the Moluccas (GPM) (Indonesia)
Toraja Church (GT) (Indonesia)
Batak Protestant Christian Church (HKBP) (Indonesia)
Indonesian Christian Church (HKI)
United Muria Christian Churches of Indonesia (GKMI)
Javanese Christian Churches (GKJ) (Indonesia)
Union of Minahasa Protestant Church (GKPM) (Indonesia)
Korean Christian Church in Japan
United Church of Christ in Japan
Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Episcopal) (Japan)
Anglican Church in Korea
Korean Evangelical Church
Korean Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church of Korea
Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
Salvation Army (Korea)
Lao Evangelical Church (Laos)
Anglican Church of Malaysia
 – Diocese of Sabah
 – Diocese of Kuching
 – Diocese of West Malaysia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore
Methodist Church of Malaysia
Myanmar Baptist Convention
Church of the Province of Myanmar
Independent Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Mara Evangelical Church (Myanmar)
Methodist Church, Lower Myanmar
Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar
Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Church of Pakistan
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches
Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines
United Evangelical Church of Christ (Philippines)
Philippines Independent Church
Episcopal Church in the Philippines
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
United Methodist Church in the Philippines
Anglican Church in Sri Lanka
Baptist Sangamaya, Sri Lanka
Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India (Sri Lanka)
Methodist Church of Sri Lanka
Anglican Episcopal Church (Taiwan)
Methodist Church in the Republic of China (Taiwan)
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
Church of Christ in Thailand
Protestant Church of Timor Lorosa'e

Member councils of the Christian Conference of Asia

Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand
 Te Runanga Whakawhunaunga I Nha Hahi O Aotearoa
 National Council of Churches in Australia
 Bangladesh National Council of Churches
 Hong Kong Christian Council
 National Council of Churches in India
 Communion of Churches in Indonesia
 National Christian Council in Japan
 Kampuchea Christian Council
 National Council of Churches in Korea
 Council of Churches of Malaysia
 Myanmar Council of Churches
 National Council of Churches in Pakistan
 National Council of Churches in the Philippines
 National Christian Council of Sri Lanka
 National Council of Churches of Taiwan

SOUTH ASIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SACC)

Founded in 1994.

Objective: To strengthen ecumenism and the ecumenical movement in South Asia.

Members:

National Christian Council in Nepal
 National Christian Council of Sri Lanka
 National Council of Churches – Bangladesh
 National Council of Churches in India
 National Council of Churches of Pakistan

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Population: 4,098,300
 Surface area: 270,500 sq.km
 Capital: Wellington
 GNI per capita: 20,310 US\$
 Classification: Developed economy
 Languages: English, Maori
 Religions: Christian 59%; Buddhist 1%; Hindu 1%
 Christianity*: Anglicans 584,793; Catholics 486,012; Protestants 656,826;
 Orthodox 6,300; Independent 64,266

The indigenous people of the islands that form New Zealand, the Polynesian Maori, arrived there some 800 years ago and called it “Aotearoa – land of the long white cloud”. Britain annexed the territory in 1840 and negotiated the Treaty of Waitangi, by which the Maoris ceded their sovereignty, but retained their perpetual rights to the land. The treaty was violated by the colonizers, and white settlers soon outnumbered the Maoris, who lost several land wars between 1843 and 1872, but resisted the assimilation imposed by the British. In 1947 New Zealand became fully independent as a constitutional monarchy within the British Commonwealth. In 1975 the Waitangi Tribunal was established, to deal with claims

of violation of the Treaty since 1840. Maoris constitute 14 percent of the population, Pakeha (people of European descent) 80 percent, and Pacific islanders and other immigrants six percent. New Zealand has a modern, developed economy, based on the export of agricultural and industrial products. The Anglican Church is the largest church, followed by the Catholics, the Presbyterians and the Methodists. These churches have in various ways provided possibilities for the Maoris to have their own jurisdiction, without separation. Similarly, there have been two ecumenical bodies, for the Pakeha and the Maori. Churches have also been the first to add Aotearoa to New Zealand in their name. An interesting form of local unity emerged in the 1980s, called “cooperative ventures” between congregations of different confessions. There are several Pentecostal church groups and independent charismatic groups, and an Evangelical network.

*statistics from Aotearoa New Zealand

Note: **The Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand** no longer exists. The member churches decided to close the CCANZ as of the end of 2005. A “Strategic Thinking Group” has been set up to help the churches consider new options for working together. It is hoped that a new and more broadly based national ecumenical body may emerge. Further information will be published on the website www.ccanz.net.nz.

***Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga I nga Hahi o Aotearoa**
(Maori Council of Churches)

A Maori section existed within the former National Council of Churches in New Zealand (later the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand). In 1982, the member churches of this Maori section decided to form their own, autonomous council of churches. The aim of the Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga I nga Hahi o Aotearoa is:

“In our own life, witness, and service, to try and make more visible our unity in Christ, and promote the concerns and programmes of the ecumenical movement among our own constitutional members.”

Member churches:

Anglican Church
Baptist Union
Catholic Church
Presbyterian Church
Methodist Church

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia

Church Family: Anglican
Membership: 650,000
Dioceses: 9
Parishes: 552
Priests: 822
Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – ACC
Website: www.anglican.org.nz

In 1814 the Nga Puhi Maori chief agreed to protect three missionary families who had landed at Oihi in the Bay of Islands. And so, on Christmas Day that year the first Anglican sermon was preached there, and the Anglican Church was established in these islands. Despite some early problems, missionary work –

including Christian teaching in the Maori language – spread quickly throughout the country. From 1823, the work was guided by the Church Missionary Society. After 1840, European settlers, mainly from England and Scotland, began to arrive in force, and a new focus emerged: the formation of the church in the new colonial settlements. In 1857, a conference held in Auckland agreed on a constitution for the church, which then became an autonomous province. The second half of the 19th century was dominated by the work of establishing parishes and churches. The church among the Maori people suffered during this period from fragmentation caused by the wars of the 1860s, and a general policy of assimilation to European structures and practices.

The two world wars and the depression dominated the first half of the 20th century. The characteristic feature of the post-war phase was the building of a distinctly New Zealand church, with New Zealanders themselves taking the leadership of that church. In the fields of liturgy, social attitudes, and the place of women in the ordained ministry, the church has been increasingly confident about its own convictions and insights. The charismatic movement has also made an important contribution to the life of the Anglican Church in New Zealand. Women were first ordained to the priesthood in 1977, and in 1990 the Rev. Dr Penny Jamieson was ordained as Bishop of Dunedin, the first woman diocesan bishop in the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican Church in the islands of Polynesia (principally in Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa) was established as an associated missionary diocese in 1925. In 1990, the diocese of Polynesia became a diocese in its own right.

Since the 1970s, the Maori people in New Zealand have moved out of the shadow of European dominance. The church committed itself to a re-examination of the principles of bi-cultural development and partnership stemming from a re-consideration of the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 between the British crown and the Maori tribes of New Zealand. The General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui adopted a revised constitution in 1992, which provides an opportunity for Maori, Pakeha (European New Zealanders) and Polynesian Anglicans to express their own *tikanga* (a key Maori term, meaning way, style or culture). The church is now a partnership of three streams – *Tikanga Maori*, *Tikanga Pakeha*, *Tikanga Pasifika*, which can express their minds as equal partners in the decision-making process of the general synod, and each exercise mission and ministry to God's people in their own ways. With the adoption of this constitution, the Church of the Province of New Zealand became the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand

Church Family: Disciples

Membership: 2,000*

Congregations: 33

Pastors: 28

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – DECC

Periodical: *NZ Christian* (quarterly, online)

Website: <http://www.churchesofchrist.org.nz/>

The first Church of Christ congregation in the southern hemisphere was established in 1844 in Nelson by an immigrant from Scotland. Congregations were founded in other centres of the new colony. All the early members had their origins in Great Britain, where many had been members of Churches of Christ. In 1901, the first dominion conference was held. Others followed at irregular inter-

vals, and from 1921 the conferences were held annually. In 1906, overseas mission work was begun in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). In 1934, R.S. Garfield Todd began service there. Todd was elected to the parliament of Southern Rhodesia and later became prime minister. More recently, New Zealand churches have supported missionary work in Vanuatu as well. Throughout their existence the Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand have maintained a close connection with churches in Great Britain, USA and Australia, and more recently with those of Zimbabwe and Vanuatu. These links are maintained through the World Convention of Churches of Christ.

In 1955, the Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand joined in union negotiations with the Congregational Union, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church. In 1964, the Church of the Province of New Zealand (Anglican) joined the negotiations. One third of the 33 congregations affiliated to the ACCNZ are now part of union parishes (Uniting Congregations). Reciprocal membership arrangements provide the opportunity for many members of Churches of Christ to contribute to the life and witness of congregations of the other negotiating churches. With declining numbers the national conference of the ACCNZ is now held bi-annually and the main business of the church is undertaken by an administration team. The conferences are conducted by delegates appointed by affiliated churches in numbers proportionate to membership. Inspirational, promotional and devotional sessions play a large role in conventions which are now held annually.

Prior to 1927, ministers were trained for the ministry of the New Zealand Churches of Christ mainly in USA and Australia. In 1927, a theological college was set up in Dunedin and eventually provided the major part of the ministerial force of the churches. Women as well as men have been ordained to the ministry of the word. Since the college closed in 1971, candidates for ministry have been trained in one of the Australian Churches of Christ colleges or one of the inter-denominational colleges recently established in New Zealand.

*plus those in Union Churches

Baptist Union of New Zealand

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 42,800

Local churches: 256

Pastors: 385

Member of: WCC (1948) – BWA – ABF

Periodical: *The New Zealand Baptist*

Website www.baptist.org.nz

The first Baptist church in New Zealand was established in 1851. The Baptist Union was formed in 1882. In the early stages many of the ministers – as well as members – came from Great Britain. At that time the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Roman Catholic churches were already well established in the country. Growth has therefore been moderately slow. Baptists make up less than two percent of the population. Most of the members of the church are active and very supportive of the work through church attendance, giving and service. The Baptist Church in New Zealand has developed mainly amongst people of European descent, and a mission to Maori people was begun in the 1950s. With the recent growth of many ethnic groups in New Zealand there are corresponding congregations developing.

In the year 2000 the annual assembly took a decision to refocus on the mission of the gospel in New Zealand and embarked on a journey of strengthening churches toward this end. "Growing Healthy Churches" has become the major emphasis, with a consultancy service provided by the union covering all areas of church life proving to be very effective. Mission beyond New Zealand is directed primarily towards Asia and South Asia, and continuing contact with neighbouring countries in the South Pacific.

Because of the congregational structure, most of the church's activities are built into the life of local congregations. These include work amongst children and youth, religious education at all levels, house groups for fellowship, prayer and Bible study, programmes extending into the community, care of the elderly, and other social outreach programmes. The union's role is to assist in the development of the above primarily through advice. The National Resource Centre serves the churches by providing all manner of administrative, legal, employment, property, and financial advice and services.

Carey Baptist College is an accredited pastoral and Bible training facility owned by the Baptist Union of New Zealand with a wide range of courses at various levels up to a Bachelors degree in Applied Theology.

Methodist Church of New Zealand

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 18,548

Parishes: 158

Pastors: 353

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – WMC

Periodical: *Touchstone*

Wesleyan (Methodist) missionary work in New Zealand began in 1822. Missionaries from Britain initially ministered to the largely Maori population, and later to the new migrants. The first New Zealand annual conference of the Australasian (Australia and New Zealand) Wesleyan Methodist Conference was held in 1874. Also active in New Zealand were the United Methodist, the Free Church, and the Bible Christian Church. These groups came together with the Wesleyans to form the first Australasian Methodist Conference in 1897. Separation from the General Conference of Australasia came in 1913 and in the same year the Primitive Methodist Church in New Zealand and the existing Methodist Church joined to form one Methodist Church. In the 1960s the Methodist Church played an active role in negotiating a plan for union by five churches: the Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational churches and the Associated Churches of Christ. The plan failed. Nevertheless the Methodist Church of New Zealand remains committed to ecumenism. In 2005, 85 of its 158 parishes were in active cooperation with one or more of the four former negotiating churches. It has always been a member of the national ecumenical bodies.

In its urban and rural settings, the church, through its parishes and social service agencies, is seeking to relate the gospel to human need. It is also responding to newly emerging social situations such as the impacts of globalization, breaking the cycle of poverty, caring for creation, and overcoming violence. As the church looks to the future, the roles of women, laity and the ordained ministry continue to be reassessed. In 1983 the church decided to move towards becoming a bi-cultural church. This recognizes the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi which was entered into by two parties representing the original people of the land and the later immigrant populations. In the following years the church has worked at ways of developing

equality in decision-making, stronger partnerships with, and sharing of resources with the Maori section of the church, which now has its own autonomy within the life of the Methodist Church.

As migration from other Pacific countries has continued (beginning in the 1970s), ethnic groupings of Samoan, Fijian and Tongan members have assumed a greater and a stronger identity within the life of the church and are making a significant contribution to its diversity and richness. More recently Asian migration, particularly of Koreans, Sri Lankans, and Chinese, has added to this diversity.

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 44,000

Presbyteries: 23

Congregations: 434

Pastors: 400

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – PCC – WARC – CWM

Periodical: *sPanz* (quarterly, in English)

Website: www.presbyterian.org.nz

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa dates back to 1840 when a group of Scottish immigrants and their pastors landed at the place where the city of Wellington now stands. In 1848, the Otago Presbyterian Church settlement was founded. It embraced the southern part of the colony and was administered by its own synod. The rest of the country was cared for by the northern church's general assembly. In 1901, an act of union merged them in what is now the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. The church's 23 presbyteries cover the whole country and include a growing number of Pacific island parishes, and a Maori synod which cares for Maori people. The PCANZ is the third largest denomination in New Zealand. Despite a decline in membership, it maintains a well-trained parish ministry, overseas mission in partnership with various indigenous churches, and a very active programme of social service. The church is involved in around 118 union and cooperating parishes, with the Anglican Church, Associated Churches of Christ, the Congregational Union and Methodist churches.

Through the late nineties the Presbyterian Church clarified its direction. It adopted a mission statement and the goal of developing and sustaining healthy congregations. The statement emphasizes the importance of structures to support congregations. The focus is on leadership development, serving the needs of youth and families, enhancing structures and processes to respond to a changing environment, contributing to debate on spiritual, cultural and ethical matters and communicating the church's identity. Alongside presbyteries and parishes, achieving these goals is the work of the council of the assembly, the assembly service team and policy groups. Groups including resourcing for mission policy, administration and finance, equipping the leadership, connecting with society and overseas mission and partnership policy, all exist to support the church in its work.

AUSTRALIA

Population: 20,088,024

Surface area: 7,7 million sq.km

Capital: Canberra

GNI per capita: 21,950 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: English; over 260 Aboriginal languages

Religions: Christian 79%; Buddhist 2%; Muslim 1%; Jewish 1%; other 1%

Christianity: Catholics 5,400,000; Anglicans 3,800,000; Protestants 2,897,760;
Orthodox 773,100; Independent 964,210

Aboriginal people settled in Australia more than 40,000 years before the first white exploration began in the early 17th century. In 1788 Britain established a penal colony there. In 1901, Australia became independent of Britain. In the 20th century many Europeans and Asians migrated to Australia. Today the country has a prosperous capitalist economy, although its previously generous policies towards immigrants and refugees have hardened considerably in recent years. Australia struggles with the effects of years of injustices suffered by the Aborigines, who continue to be marginalized, poor and victims of racism. The churches are challenged to relate in new ways to the aboriginal communities in their midst. The two largest Christian bodies are the Catholic Church, transported from central Europe and the Philippines, and the Anglican Church, with its roots in England. The Uniting Church in Australia, made up of former Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians, is one of the pioneering church unions in the ecumenical movement worldwide. Of more recent origin are the sizeable Orthodox churches and the Pacific Islander communities. The National Council of Churches was re-organized several years ago to include the Catholic Church. There is also an Australian Evangelical Alliance. Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Charismatics represented in 2000 some 27 percent of the Christian population. In their external relations, Australian churches are primarily turned toward the Pacific and Asia.

***National Council of Churches in Australia**

Founded in 1994 (forerunner: the Australian Council of Churches, founded in 1960, which sprang from the Australian Committee for the World Council of Churches, formed in or about 1948).

Basis: The NCCA gathers together in pilgrimage those churches and Christian communities which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and commit themselves to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his church, and to work together towards the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service, to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church of Australia

Antiochian Orthodox Church

Armenian Apostolic Church

Assyrian Church of the East

Churches of Christ in Australia

Congregational Federation of Australia

Coptic Orthodox Church

Greek Orthodox Church

Lutheran Church of Australia

Religious Society of Friends
 Roman Catholic Church
Romanian Orthodox Church
 Salvation Army
Syrian Orthodox Church
Uniting Church in Australia

Observer Churches:

Baptist Union of Australia
 Presbyterian Church of Australia

Australian Ecumenical Partner Councils:

Council of Churches of Western Australia
 New South Wales Ecumenical Council
 Northern Territory Council of Churches
 Queensland Churches Together
 South Australian Council of Churches
 Tasmanian Council of Churches
 Victorian Council of Churches

Website: <http://www.ncca.org.au>

The National Council of Churches in Australia is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Anglican Church of Australia

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 3,881,000
 Dioceses: 23
 Parishes: 1,448
 Priests: 3,710
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCA – ACC

The Anglican Church came to Australia in 1788 with the “First Fleet”, made up, for the most part, of convicts and military personnel. That community was ministered to by a chaplain. The whole continent of Australia formed an archdeaconry of the diocese of Calcutta in 1824 but in 1836 the first bishop of Australia was consecrated and soon after, in 1842, a second diocese, that of Tasmania, was formed. Five years later, three more dioceses were created, and the bishop of Australia became the bishop of Sydney. The first general synod was convened in 1872 when the number of dioceses had grown to ten. In the early years of the 20th century, the church was divided into four ecclesiastical provinces which correspond generally to the states of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. The province of South Australia was formed by the general synod in 1973. The diocese of Papua New Guinea had been part of the province of Queensland since its formation, but following proposals authorized by the general synod in 1973 and the independence of the country, it became a separate province in 1977.

In 1962 the constitution of the Church of England in Australia came into force, having first been approved by each diocesan synod and given legal force and effect by suitable acts passed by the six state parliaments. The general synod is required to meet at least once every four years. The primate is elected from among the diocesan bishops by an electoral college of bishops, clergy and laity. The name was changed to the Anglican Church of Australia in 1981 to better reflect the national identity. Women entered the diaconate in 1985 and the priesthood in 1992. Four

dioceses do not ordain women to the priesthood while two of them do not ordain women to the diaconate either.

The church is committed to being intimately related with the culture, social order, political life and all other factors which combine to make up the fabric of the Australian nation. Considerable social welfare and counselling programmes are provided across the country through Anglicare Australia. Likewise, along with the parish and welfare aspects of the church's mission, there has developed a more national approach to the provision of education through the development of a comprehensive network of Anglican schools. Various crises, including the need to better ensure the churches are safe environments for all people, have prompted greater national cooperation as well.

Ecumenical cooperation is developed through fruitful bilateral dialogues as well as in a range of new initiatives: from the training of those doing spiritual direction, through theological education to lobbying and advocacy work on behalf of those more vulnerable.

There are still many big issues facing the church: re-imagining our English heritage in an increasingly multi-cultural society, better support for indigenous people, how to evangelize in a rather secular society, good relations with other faith communities both in Australia and in the Asia/Pacific region. Meanwhile, there is a good flow of young, talented clergy and laity preparing to take leadership of our church. Anglican Christian artists, musicians and writers are becoming more prominent. Overall, Anglicans are learning a little better how to be Christian in this "great Southland of the Holy Spirit".

Churches of Christ in Australia

Church Family : Disciples

Membership: 33,000

Congregations: 430

Ministers: 720

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCA – DECC

Periodical: *The Australian Christian*

Churches of Christ in Australia belong to the Stone-Campbell family of churches, which include the Christian Church (Disciples), Christian Churches and Churches of Christ in the USA, and churches in over 160 countries throughout the world. They are members of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council. The history of the Churches of Christ in Australia goes back to 1845, when a young immigrant from Britain who had been converted in Nelson, New Zealand in the first Church of Christ congregation there, joined a Scottish Baptist group in Adelaide who had abandoned their denominational name. His convincing testimony won many to an appreciation of the example of the New Testament Church. The next year a chapel was put up. By 1865 there were five Christian churches in southern Australia, with a membership of 253. The first annual conference was held in 1866. There was a division of opinion over the nature of the conference, but in 1872 the principle of congregational independence prevailed. In 1889 evangelistic work was extended to the colony of Western Australia.

A College of the Bible was established in Melbourne in 1907, and another Bible college at Woolwich, a Sydney suburb, in 1942. A year earlier the federal conference had authorized the start of organized work among the Aborigines. Today Churches of Christ are found in all states and territories of Australia. Churches of Christ in Australia have a history which parallels the national history as it has been involved in the movements of people first to the rural areas and in recent

years to the cities. The churches are alive as local congregations, which place an emphasis on lay participation in worship and government. This means that the ethos of theology, liturgy, church programming and evangelism reflects the concerns of the lay membership. The care of congregational life based on the Christian gospel is seen as vital. Since the mid-1990s a significant focus has been on re-engaging missionally with post-modern western culture. Among the major issues faced by Churches of Christ in Australia are: (a) to enable church growth with a theology that is biblical and authentic to Australians; (b) to help members towards an understanding of the unity of the church on the basis of rediscovering a New Testament understanding of the church itself; (c) to witness to the renewal of human community based on the gospel imperatives.

Churches of Christ in Australia have good relations with sister churches in New Zealand, Western India, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, the United Kingdom, Poland, Albania, Zimbabwe, Indonesia and the United States.

Uniting Church in Australia

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 350,000

Congregations: 1,600

Synods: 6

Pastors: 2,900 (including 1,400 retired)

Member of WCC (1948/1977) – CCA – NCCA – WARC – WMC

Website: <http://nat.uca.org.au>

Periodicals: Six Synod newspapers

The Uniting Church is the third largest denomination in Australia, behind the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. According to census figures almost seven percent of the population claims an association with the Uniting Church – approximately 1,400,000 people – but the church itself has only 350,000 on its membership rolls. The Uniting Church was formed in 1977, bringing into one church the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches throughout Australia. Minorities of Congregationalists and Presbyterians stayed out of the union. The church has a strong ecumenical commitment, with national dialogues with nine other Australian churches. As declared by its name, it seeks close cooperation and further union with other churches. The closest relationships and greatest cooperation are with the Anglican and Lutheran churches and the Churches of Christ (Disciples).

While the origins of this church lie in Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, its present and future lie very much with Asia and the Pacific. The Uniting Church declared itself to be a multicultural church in 1985, and now includes in its membership over 150 congregations of Asian and Pacific migrants. This means that along with other communities, members of the UCA worship in more than 35 different languages (including indigenous languages). The UCA has formal partnership agreements with 32 churches in Asia and the Pacific, representing longstanding mission relationships and newer partnerships of solidarity and joint action.

Another initiative taken in the 1980s was the establishment of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, the semi-autonomous indigenous arm of the church. The Congress leads the church's ministry and mission with indigenous Australians, and is one of the largest indigenous organizations in the country.

The largest national agency of the church is Frontier Services, with its well-known network of patrol ministries (some undertaken by plane) and community services in the remote “outback” areas of Australia. Much of this work is done in cooperation with the Aboriginal Congress. These ministries receive government and public support and make the Uniting Church a most visible presence in the outback.

The church manages a huge national network of community services, collectively called UnitingCare. Its agencies are found in every corner of the country and provide employment for over 70,000 Australians.

The Uniting Church follows a largely Presbyterian polity, with local elders and church councils, 50 presbyteries, six synods and one national assembly. It is committed to the best of Christian scholarship, with six theological colleges and a distance education facility. The church has been instrumental in pioneering inter-faith relationships in Australia. In the early 1990s the church moved to a consensus form of decision-making in the councils of the church, a system which has been adapted since by several other denominations and ecumenical bodies.

The largest issue facing the Uniting Church is how to combat the increasing secularism of Australia and a continuing decline in church membership. Homosexuality has been a controversial issue within the church for more than 20 years and the church’s recent decision to leave decisions on suitability for ministry to local councils remains contentious. Other issues facing the church include ongoing tensions between the more liberal and the more evangelical streams within the church, difficult relationships with the conservative national government since 1996, maintaining connection between UnitingCare agencies and congregational life, the further development of inter-faith relationships, and reducing financial support for the ministries of synods and assembly.

BANGLADESH

Population : 152,592,662

Surface area: 1,44 million sq.km

Capital: Dakha

GNI per capita: 400 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Bangla, English

Religions: Muslim 86%; Hindu 12%; Christian 0,4 %; Buddhist 1%

Christianity: Catholics 276,844; Protestants 206,601; Independent 165,710

Bangladesh is one of the least developed and most densely populated countries in Asia. The country and the people have thousands of years of history behind them. Hindu and Buddhist traders originally settled the area. Islam arrived during the 13th century, and Bengal became part of the Moghul empire. Known as East Pakistan following the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, the country went through a succession of upheavals. The first, in 1952, was the struggle to retain and honour the mother tongue Bangla of the Bengalis. The outcome of this language movement established the ground for the struggle for independence, in 1964, 1969, and finally in 1971, when Bangladesh achieved its sovereignty after a bloody liberation war against Pakistan. Bangladesh is a low-lying country with an extensive network of rivers, which determine much of the socio-economic life of the nation. Each year about a third of the country is subject to major flooding, tropical storms, tidal waves, and cyclones. Islam became the state religion in 1988.

Christians form a tiny minority. Most of the churches belong to the evangelical family. Besides the National Council of Churches there is a National Christian Fellowship, affiliated with the WEA.

National Council of Churches – Bangladesh

Founded in 1949 as the East Pakistan Christian Council. It became the National Council of Churches – Bangladesh after the independence of the country in 1971.

Basis: The member churches hold the faith that the church ever held in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, in whom men and women are saved by grace through faith, in accordance with the revelation of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They accept the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation and as the ultimate standard of faith.

Member churches:

Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha
 Bangladesh Evangelical Holiness Church
 Bangladesh Methodist Church
 Bogra Christio Mondoli
Church of Bangladesh
 Church of Christ
 Church of God
 Gospel for Bangladesh Churches
 Hill Tracts Presbyterian Church
 United Church of Bangladesh

Associate member bodies:

Bangladesh Bible Society
 Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh
 Christian Medical Association Bangladesh
 Community Health Care Project
 Dishari Foundation
 Ecumenical Social Action Group

Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 17,196
 Regional Districts: 10
 Local churches: 329
 Pastors: 80
 Member of: WCC (1976) – CCA – NCCB – BWA – ABF

The Baptist Church Sangha is the oldest and largest Protestant denomination in Bangladesh. Its origins go back to the work started by Dr William Carey in 1796. Later, Baptist Missionary Societies from New Zealand and Australia began working in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). The church was one community until the separation of India and Pakistan in 1948. In 1971, with the creation of Bangladesh, it took the name Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha. Right from the start, the BBCS has been involved in spiritual and social development, through various programmes. The life and witness of the local churches is sustained by Sunday school, youth activities and women's programmes. Women are the most active members of the church. They organize activities in the cities and villages, like Bible study, prayer and singing, discussion of problems related to drug addic-

tion and HIV/AIDS, family relationships, etc. The Baptist theological academy trains pastors, deacons and lay leaders. It teaches the Baptist doctrine, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, pastors' character and calling. The BBCS does not have enough pastors to look after all the local churches. Therefore lay leaders, young people and women are encouraged to follow courses by theological extension education, under the supervision of the Bangladesh Christian College of Theology. Currently there are 259 students; four graduated in 2003 and work as pastors.

Evangelism is difficult in Bangladesh which is an Islamic country. However the BBCS has established 22 churches among the Santal tribal people and 17 among the Mru in the Bandarban Hills. People are very poor and illiterate, and are struggling to maintain their spiritual values. Proper values will help to develop the churches and the communities. The church is also participating in the hostel programme for students at college and university level. It is concerned with the opportunities of higher education for the poor. In the area of health care, the BBCS supports a wide range of activities, including a hospital, a leprosy hospital, four clinics and an educational programme. The church runs two high schools for girls and boys, a junior high school, 64 primary schools, a school for blind girls, two children's homes with schools, and four hostels.

Church of Bangladesh*

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 15,622

Parishes: 71

Bishops: 2

Pastors: 32

Member of: WCC (1975) – CCA – NCCB – ACC

Periodical: *Kapot* (bi-monthly, in Bangla) *Janasuna* (monthly, in Bangla)

The church grew out of the work started in the late 19th century by the Church Missionary Society, the Oxford Mission to Calcutta and the English Presbyterian Society. The Anglican Church in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was under the Diocese of Calcutta until 1951, when the Diocese of Dhaka became part of the Anglican Church in Pakistan. Under the Church Union plan of 1965 the Church of Pakistan was created (1970). When Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971 the Dhaka Diocese became an autonomous church under the name Church of Bangladesh, bringing together the Anglican and Presbyterian churches. In the late 1980s a second diocese was created, which completed the status of the Church of Bangladesh as a national and united church in conformity with the Church Union plan.

The church understands its mission as proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, responding to human needs, striving to build a more just society and preserving the integrity of God's creation. In the aftermath of the war for independence which caused enormous damage to the country and the people, and while the nation was just starting its recovery process, the newly emerged leadership of the Church of Bangladesh had to face these realities and give shape to the solidarity and the participation of the church in the reconstruction of the country, according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a result the church started its social development service alongside the process of deepening its spiritual ministry. Relationships of cooperation were established with new partners in Europe and North America as well as in Asia. The work went beyond the church's own constituency to all people in need and became registered with the government as a separate entity. Today the Church of Bangladesh Social Development Pro-

gramme (CBSDP) operates projects in different regions of the country, along with relief and rehabilitation activities. All the projects are situated in the rural areas and the activities are being implemented among the poorest sectors in the community, irrespective of religion, caste, etc.

The different institutions of the Church of Bangladesh include two hospitals, ten clinics, four nursery and forty-four primary schools, three junior and four senior high schools, two trade schools and a craft centre for girls. The clergy is trained at St Andrew's Theological College and the church has also a retreat centre.

CAMBODIA

Kampuchea Christian Council

Founded in 1998.

Mission statement: The Kampuchea Christian Council aims at developing fellowship and unity among Christians in Cambodia and carrying out God's mission, to produce responsible and empowered churches that will pursue abundant and meaningful life for all.

Member bodies:

- Cambodian Baptist Convention
- Cambodian Church of Christ
- Cambodian Methodist Church
- Evangelical Churches
- French Methodist Church in Cambodia
- Kampuchea Independent Churches
- Cambodian Christian Youth Desk
- Cambodian Christian Women's Desk

CHINA (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF)

Population: 1,306,691,689

Surface area: 9,6 million sq.km

Capital: Beijing

GNI per capita: 1,100 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Mandarin, Cantonese

Religions: Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism
are the officially recognized religions

Christianity: Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox

China traces its roots as a political and cultural entity back to around 2000 BCE. From the 14th to the 17th century, it was the most advanced civilization on earth. Colonial and civil wars weakened China during the 19th century. In 1911, nationalists instituted the republic. In 1949, communist forces defeated the nationalists and established the People's Republic of China. Today, China is rapidly developing as a regional power in Asia, and an emerging power on the world scene. The traditional religions of China are Taoism and Buddhism. Christianity has long been a foreign religion with few followers. Under communist rule China became officially an atheist country. As of 1979, churches and other religious groups were

gradually given more space. Delegations of the Protestant churches travelled abroad to re-establish contact with ecumenical partners. In 1948, four Chinese churches were among the founding members of the WCC. They withdrew at the time of the Korean war. Membership was resumed in 1991, by the China Christian Council. Christianity has grown and continues to grow, as do other religions, e.g. Buddhism. Estimates vary widely, from about 22 million Christians (Protestants and Catholics) to over 100 million (i.e. from 1.5 percent to 8.5 percent). The latter would include over 40 million charismatics in house churches, 14 million in unregistered house churches, five million “New Birth” movement, etc. (World Christian Database, 2005); the WCD estimate of Three-Self Christians matches the figure of 16 million of the China Christian Council. Chinese research institutions put the total number at about 65 million. There is a small minority of about 60,000 Chinese Orthodox Christians.

China Christian Council

Church Family: Post-denominational

Membership: 16,000,000

Congregations: 55,000

Provincial Councils: 29

Pastors, Elders and Preachers: 27,000

Member of: WCC (1991)

Periodical: *Tian Feng* (Heaven’s Wind, monthly in Chinese)

According to the Nestorian Tablet unearthed in Xi’an, as early as 636 AD the Christian gospel entered China from Persia. However, because Christianity did not become firmly rooted in the soil of Chinese society and culture, it did not come to be widespread in China, and even came close to vanishing at times. In the 19th century Protestant Christianity entered China from the West, but mission activities were protected by unequal treaties and the churches were controlled by foreign missions. As a result, Christianity was generally looked down upon by Chinese people as a foreign religion. In 1949 there were only approximately 700,000 Protestant Christians in China. In 1950, Chinese Protestant Christians initiated the Three-Self Movement, and through the principles of self-governance, self-support and self-propagation, Chinese Christians set out on an independent road to building the church. During the cultural revolution, from 1966 to 1976, churches were closed. However, churches began to re-open in 1979, and in 1980 the China Christian Council (CCC) was established.

The churches in China have now entered a post-denominational period. Within the CCC, institutional protestant denominations no longer exist and believers worship together. Differences in theological or liturgical background are dealt with according to the principle of mutual respect. Pastoral work of the Chinese churches has been expanded during the last twenty-five years. More than 55,000 churches and meeting places have been opened, 70 percent of which are newly built. Of the more than 16 million Protestant Christians 70 percent live in the rural areas. Lay training, theological formation and Bible distribution are among the top priorities of the CCC. From 1980 to 2004, 36 million Bibles were printed in China. Social service has developed in recent years. There are currently 18 theological seminaries and Bible schools and some other lay training centres throughout China. The theological institution at the national level, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, grants M.Th. and M.Div. degrees.

Since the China Christian Council was founded, it works closely together with the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) to achieve the full programme of the ministries of Chinese Christianity. Both of them serve to strengthen contacts with provincial, autonomous regional and directly-administered municipal Christian councils (or church councils)/TSPM, through channels of communication, exchange of experience, study and consultation on issues common to its counterparts at these levels.

CCC/TSPM is advocating theological reconstruction in the Chinese church to build up theological thinking that is biblically grounded, rooted in Chinese culture, that encapsulates the special experience of the Chinese church, and is able to provide a sound explanation of Christian faith in the modern Chinese contexts. CCC/TSPM has eight commissions (Church Regulations, Theological Education, Bible Publication, Christian Publication, Tian Feng Editorial, Sacred Music, Women's Ministry, Rural Church Ministry) and eight departments (Training, Publication, Tian Feng Editorial, Research, Social Service, Overseas Relations, Administrative Office and Nanjing Office). In addition, CCC/TSPM has an advisory committee.

CHINA (HONG KONG SAR)

Population : 6,800,000

Surface area: 1,092 sq.km

GNI per capita: 25,860 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Mandarin, Cantonese, English

Religions: Buddhist 66%; Christian 10%; Muslim 2%

Christianity: Catholics 300,000; Protestants 300,000; Anglicans 31,000

Hong Kong was a British protectorate from 1841 when it was ceded to the United Kingdom by China. In 1997, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories on the mainland were returned to Chinese sovereignty, and became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. In this agreement, China promised that, under its "one country, two systems" formula, Hong Kong will enjoy a high degree of autonomy in all matters except foreign and defence affairs for a period of 50 years. Hong Kong has a thriving economy, based on international trade. It contributes to, and benefits from China's rapidly developing economy. The churches are a minority, but very active in social work and evangelism. Many churches and Christian organizations have significant links with partner churches and agencies in mainland China. There has been renewed commitment to the issue of poverty and the area of education in Hong Kong. About half of the Protestant churches belong to the Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Holiness traditions. For several years now there has been a Metropolitanate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Eastern Orthodox) in Hong Kong, which covers South East Asia. As an international city, Hong Kong has also many foreign language congregations. The Hong Kong Christian Council is the ecumenical body.

***Hong Kong Christian Council**

Founded in 1954.

Mission statement: To develop fellowship and promote joint projects and activities amongst the various churches and Christian organizations in Hong Kong in order to strengthen their missionary work; to serve as an organization amongst the churches and Christian organizations for the exchange and reconciliation of views on matters of common interest; to be the symbol of Christian unity and continue to promote the ecumenical movement and activities; to show concern and express opinions on issues affecting the religious, moral, economic and social life of the community; to liaise with other regional and world ecumenical bodies.

Member churches:

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong
 Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation
 Hong Kong Anglican Church
Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
 Hong Kong Japanese Christian Fellowship
 Kowloon Union Church
 Methodist Church, Hong Kong
 Methodist Church (English-speaking)
Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia
 Salvation Army
 Tsung Tsin Mission, Hong Kong
 Union Church Hong Kong

Member organizations:

Chinese Christian Literature Council
 Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong
 Christian Action
 Hong Kong Bible Society
 Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service
 Hong Kong YWCA
 Lutheran Theological Seminary
 YMCA of Hong Kong

Related organizations

Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital
 Christian Family Service Centre
 Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee
 Hong Kong Christian Service
 Nethersole School of Nursing
 Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital
 United Christian Medical Service

Website: www.hkcc.org.hk

Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 30,000

Congregations: 62

Pastors: 62

Preachers: 93

Member of : WCC (1967) – CCA – HKCC – WARC – WMC – CWM

Periodical: *Hui Sheng* (monthly, in Chinese)

Website: <http://hkcccc.org>

The history of the Church of Christ in China can be traced back to 1918 when a group of church leaders in China thought it necessary for the churches to become united and to form an indigenous church organization. The church consists of a national assembly, synods, district associations and local churches. The Hong Kong Council used to be under the jurisdiction of the Sixth District Association of Guangdong Synod. It was re-named the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China in 1953. Members of the council essentially include those churches, institutions and schools that were originally members of the Sixth District Association located in Hong Kong and Macau. The council became a self-supporting organization in 1974 and proclaimed as a “Three-Self” church in 1980. Its congregations are found in Hong Kong and Macao.

The HKCCCC is a uniting church consisting mainly of churches with Congregational and Presbyterian traditions. It emphasizes the universality and unity of the church, and focuses on sharing, witnessing and service. Following the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit, the HKCCCC embraces partnership in mission, joint action for mission, and sharing for mission, which show the council's willingness to share its human-power, financial resources, and vision with member churches to achieve its objectives of mission and service. The council periodically offers training sessions, retreats, conferences, meditations, seminars, etc., to its young ministers, newly ordained elders and deacons and laypersons. It also supports theological education and places great emphasis on quality of ministries.

The council operates 26 secondary schools, three evening schools, 29 primary schools and four nursery schools. Member churches also sponsor one secondary school, five primary schools, and 22 nursery schools. There are a total of some 2,900 teachers and 53,000 students. It also runs three nurseries and two family support service centres. It has also been providing supervision and supporting services to social workers in the schools sponsored by the council. Some member churches also operate nurseries, and centres for youth and the elderly. The council also provides other supporting services such as the publication of *Hui Sheng*, a monthly journal for internal communication, and the establishment of a webpage. It also sponsors research, and manages homes for retired pastors and women preachers.

The council works ecumenically with local churches and church organizations. In addition, it cooperates with both overseas churches and churches in China. There are frequent exchanges and visits with the churches in China.

TAIWAN

Population: 23,235,000

Surface area: 35,980 sq.km

Capital: Taipei

GDP per capita: 25,300 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Mandarin, Taiwanese, English

Religions: Chinese folk religion 51%; Buddhist 21%; Taoist 10%; Christian 6%

Christianity: Catholics 301,000; Protestants 446,610; Independent 422,831

Taiwan is formed by one large and several small islands off the coast of China. From the 16th through the 19th century, it was part of China, and from 1895 through 1945 it was a colony of Japan called Formosa. It reverted to China after World War II. Following the communist victory on mainland China in 1949, some

two million Nationalist Party Chinese fled to Taiwan and declared a government for all of China based on the constitution of 1946. Since then, the dominant political issue is the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China. The two sides agree that Taiwan is part of China, but disagree on the terms of an – eventual – reunification. A minority movement pleads for independence. In 2000, Taiwan underwent its first peaceful transfer of power from the Nationalist to the Democratic Progressive Party. It has become one of the leading economies of Asia, and economic and cultural relationships with the mainland are growing rapidly. Christianity came to the island in the 17th century but only developed significantly in the 19th and 20th centuries. Taiwan has an indigenous population which is heavily Christian. Besides the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church, other large churches are the Little Flock (Evangelical) and the True Jesus Church (Pentecostal). In recent years, other Pentecostal and Charismatic groups have established themselves. The Catholic Church is a member of the national council of churches.

National Council of Churches of Taiwan

Founded in 1991 (forerunner: the Ecumenical Cooperative Committee of Taiwan, formed in 1966, which replaced the Ecumenical Consultative Committee of Taiwan, created in 1963).

Mission statement: The purpose of the Council is to attain unity in Christ, through strengthening the relationship of churches, promoting cooperation in various services, undertaking social welfare, charitable works, and educational matters, proclaiming the Christian message, and participating in the common mission of the church to the world.

Member churches:

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
Taiwan Episcopal Church
Methodist Church in the Republic of China
Taiwan Lutheran Church
Chinese Regional Bishops Conference

Member organizations:

Bible Society in Taiwan
Christian Audio Visual Association Republic of China
Mackay Memorial Hospital
Tainan Theological College & Seminary
Taipei Christian Academy
Taiwan Christian Service
Taiwan Theological College & Seminary
The Garden of Hope Foundation
World Vision
Young Women's Christian Association of Taiwan
Young Men's Christian Association of Taiwan

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Church Family: Reformed
Membership: 217,612
Congregations: 1,219
Pastors: 967 men, 238 women
Member of: WCC (1951) – CCA – NCCT – WARC – NEAAC – CWM
Periodicals: *Taiwan Church News* (Chinese) *Lu-Soan* (women's magazine, Chinese) *New Messenger* (youth magazine, Chinese)
Website: www.pct.org.tw

The church began in 1865 with the work of English Presbyterian missionaries in the south of the island and Canadian Presbyterian missionaries in the north (1872). After the Japanese occupation in 1895, mission bodies were refused entry into the country. This resulted in the development of a single Protestant church, without the complications of denominational diversity. In the late 1930s English and Canadian missionaries withdrew from Taiwan because of the increasing militarism of Japan but they returned after World War II. After the Communist takeover of China in 1949, many Christians fled to Taiwan and a large number of missionaries were redeployed to work there as other mission boards were now allowed to enter. In 1951 the synods of the north and the south came together in one general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Whereas during the early post-war years the church was preoccupied with issues of survival and recovery, the years 1955-65 were characterized by rapid growth. The church doubled its membership and the number of local congregations. After its centennial in 1965 the church carried out three five-year programmes. In 1978 it launched the Ten Plus One Movement, focused on evangelism and witness. Although its numerical goal was not reached, some 80 new churches were added while membership increased by about 40,000. In 1990 the PCT joined an inter-church "Year 2000 Gospel Movement" which was later followed by the PCT's own "21st century New Taiwan Mission Movement". The theme of this movement is "to actualize the kingdom of God through building *koinonia*".

The Presbyterian Church has maintained a strong sense of social concern for the people in Taiwan and for the future of the nation. It has sought to uphold human rights and to stress the meaning and value of human life in the midst of rapid social change. In the 1970s PCT issued three significant public statements, which led to the arrest and imprisonment of church leaders including the then general secretary of the church. Again in the early 1990s other statements followed. The church has made significant contributions to Taiwanese society. Through preaching, healing, and other forms of ministry it continues to work towards indigenization of the faith and to make it a part of the life of the common person. Among its major programmes and activities are: lay training and theological programmes, senior citizens' university, Christian literature programmes, spiritual formation and discipleship seminars, medical ministries, women's ministry, youth ministry, campus ministry among students, crisis and family counselling, and community development especially among indigenous people. It also expresses its social concern through its various social service agencies and in its response to natural disasters (earthquakes, typhoons) both in Taiwan and overseas. The PCT has three theological seminaries, one Bible college, two universities, three high schools, three hospitals, and a nursing school.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan maintains fraternal church relationships with over thirty churches in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and North America, and Pacific.

INDIA

Population: 1,096,917,184

Surface area: 3.3 million sq.km

Capital: New Delhi

GNI per capita: 540 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Hindi, English, and 14 other official languages

Religions: Hindu 75%; Muslim 12%; Christian 3 to 6%; Sikh 2%; Buddhist 1%

Christianity: Catholics 18,250,000; Protestants 19,564,440;

Orthodox 3,333,000; Independent 15,263,580

India's first civilization along the Indus valley goes back to 2500 BC. Aryan tribes invaded the region about 1500 BC and introduced the Vedic religion, which was the foundation of Brahminism and the caste system. Christianity was introduced in 52 AD by the Apostle St Thomas. Muslim influence began in the 10th century. In the 16th century, Muslim invaders from the north established the Moghul empire. European presence in India began with the Portuguese in 1498. In the 19th century Britain assumed political control of India. Nationalism found its expression in Gandhi's movement of non-violent civil disobedience. The independence movement was dominated by the Hindus. A Muslim league demanded a separate Muslim state. At independence in 1947, the sub-continent was partitioned between a Hindu majority India and a Muslim majority Pakistan. India's economy ranges from traditional farming to modern industries and high technology. The country is rapidly becoming a regional and global power, but is still facing dire poverty of over one third of its population. The caste system still exists and discriminates millions of Dalits. Christians are a minority. Estimates vary from 3 to 6 percent. The three major groups of churches are those belonging to the National Council of Churches, the Catholic Church, and the churches and groups represented in the Evangelical Fellowship of India (affiliated with WEA). In recent years, these three groups have been working together more closely. Pentecostals, who form about 6 percent of the total number of Christians, are not part of any of these three groups.

***National Council of Churches in India**

Founded in 1921 as the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon, which became the National Council of Churches in India in 1979 (forerunner: the National Missionary Council of India, formed in 1912).

Basis: Full membership is open to churches and regional Christian councils which are in sympathy with and subscribe to the objectives of the National Council of Churches in India.

Member churches:

Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church

Arcot Lutheran Church

Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention

Chaldean Syrian Church of the East

Church of North India

Church of South India

Convention of Baptist Churches of the Northern Circars

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India

Council of Baptist Churches of Northern India

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh

Good Samaritan Evangelical Lutheran Church
Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur
 Hindustani Covenant Church
India Evangelical Lutheran Church
Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Malabar Independent Syrian Church
 Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Mar Thoma Syrian Church
 Mennonite Brethren Church
 Mennonite Church in India
Methodist Church in India
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Presbyterian Church of India
 Salvation Army
Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches
South Andhra Lutheran Church
Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church
 The National Organization of the New Apostolic Church

Regional councils:

Andhra Pradesh Council of Churches
 Bengal Christian Council
 Bihar Council of Churches
 Chhattisgarh Christian Council
 Gujarat Council of Churches
 Karnataka Christian Council
 Kerala Council of Churches
 Madhya Pradesh Christian Council
 Maharashtra Council of Churches
 North East India Christian Council
 North West India Frontier Christian Council
 North West India Christian Council
 Santalia Council of Churches
 Tamil Nadu Christian Council
 Utkal Christian Council
 Uttar Pradesh Council of Churches

All India Christian Organizations:

All India Association for Christian Higher Education
 Association of Theologically Trained Women of India
 Bible Society of India
 Christian Association for Radio and Audio Visual Services
 Christian Union of India
 Ecumenical Council for Drought Action and Water Management
 Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
 Inter-Church Service Association
 Leprosy Mission
 Lott Carey Baptist Mission in India
 National Council of YMCAs of India
 National Missionary Society of India
 Student Christian Movement of India
United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India
 Young Women's Christian Association of India

Related Agencies:

All India Sunday School Association
 Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society
 Christian Literature Society
 Christian Medical Association of India

Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
Ecumenical Church Loan Fund – India
Henry Martyn Institute

Website: www.nccindia.org

The National Council of Churches in India is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention*

Church Family: Baptist
Membership: 9,500
Local churches: 170
Pastors: i.n.a.*
Member of: WCC(1965) – NCCI – BWA – ABF

The church grew out of the missionary work of Free Will Baptists in this part of India, which started in 1836. In 1911 the Free Will Baptists handed the work over to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

The status of this member church is being clarified. No updated information is available. The numbers of membership and local churches are taken from the World Christian Encyclopedia and date from 1995.

* information not available

Church of North India

Church Family: United and Uniting
Membership: 1,500,000
Dioceses: 26
Congregations: 3,500
Pastors: 1,200
Member of: WCC (1948/1972) – CCA – NCCI – ACC – WARC – CWM – DECC
Periodical: *The North India Church Review* (monthly, in English)

The Church of North India is a united expression of the unity of the church in India. After 40 years of prayer and negotiations it came into existence in 1970. Six churches formed the CNI: the Council of Baptist Churches in Northern India, the Church of the Brethren, the Disciples of Christ, the Church of India (Anglican, formerly known as the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon), the Methodist Church (British and Australasian Conferences) and the United Church of Northern India. The Church of North India as a United and Uniting church is committed to announcing the good news of the reign of God inaugurated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in proclamation, and to demonstrate in action the integrity of God's creation through continuous struggle against the demonic powers, by breaking down the barriers of caste, class, gender, economic inequality and exploitation of nature (mission statement). The motto of the church is: Unity – Witness – Service.

Geographically the CNI covers the whole of India except for the four southern states, i.e. about two thirds of the entire country. It is spread over varied areas, ranging from hills to deserts and to coastal regions, covering both rural as well as urban populations. The church brings together people of diverse cultures, traditions and life-styles, journeying with them in their struggles and their joys. The priorities of the CNI for the first decade of the 21st century are: rejuvenating

pastoral ministry; evangelism within and outside the church for costly discipleship; ministry of service; solidarity with the marginalized; formation of healing communities; equipping God's people for participatory learning; re-structuring its internal organization. The church has two boards to facilitate health and development work in the dioceses. It has a programme office that works with all the dioceses to facilitate the implementation of their six-yearly "Ministry Plans", linking up the concerns of the dioceses with the seven desks of the programme office: children, women and gender, youth, peace and interfaith concerns, marginalized, local congregational concerns and human resources development.

Church of South India

Church Family: United and Uniting
 Membership: 3,500,000
 Dioceses: 22
 Congregations: 8,715
 Bishops: 22
 Priests: 1214
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCI – ACC – WARC
 Periodical: *CSI Life* (monthly, in English)

The Church of South India was inaugurated in 1947, after thirty years of union negotiations between the South India United Church – the combined body of Presbyterians and Congregationalists – the Anglican dioceses in South India and the South Indian districts of the Methodist Church. Out of the 22 dioceses of the CSI one is in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The basis of the constitution is the Lambeth Quadrilateral, the historical episcopate being accepted in a constitutional form. From the beginning all ordinations have been by bishops. The mission statement of the CSI is "The Church of South India affirms that the church is the servant of God to carry on the mission rooted in Jesus Christ and based on the scriptures. The church through her mission, expresses solidarity with the broken communities for a new hope to face the challenges of life. The cross continues to be the sign of hope for the witnessing church, which strives towards unity, peace and reconciliation as a vibrant channel of God".

Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference of 1968 and the Anglican Consultative Council of 1971 advised Anglican churches and provinces to re-examine their relation to the CSI with a view to entering into full communion with that church. More recently the CSI, the Church of North India and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar have formed the Communion of Churches in India (2003), as a further step towards unity.

Primary concerns of the CSI are evangelism and social justice. Major programmes and activities of the CSI are: evangelism, stewardship, healing and educational ministries, technical and vocational training, rural and urban development, Christian nurture of the congregation, theological education and training of pastors.

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

Church Family: Orthodox (Oriental)
 Membership: 2,000,000*
 Dioceses: 23
 Congregations: 1,600
 Bishops: 25
 Priests: 1,500

Deacons: 42

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCI

Periodical: *Malankara Sabha* (monthly) and *Orthodox Youth* (biweekly, both in Malayalam)

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church traces its origins back to the work of the Apostle St Thomas in the south-west region of India (Malankara or Malabar, in modern Kerala). According to the tradition, St Thomas arrived in 52 AD and during a twenty year stay converted several Brahmin families to faith in Christ and established seven centres of worship. From the 3rd century onwards, Kerala Christians had spiritual and trade relations with churches in the Persian empire. The Indian Church of the Apostle Thomas was deeply rooted in the social and cultural traditions of the country and maintained its apostolic traditions and administrative freedom. The arrival of the Portuguese in Kerala in 1498 inaugurated the colonial period. The Portuguese Catholic missionaries began to exercise control over the ancient Indian church and latinized it by force. In 1653 in a historic and dramatic protest at the “Bent Cross” in Cochin, the church pledged against Portuguese and Roman Catholic authority and declared its freedom. Indian Christians were persecuted by the colonial authorities who succeeded in dividing the church. One group turned to Roman Catholic allegiance. In the 19th century British missionaries also did “mission” in the Indian Church, which led to the creation of the reformed Mar Thoma Church.

During the Portuguese persecution, the Indians who wanted to maintain their eastern and apostolic traditions appealed to several Oriental churches. Thus started the connection with the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, in 1665. It was a spiritual connection between sister churches at first, but gradually Syrian Patriarchs of Antioch began to exercise control and claim jurisdiction over the Indian church. Again the Indian Christians protested against foreign domination. Thus, in 1912, as a symbol of freedom, autocephaly and apostolic identity, the Catholicosate was established and an Indian Orthodox metropolitan was elected as the head (Catholicos) of the Malankara Church. A group continued to maintain allegiance to the patriarchal claims and therefore litigation in courts occurred. In 1958 the Supreme Court declared its final verdict recognizing the Indian Catholicos as the rightful head of the church, and validating his legal rights as well as the constitution of the church. However, some of the old patriarchal loyalists continued to create division, though the church seeks reconciliation and peace.

The MOSC, sharing the nation’s history for 20 centuries, is fully integrated in the socio-cultural setting of India. Contributing to the field of education and health care, the church runs reputed medical and engineering schools in addition to hundreds of schools and technical institutes. It has two major seminaries with faculties at university level and has a 200-year old well-known lay theological education programme. The theological seminary in Kottayam runs a liturgical music school and other programmes in addition to its graduate and post-graduate courses in theology. The church has very active student and youth organizations. With a national mission board, the MOSC is very active in missionary and social witness, running homes for orphans, leprosy and HIV/AIDS patients, and bringing relief to victims of natural catastrophes.

Member of regional and local ecumenical bodies, the MOSC has always been very supportive of ecumenical initiatives. The church maintains official dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church. Through the Oriental Orthodox family, it is in dialogue with other church bodies also.

*Of which 100,000 in North America.

Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar

Church Family: Mar Thoma
 Membership: 1,061,940*
 Parishes: 1075
 Dioceses: 11
 Bishops: 10
 Priests: 755
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCI
 Periodical: *Malankara Sabha Tharaka* (in Malayalam)

Until the 19th century the history of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar coincided with the history of the Syrian Church in the southern part of India, which goes back to the beginning of Christianity. According to the tradition the Apostle St Thomas came to India in 52 AD and founded the church. At the beginning of the 17th century, when the Portuguese established their power on the west coast of India, they forced the church they found there to accept the jurisdiction of the pope in Rome. But in 1653 the church declared itself independent again. In the following period close links developed with the Church of Antioch. This explains the reference to “Syrian” in the names of several churches in India, especially in the state of Kerala, which trace their history back to these common roots.

At the beginning of the 19th century the Syrian church came into contact with British missionaries, who established educational institutions and assisted the church with theological formation. The Bible was translated into the local language, Malayalam, in 1828. In 1836 a group of committed Christians initiated a movement of reformation in the church. They insisted on re-ordering its life and practice in the light of the scriptures. The reformed section of the church became known as the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar or simply the Mar Thoma Church. Institutions such as the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association (1888) and the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary (1927) were created and continue to promote evangelical and ecumenical vision and commitment.

While retaining many of the traditional characteristics of the ancient Eastern church, the Mar Thoma Church keeps very close relations with Christian churches in other parts of the world. It is in full communion with the churches of the Anglican Communion and maintains special relations with the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican churches in Australia and Canada, as well as with the Uniting Church in Australia. In India, the Joint Council of the Church of North India, the Church of South India and the Mar Thoma Church have declared themselves as the Communion of Churches in India (2003) as a further step towards visible unity. The Mar Thoma Church is fully involved in the ecumenical movement and stands for active cooperation with other churches, as for example in the Nilackal Ecumenical Trust in Kerala.

Awake to missionary responsibility, the Mar Thoma Church is engaged in evangelism, education, technical training and medical work. It participates actively in the society. Its members form one of the most literate communities in the country and contribute to the social and cultural advancement of the nation. The church maintains good relations with Hindus, Muslims and other religious groups. Issues like poverty, unemployment, injustice and violence have been taken up seriously for study and action. The church has a particular concern for the Dalits and other marginalized groups and is working for their empowerment. It runs orphanages, homes for the destitute and hospices and schools for physically and mentally handicapped persons as well as for the blind and the deaf. New ventures are palliative and pain care, care for senior citizens, tribal children, drug

addicts and programmes dealing with HIV/AIDS. These programmes are mainly supported by resources coming from the members of the church.

***Distribution:**

India: 963,470
 Asia (outside India): 25,000
 Europe: 1,300
 Middle East: 38,800
 North America: 33,370

Methodist Church in India

Church Family: Methodist
 Membership: 648,000
 Regional Conferences: 12
 Congregations: 2,460
 Pastors: 2,156
 Deaconesses: 168
 Member of: WCC (1982) – CCA – NCCI – WMC

In 1856, the Methodist Episcopal Church from America started mission work in India. Methodist churches were established in cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and other places throughout the country. The year 1870 marked the beginning of a new era. Special revival meetings were held which led the church out of its boundaries and gave it a national status. That same year educational and medical work was started among women and girls. Evangelistic work in the villages of northern India resulted in the baptism of large numbers of people from among the deprived classes. Thus began the mass movement work, which has brought several hundreds of thousands of converts into the Methodist Church in the rural areas. In 1920 the Methodist Missionary Society was organized to supervise the missionary work in India. In 1930 the Central Conference of Southern Asia elected the first national bishop. Since the independence of India in 1947 all bishops have been Indian nationals. Missionaries were sent to Borneo in 1956 and to the Fiji islands in 1963.

Since 1928, the MCI was engaged in union negotiations in North India. In 1970 the Central Conference voted against the plan of union, but dialogue with the Church of North India has been continued. In 1981 the Methodist Church in India was established as an “autonomous affiliated” church in relation with the United Methodist Church. This ushered in a new era for Indian Methodism. The church is now independent in its life and organization and has adopted its own constitution and Book of Discipline and Articles of Faith. The Methodist Church in India understands itself as the body of Christ in and for the world as part of the church universal. Its purpose is to understand the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, to bear witness of this love to all people and to make them his disciples.

The MCI runs 102 day boarding schools and 155 village schools in which over 60,000 children are enrolled; 89 residential hostels provide Christian care for 6,540 boys and girls. The church also operates 19 colleges and vocational training institutions, 25 hospitals and health care centres, and many community welfare and development programmes in the country.

Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches

Church Family: Baptist

Local Churches: 1,214

Membership: 844,150

Regions: 5

Pastors: 617

Member of: WCC (1965) – CCA – NCCI – BWA – ABF

The Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches is a registered organization consisting of 1,214 independent Baptist churches. American Baptists started missionary work in South India among Telugu-speaking people in 1836. In 1887 the existing churches were organized into the Convention of Telugu Baptist Churches. In 1962 the convention became the Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches, with a unanimously adopted constitution. It was registered in 1963. From then on the support of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, which changed its name to Baptist International Ministries (BIM), was channeled to the Samavesam through the Inter-Church Service Association in Chennai. The properties were also transferred to the Association of Baptist Churches. Afterwards all the American missionaries left India and the leadership of the STBC was entrusted to the national officers. The STBC is self-supporting financially. Only the Andhra Christian Theological College in Hyderabad continues to receive assistance from the BIM, as it is an interdenominational institution.

Evangelism and the development of Christianity in Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu States are at the heart of the STBC. It runs educational institutions, hospitals, health centres and one theological seminary, in Ramapatnam. There are five degree colleges, eight junior colleges, 14 high schools and 14 primary schools. The interdenominational theological college at Hyderabad is affiliated with the Serampore University, Kolkata. The STBC has 4,500 Sunday schools with an enrolment of some 72,000 children.

The STBC strongly favours interdenominational cooperation through the Andhra Pradesh Council of Churches and the NCCI. It participates actively in the programme of retreat and training centres of the AP Council of Churches, for the training of voluntary church workers. It is involved in the work of the Henry Martin Institute of Islamic Studies in Jabalpur and the Christian Medical College in Vellore. It supports the Student Christian Movement and the United Mission Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Arogyavaram.

United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 1,500,000

Congregations: 3,000

Pastors: 1,291

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCI – LWF

Periodical: *Indian Lutheran* (in English)

Nearly three out of ten of Asia's Lutherans live in India, where Protestant missions began work in 1706. India's Lutheran churches, established by German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and American mission societies and boards, extend from the far north/north east to the southern tip along the eastern part of India. In 1853 the first Evangelical Lutheran synod was held at Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. In 1905 a Lutheran general conference was held in Kodaikanal with

representatives from five missions. In 1926 the constitution of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India was presented. The common liturgy was approved in 1935. In 1947, a convention at Ranchi proposed the formation of a United Lutheran Church in India. Lutheranism found new meaning by changing the constitution of the FELCI so that it became the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India in 1975. In 1998 the name was changed to United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India.

The following eleven churches belong to UELCI:

- Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Arcot Lutheran Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in The Himalayan States
- Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Good Samaritan Evangelical Lutheran Church
- India Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
- South Andhra Lutheran Church
- Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Through the UELCI the eleven member churches participate collectively in the WCC and the CCA, but they are individual members of the LWE.

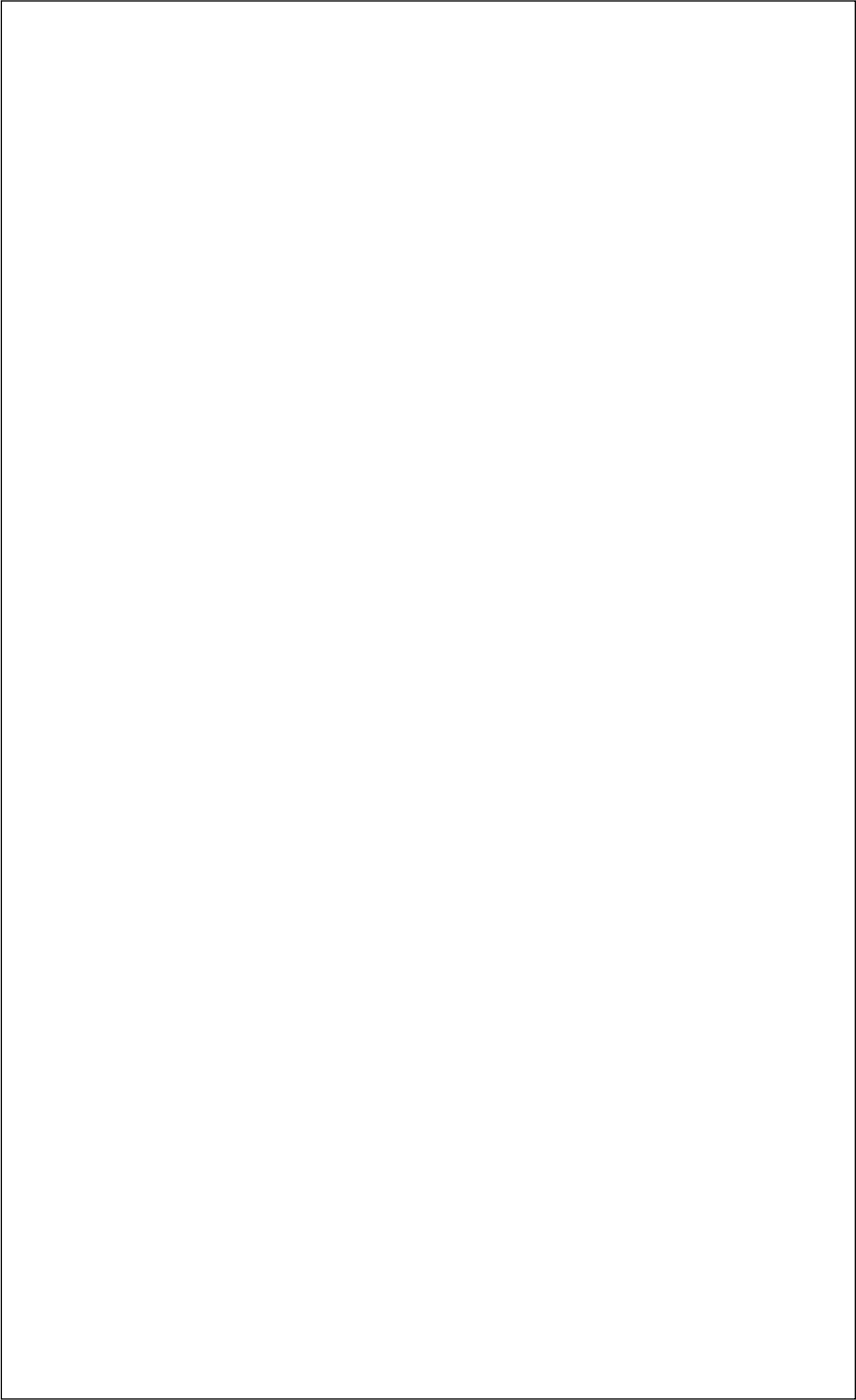
Lutherans in India have been pioneers in composing indigenous lyrics to Indian tunes. Primary concerns of the churches include developing programmes sponsored by the Division of social action; awareness-building on the need to fight poverty, hunger and unemployment; self-reliance in matters of theology, publications and finance; effective participation in the Indian ecumenical movement; global partnership as a task of each Christian community; and improvement of the training of ministers at Gurukul Theological College and Research Institute, Dalit movement, gender justice, HIV/AIDS, water, disaster relief, etc.

The UELCI maintains close relations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, the ELM, Gossner Mission, the Danish Missionary Society, the Church of Sweden Mission, Norwegian Church Aid, and Danmission.

INDONESIA

- Population: 225,313,495
- Surface area: 1,9 million sq.km
- Capital: Jakarta
- GNI per capita: 810 US\$
- Classification: Developing economy
- Languages: Indonesian
- Religions: Muslim 80%; Christian 13%; Hindu 3%; Buddhist 1%
- Christianity: Protestants 14,216,100; Catholics 7,000,000;
- Independent 7,380,700

The Indonesian archipelago has been an area of migration for thousands of years. Successive movements of people brought Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam to the region. From the 17th through the mid-20th century the Dutch colonized Indonesia. During World War II it was occupied by Japan. In 1945, Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno declared independence, which was recognized by the



Netherlands in 1949, after three years of unavailing military action against the liberation forces. Sukarno unified the country by introducing one language, and 'Pancasila' (the five pillars: belief in one God, humanism, national unity, democracy, and social justice). One of the challenges of Indonesia is the balance between a unitarian state and regional autonomy, e.g. in Aceh, North Sumatra, and Tanah Papua, in the eastern part of the archipelago. Christianity in Indonesia is comprised of two religions: Protestantism and Catholicism. Protestant churches are numerous, because many are ethnic and cover an island or part of it, or an island group. The ecumenical Communion of Churches, which aims at forming one church, has over 80 member churches. The Pentecostals and the Evangelicals have each their own group, and there is overlap, and cooperation, between the three. Indonesia is the largest Muslim nation in the world. It has a tradition of tolerance, but since 1998 there has been an upsurge of Islamic extremism, resulting in violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians that have disrupted communities in Java, the Moluccas and Central Sulawesi. Many people have been killed and properties destroyed. Communal peace has become a high priority for the Christians.

***Communion of Churches in Indonesia**

Founded in 1950.

Basis: The Communion of Churches in Indonesia confesses that Jesus Christ is God and Saviour of the world, head of the church and source of truth and life, who gathers and nurtures the churches according to God's word in the Bible, namely the Old Testament and the New Testament: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11, comp. Math. 16:16-18; Eph. 4:15 and Deut. 7:6).

Objective: The aim of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia is to realize the United Christian Church in Indonesia.

Member churches:

- Abdiel Christian Church
- Alliance Bible Church (GKKA)
- Assembly of Fellowship in Jesus (AFY)
- Batak Christian Community Church (GPKB)*
- Batak Mission Church (GMB)
- Bethel Church in Indonesia (GBI)
- Christian Church in Central Sulawesi (GKST)*
- Christian Church in East Timor (GKTT)
- Christian Church in Indonesia (GKI)*
- Christian Church in Indonesia (HKI)*
- Christian Church in Luwuk Banggai (GKLB)*
- Christian Church in North-East Java (GKJTU)
- Christian Church in South Sulawesi (GKSS)
- Christian Church in West Kalimantan (GKKB)
- Christian Church of Sumba (GKS)*
- Christian Churches of Southern-part Sumatra (GKSBS)
- Christian Communion of Indonesia in Nias (GAMIN)*
- Christian Evangelical Church in Bolaang Mongondouw (GMIBM)
- Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM)*
- Christian Evangelical Church in Sangihe Talaud (GMIST)*
- Christian Evangelical Church in Talaud (GERMITA)
- Christian Evangelical Church of Indonesia (GEMINDO)
- Christian Protestant Angkola Church (GKPA)*
- Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI)*
- Church of Christ

Church of Christ the Lord (GKT)
 Church of God of Prophecy in Indonesia (GTDI)
 Communion of Protestant Church (ONKP)
 Ecumenical Christian Church in Indonesia (GKO)
 Evangelical Christian Church (GKPI)
Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH)
 Evangelical Christian Church in Indonesia (GEKISIA)
Evangelical Christian Church of Tanah Papua (GKI Papua)
Evangelical Christian Church of Timor (GMIT)
 Evangelical Christian Church of Indonesia (GKII)
 Evangelical Church of Tanah Java (GITJ)
East Java Christian Church (GKJW)
 Friends Church in Indonesia (GSI)
 Full Gospel Bethel Church (GBIS)
 General Protestant Christian Church (GMPU)
 Grace Christian Church
 Holy Word Christian Church
 Indonesia Christian Church in South Sulawesi (GKI-SULSEL)
 Indonesian Christian Church of Sumatra (GKI Sumut)
 Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI)
 Indonesian Faithful Christian Church (GKSI)
Indonesian Protestant Church Banggai Kepulauan (GPIBK)
Indonesian Protestant Church Donggala (GPID)
Indonesian Protestant Church Gorontalo (GPIG)
Indonesian Protestant Church in Buol Tolitoli (GPIBT)
 Indonesian Protestant Church in Luwu (GPIL)
 Indonesian Protestant Church Papua (GPI – Papua)
 Isa Almasih Church
Javanese Christian Churches (GKJ)
Kalimantan Evangelical Church (GKE)
Karo Batak Protestant Church (BGKP)
 Keesaan Injili Indonesia Church (GEKINDO)
 Mamasa Toraja Church (GTM)
Methodist Church in Indonesia (GMI)
Nias Protestant Christian Church (BNKP)
 New Testament Christian Church (GKPB)
 Pak Pak Dairi Christian Protestant Church (GKPPD)
Pasundan Christian Church (GKP)
 Pentecostal Movement Church (GGP)
Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP)
Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB)
 Protestant Christian Church in Mentawai (GKPM)
Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI)
 Protestant Church in West Kalimantan (GPKB)
 Protestant Church in South Sulawesi (GPSS)
Protestant Church in the Moluccas (GPM)
Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB)
Protestant Church of South East Sulawesi (GEPSULTRA)
 Rehoboth Church
Simalungan Protestant Christian Church (GKPS)
 Surabaya Centre Pentecostal Church (GPPS)
Toraja Church (GT)
 United Muria Christian Churches of Indonesia (GKMI)
 United Protestant Church (GPP)
 Union of Minahasa Protestant Church (KGPM)
 Utusan Pentecostal Church in Indonesia (GUPDI)

The Communion of Churches in Indonesia is organized in 26 regional communions: Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, Banten, Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara dan Timor Timur, Papua, Maluku, South-East Sulawesi, North & Central Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, East Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Lampung, Jambi, Bengkulu, Riau, Riau Islands.

The Communion of Churches in Indonesia is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Website: www.pgi.or.id

Batak Christian Community Church*
(Gereja Punguan Kristen Batak, GPKB)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membersip: 20,000

Congregations: 41

Bishop: 1

Pastors: 21

Member of : WCC (1975) – CCA – CCI – LWF – UEM

The Batak Christian Community Church was originally started by the former Batak people who had moved to Jakarta from the Batak land in North Sumatra at the beginning of the 20th century. They were not satisfied with the use of Malay and Dutch languages in church services, so they organized themselves to become a community worshipping, singing and praying in their original Batak language. The church was officially founded in 1927 under the name Batak Christian Community and became the Batak Christian Community Church in 1975. The GPKB's headquarters are in Jakarta (the capital of Indonesia), where the majority of people are Muslims. It is a strategic place from where a wide network can be built to develop and empower the GPKB's ministry in church and society. The doctrinal basis of the GPKB is derived from Martin Luther's Small Catechism, and its forms of worship and other practices are in keeping with the Lutheran legacy.

Today the church has branched out to North Sumatra and has six districts of ministry. Since the general synod in 2002 it has a new spirit and vision of its mission, which is to participate more actively in the building of the kingdom of God. A new constitution and a new structure have been adopted, in order to improve the programmes of the church in the future. Three departments are responsible for *Marturia*, *Koinonia* and *Diakonia*. In this way the GPKB seeks to express the three aspects of the fundamental calling of the church and build an active and intensive ministry. It will continue to improve its mission to the Maya-maya people who have transmigrated to the Kubu area and who are keen to hear the gospel message. It also wants to reach the Batak Christian people who live in close-knit communities in the cities and do not have the opportunity to gather for worship in the church because they are poor and feel ashamed to join the others. Many of them also are facing difficulties in relation to Islam. In present-day Indonesia people are generally struggling with social problems due to the multi-dimensional crisis affecting the country: economic, political, legal, moral and cultural. In this context the GPKB faces the problems of human rights, environment, gender, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, poverty, and interreligious conflict. Dealing with these problems is the challenge to the church at the present time. The GPKB maintains a particular relationship with the Lutheran Church of Australia.

Christian Church of Central Sulawesi (Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah, GKST)

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 188,000
 Congregations: 376
 Pastors: 625
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – CCI – WARC

The Netherlands Missionary Society came to Celebes (now Sulawesi) in 1892. The church became autonomous in 1947. Most of its members live in the central part of Sulawesi, as its name suggests, but the church has also spread to South Sulawesi provinces. In recent years the GKST has been affected by violent confrontations between Muslims and Christians, as in other parts of Indonesia. Many Christians fled from the villages to the main town, Poso, for security reasons. There were still some 16,000 displaced persons in the region of the central synod of the GKST in 2003. The general secretary of the church, who was actively involved in efforts to resolve the conflicts, was accused of transporting arms and put in prison. While in prison he was elected president of the church. Since his release he has taken up office.

The conflicts in the area have affected the church and created some tensions. Reconciliation, internally and especially with the Muslim population, is therefore a high priority of the GKST. The church is also concerned with the enforcement of the law, in particular with regard to human rights. Other important concerns are the education and formation of the members of the church, and the improvement of their living conditions. Central Sulawesi is an isolated area and difficult of access, and the economy has suffered from the civil strife.

Christian Church of Sumba (Gereja Kristen di Sumba, GKS)

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 256,000
 Congregations: 97
 Pastors: 126
 Member of: WCC (1998) – CCA – CCI – WARC – REC

The Christian Church of Sumba (GKS) grew out of the missionary work of the former Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (now Protestant Church in the Netherlands). The church became autonomous in 1947. It confesses the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Apostolic Creeds. The GKS is organized according to the presbyterian-synodal tradition with a synod as the supreme governing body, meeting every four years, and councils of elders in the local congregations. Evangelism is one of the priorities. The church has been growing steadily in the past years. It runs various schools (primary, secondary and higher education), two hospitals and programmes of welfare and development. In all, the GKS employs more than 700 full time workers.

Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa, GMIM)

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 730,000
 Presbyteries: 90

Congregations: 816

Pastors: 1500

Elders & Deacons: 17,220

Religious teachers: 155

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Periodicals: *Menjabarkan Trilogi Pembangunan Jemaat* and *Renungan Harian Keluarga* (in Indonesian)

Minahasa is a region in the northern part of the island of Sulawesi. A few Dutch missionaries worked in the area in the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1827 the Netherlands Missionary Society was invited to work there. A teacher-training school was opened as early as 1851. Assistant pastors were trained but not allowed to administer the sacraments. By 1880 the Christian population had grown to 80,000 members which was about 80 percent of the Minahasa population. In 1876 the church became a part of the colonial state church, later called the Protestant Church in Indonesia. At the first synod meeting at Tomohon in 1934, the church was proclaimed autonomous and took its present name. Besides a few Dutch pastors there were only twenty indigenous "assistant pastors". Most congregations were being cared for by "teacher-preachers" of the teacher-training school. The GMIM suffered greatly under the Japanese occupation from 1942-45 but it also learned during this time to stand on its own feet. The church now believes in the necessity of formulating its own theology and ecclesiology, and of cooperating responsibly with fellow citizens who adhere to Islam or other religions.

The church offers many educational opportunities to young people with scholarship possibilities. It runs kindergartens, primary, secondary, and high schools, vocational schools, and a university where the school of theology is housed. It further operates several hospitals, polyclinics, maternity clinics, mother and child-care stations and family planning clinics. Lay training courses are regularly conducted which concentrate on social justice and stewardship education and the participation in village cooperatives. In recent years many new denominations have established themselves in Minahasa which has caused loss of membership to the GMIM, the majority church in an area where 90 percent of the population is Christian. Although many GMIM members live in other parts of Indonesia the church maintains its policy of not forming congregations outside Minahasa.

Particular relations exist between the GMIM and the Uniting Church in Australia, United Church of Christ in Japan, Presbyterian Church in Korea, Reformed Church in America, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, the Evangelical Mission in Stuttgart, Germany and the Evangelical Church in South-West Germany.

Christian Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud

(Gereja Masehi Injili Sangihe Talaud, GMIST)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 198,200

Congregations: 322

Pastors : 280 (of whom 158 women)

Member of: WCC (1974) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Periodical: *Kadadamehe* (monthly, in Indonesian)

Carpenter missionaries from Germany, sent by the Dutch Missionary Society, started working in the Sangihe islands north of today's Sulawesi in 1857. They worked as craftsmen while teaching the gospel to the people. Their mission was difficult because of isolation and hardships. After their death, the mission society

established a committee to continue the work they had initiated. Later on, the responsibility for all the missionary work was handed over to the synod of the Christian Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud (GMIST), which came into being in 1947. The GMIST is organized according to the presbyterian-synodal system. Its doctrinal bases are the Apostle's Creed and the Creed of Nicea-Constantinople. The area of Sangihe Talaud is composed of 124 islands. In the beginning the GMIST was active in 42 of these. In 2001 the synod of the GMIST decided to form a new church, the Christian Evangelical Church in Talaud (GERMITA), to serve the congregations spread throughout the Talaud archipelago.

Until 1960 the pastors of the GMIST were trained at the theological school in Makasar (South Sulawesi), and some were sent to the higher theological school in Tomohon (Minahasa, North Sulawesi). The church gradually became aware of the importance of having more and well prepared full-time pastors. Today most of the candidates study at the theological faculty in Tomohon. Since 1990, some pastors are selected by the synod in order to pursue advanced theological studies, with the help of ATESEA (Association of Theological Education in South East Asia). Besides the development of human resources, other priorities of the church are: strengthening of ecumenical relationships and cooperation with other churches, foundations and institutions in the region; developing a contextual theology that can assist the members of the church in their daily life; enhancing the work with teenagers and youth ministries; launching a gender programme; promoting community health services, especially for the people in the remote areas; inter-faith dialogue as a response to the regional and national religious conflicts. The GMIST runs 70 kindergartens, 136 primary schools, four secondary schools and one high school.

Christian Protestant Angkola Church (Geraja Kristen Protestan Angkola, GKPA)

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 28,295
 Districts: 4
 Congregations: 168
 Pastors: 51
 Member of: WCC (1990) – CCA – CCI – LWF

The Christian Protestant Angkola Church was officially established in 1976 when it obtained its autonomy from the Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP), under the name HKBPA. It joined in 1988 with the Protestant Angkola Church, and the present name was adopted. The GKPA ministers to the Angkola Batak people in their language. It states its purpose as “strengthening Christianity in the Islamic environment” and tries to create good mutual understanding and tolerance between Christians and Muslims.

The church provides training programmes for youth and children, programmes for training in spirituality, and publishes teaching materials. It runs three junior and two senior secondary schools, one public health centre, and technical training programmes in agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, etc. It also conducts courses and training for pastors, presbyters, women and Sunday school teachers. The church is committed to promoting programmes such as overcoming violence, gender balance, justice, peace and integrity of creation, and workshops on HIV/AIDS. It is involved in mission work in areas of new settlement and transmigration. New materials in the Angkola language, including the Bible, have been produced and are widely used. The experience of working among the Angkola

people – an ethnic group of some 450,000 – has contributed to the growth of the church.

Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia

(Gereja Kristen Protestan Indonesia, GKPI)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 348,575

Regions: 17

Districts: 168

Congregations: 1,114

Pastors: 200 (163 men, 37 women)

Elders: 6289 men, 435 women

Member of: WCC (1977) – CCA – CCI – LWF – UEM

Periodical: *GKPI Voice* (monthly, in Indonesian)

This church grew out of a spiritual, congregational reform movement in the Batak Protestant Christian Church (HKBP) which led to a split due to some disagreement in the leadership. The GKPI was established in 1964. The first years were difficult because the church had no relationships locally and internationally. Its membership increased and the isolation was overcome when the church joined the Lutheran World Federation and the United Evangelical Mission in 1977. The GKPI is a national church which has spread around Sumatra, to Java and Kalimantan, but its members are mainly of the Toba-Batak ethnic groups and its geographical concentration is in North Sumatra. More than 75 percent of the members are small farmers living in the villages and rural areas. Others are in government service or in the military, or are shop-holders, *beçak* drivers, etc. Most of them belong to the low income group with few skills to improve their living conditions.

The GKPI has three departments, for witness, general organization and finance, under which several sections deal with programmes like evangelization, training and education, Sunday school, research, youth, women, men etc. There are also some foundations, for the blind, for general education, the Mamre Orphanage and the Agapè Foundation. The work depends on the financial support of the congregations, which are also responsible for the salary of their parish pastor. Some of the programmes are also supported by the United Evangelical Mission. The GKPI is in favour of the type of partnership promoted by UE, because it helps the churches to know each other's conditions, needs and challenges, and to learn from each other how to implement the mission of Jesus Christ in the world, and it enables the churches to carry out their ministry. Among the priorities of the church are the training of pastors, elders and church leaders to develop their knowledge, skills and leadership abilities, and to deepen their spiritual life and dedication. The GKPI has encouraged a number of pastors to do post-graduate studies. The church is also planning a cooperative budgeting system for its activities, aiming at local fundraising and financial self-reliance.

East Java Christian Church

(Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan, GKJW)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 130,000

Presbyteries: 12

Congregations: 148

Pastors: 156

Member of : WCC (1948) – CCA – CCI – WARC – UEM
 Periodical: *DUTA* (monthly, in Indonesian)

The East Java Christian Church has been a missionary church from the beginning. It grew from a spontaneous movement among the Javanese in the middle of the 19th century. In the 1830s groups of Javanese believers near Surabaya were brought into contact with the gospel by the activities of European lay people; the first baptism occurred in 1843. In the 1850s the Dutch mission (NZG) took over and started what it considered to be a necessarily long process of bringing the church to maturity. This process was concluded by the convening of the first synod in 1931, when the church had 23,000 baptized members, in 45 local parishes. But, as elsewhere in Indonesia, the NZG remained as a “guide towards adulthood” until 1942. So great was its influence that the GKJW considers itself a daughter church of the Netherlands Reformed Church (now Protestant Church in the Netherlands). The coming of the Japanese brought the end of missionary domination. During and after World War II the church went through hard times. After 1950 a slow but steady growth began, which peaked after the elimination of communism in 1965-1967. From the beginning, the GKJW has been a rural church; many congregations were founded by clearing forests and establishing Christian villages on the reclaimed land. The other churches in East Java are based in the cities. Together they constitute 1.5 million (including Roman Catholic) of the 34 million population of East Java, the overwhelming majority (95.5 percent) being Muslim. In 1995 and 1996 riots occurred several times, resulting in severe damage to Christian lives and property.

The GKJW has a number of hospitals, clinics, a small number of schools for elementary to senior high level and an orphanage. In 1987 the church commenced its first six-year comprehensive church development plan, which consists of programmes for the development of theological activities, community life, Christian service, Christian witness, and stewardship. Pastors are trained at the theological school in Malang. The GKJW is connected with the Duta Wacana Christian University in Yogyakarta.

The church considers December 11, 1931 as its birth date. It uses three languages: Indonesian, Javanese and Madurese. Its organization is presbyterian-synodal. Since 1981 the GKJW has been in relationship with the United Evangelical Mission in Germany. It has partnership relations with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, the Evangelical Church in Rhineland (Germany) and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The theme of the church for 1999-2004 was: *Realizing the year of the Lord's favour to all people (Isaiah 61:1-3)*. The theme for 2005-2010 is: *Realizing the family of God as the Lord's favour to all people (Psalm 128)*.

Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera

(Gereja Masehi Injili Halmahera, GMIH)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 300,000

Congregations: 374

Pastors : 326

Evangelists: 48

Member of: WCC (1979) – CCA – CCI – WARC

The Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (North Moluccas) grew out of the missionary work of the former Netherlands Reformed Church. It became

autonomous in 1949. The church is organized according to the presbyterian-synodal model. In 1999-2000 and again in 2001, mass violence erupted in North Moluccas which caused death and destruction. People had to flee their homes and hide in the bushes, and many ended up as internally displaced persons in camps, in North Sulawesi and elsewhere. Although on a lesser scale, the tensions continue and people live in constant fear of provocation and terror. Widows and children are bearing the brunt of the conflict. They have to struggle for survival in conditions where there is very little access to basic necessities. The church has been severely affected by the situation. Its membership has decreased by more than half. It is trying to help its people in the congregations who have lost everything. The GMIH is convinced that the origins of the conflict were not religious but political, and that it was caused by forces from outside the area. Halmahera has become a province of its own, the Province of North Moluccas, with a Muslim majority. A Muslim-Christian working group has been set up and is working with the people to restore the relationships in the communities and bring back the normal conditions of daily life in the society. Displacement and resettlement have psychological and mental consequences for the population.

Since 1968 the GMIH operates its own theological college. It was moved from Ternate to Tobelo in 1989. The church is also related to the Theological Seminary in Ujung Padang (South Sulawesi).

Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua, GKITP)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 600,000

Districts: 39

Congregations: 1148

Pastors: 498

Evangelists: 430

Member of: WCC (1961) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Periodical: *Serikat* ("United", quarterly, in Indonesian)

The Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua is the fruit of the work of the Gossner Mission (Germany) which started in 1855, and of the mission of the Netherlands Reformed Church which began in 1870. The church became autonomous in 1956. Its motto is from Ephesians 5:8 *"for once you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light."*

The Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua seeks to grow and to develop its theological vision in the spirit of Eph. 5:8. Ideally this is the vision of the kingdom of God. Operationally, the theological vision of the church is to demonstrate the signs of the kingdom, e.g. "Shalom", in its mission activities. It has been able to develop into a mature church which has the capacity to support its actions of service by means of its own financial and human resources. The four main programmes are 1) public services in the area of human rights, legal support, politics and human security; 2) theology, evangelism and mission; 3) education, from elementary to tertiary levels; and 4) awareness building for financial self-reliance. The church has its own theological seminary for the training of pastors.

The GKITP is organized according to the presbyterian-synodal model. The synod is the highest governing body. It elects an executive board, composed of eight regional and five executive members, which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the church. In the areas of human rights and politics in Papua the GKITP is playing a very significant role. Through the campaign "Papua as Land

of Peace” the church is involved in the resolution of conflicts in the community, in cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, other Protestant churches and other faith groups in the region.

Indonesian Christian Church

(Gereja Kristen Indonesia, GKI)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 220,000

Presbyteries: 18

Congregations: 208

Pastors: 295

Member of: WCC (1965) – CCA – CCI – WARC – REC

Periodical: *Majalah GKI* (quarterly, in Indonesian)

The Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) is a uniting church. It was formed by three churches which came together in 1962 and established one church in 1988. The three were the Indonesian Christian Church of West Java, the Indonesian Christian Church of Central Java and the Indonesian Christian Church of East Java. Formerly, these three were Chinese churches developed by the former Netherlands Missionary Society. The new church approved its “Church Order” at its 13th general assembly, held in November 2002. The Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) is a reformed church, and an ecumenical church. It recognizes the interdependency of churches around the world, particularly those of the same confession. It has developed fellowship with other churches in a mutual relationship. It actively promotes the ecumenical movement locally, regionally and internationally.

Indonesian Christian Church

(Huria Kristen Indonesia, HKI)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 342,300

Congregations: 710

Pastors: 123

Teacher preachers: 710

Member of: WCC (1974) – CCA – CCI – LWF

The Indonesian Christian Church (HJI) was established in 1927, asserting its autonomy and self-government from the Rhineland Mission (Germany). At issue were the ordination of Batak ministers, the indigenous role in regional and local church affairs, and the Batak role in national identity. Soon after the proclamation in 1946 of Indonesian independence, the church changed its original name “Huria Kristen Batak” to “Huria Kristen Indonesia”. The HKI adopted a synodal form of policy, headed by an ephorus. Since 1968 it has used the Nommensen University for the formation of pastors, teachers and others. The congregations are located mostly in Sumatra, where the language is Batak Toba, and Java. The majority of members live in rural areas. They are small farmers who raise cattle, water buffalo, pigs and chickens. Others live in towns and cities, including Jakarta, working as civil servants, policemen, soldiers, retailers, etc.

Since 1970, the church has had connections with the Lutheran Church in America. With expatriate assistance, it conducts a programme in theological education by extension in which the Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun, the

Gereja Kristen Protestan Indonesia and other churches participate. In 1982 a theological education programme for teacher-preachers was started. Some newly trained church members will be sent as evangelists to the frontiers. A third programme is the family discussion group, undertaken in rural and urban places. The HKI is also involved in development projects. In 1976, an agricultural smallholders' rice-growing project was initiated with outside aid. As the invested money is repaid, the revolving fund will help launch new projects for more people.

Javanese Christian Churches

(Gereja-Gereja Kristen Java, GKJ)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 230,000

Congregations: 279

Pastors: 271

Preachers: 800

Member of: WCC (1950) – CCA – CCI – WARC – REC

The church came into being in 1949 as a result of the union of the Christian Javanese Church in South-Central Java and the Christian Javanese Church of North-Central Java. The former was founded in 1931 through the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (now the Protestant Church in the Netherlands), the latter was founded in 1937 through the work of the Salatiga Mission, sponsored by the "Waisen- und Missionsanstalt" of Germany. The GKJ acknowledges the Apostles' Creed and the Heidelberg catechism. In government it is presbyterian.

The Javanese Christian Churches carry on missionary work among Javanese transmigrants in Sumatra and in central Java through a number of agencies. These include schools for education at all stages, teacher training schools and hostels for students; general hospitals and maternity hospitals; a bookshop; orphanages and an old people's home; and Sunday schools. Apart from full-time missionaries, the church has a number of its members working in a voluntary, part-time capacity. There are many Bible study groups.

Kalimantan Evangelical Church

(Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis, GKE)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 245,035

Congregations: 1,057

Pastors: 386

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Periodicals: *Berita GKE* (in Indonesian) *Talita Kum* (Women Commission, in Indonesian)

From 1835 to 1925 the Rhenish Missionary Society worked on the island of Borneo among the Dayak people. Progress was slow because the Dayaks held tenaciously to their traditional beliefs and practices, and also because of Muslim opposition. By 1925 there were only 5,400 Christians. From 1925-35 the Basel Mission took over but faced also many difficulties. The church became autonomous under the name Dayak Evangelical Church. It endured great hardships under the Japanese occupation. In 1950 the church adopted the name Kalimantan Evangelical Church, to express the fact that the entire island, where other tribes live

besides the Dayaks, is the church's mission field (Kalimantan is the name of the part of the island belonging to Indonesia).

There are many ethnic groups in Kalimantan: Dayak, Banjar, Bugis, Java, Madura, Bali, Sunda, thus forming a pluralistic society of different cultures, customs and languages. Though there has been intermarriage and some assimilation of culture, tensions and conflicts remain. The church is aware of the fact that there are positive values in the customs and traditions of the ethnic groups of Kalimantan and that they relate in different ways to the Christian faith. The Muslim majority of Kalimantan is conservative and strongly influenced by local traditions and culture. In some areas migrants greatly outnumber the indigenous population. An example is the district of Pangkoh in Central Kalimantan. In 1980, it had a population of 6,000, mostly comprising people from the Dayak tribe. Within a few years the population increased to 56,000 due to migration. In 2000 communal violence erupted in Central Kalimantan, where the majority of the Christians live. It was not a Christian-Muslim conflict but ethnic violence marked by a resurgence of traditional belief in magic powers which resulted in killings. The fact that this could happen remains a problem for the church. The answer lies not so much with Christian-Muslim dialogue but rather in promoting activities of common interest for the different ethnic groups.

The GKE is spread over an area of 230,000 square miles and divided into four provinces, 64 parishes (or regions) and seven parishes in formation. A great problem is the lack of transportation for the pastors, teachers, and other church workers. The church participates in education and development through agricultural and technical schools (e.g. carpentry), rural development centres, health services in rural areas, several elementary schools and high schools, a university and some boarding homes. Pastors are trained at the theological seminary in Banjarmasin.

Karo Batak Protestant Church

(Gereja Batak Karo Protestan, GBKP)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 276,912

Presbyteries: 20

Congregations: 398

Pastors: 196

Evangelists: 34

Elders & Deacons: 7476

Member of: WCC (1969) – CCA – CCI – WARC – UEM

Periodicals: *Maranatha* (monthly, in Karonese) *Beras Piher* (quarterly,

Indonesian and English)

Website: www.gbkp.or.id

Work among the Karo Batak people was started in 1890 by the Dutch Missionary Society, financially assisted by the Dutch Plantation Company. The Karo people used to accuse the missionaries of being agents of colonialism. The church grew slowly, at its 50th anniversary it had 5,000 members. The GBKP was founded at the first synod in 1941. At that time there were two ordained Karonese pastors. During the Japanese occupation the missionaries were detained in camps and the Karo Christians had to take responsibility, without proper preparation financially, institutionally, theologically or in terms of human resources. Two periods of rapid growth occurred in 1965 and 1966 with mass baptisms at the time of the repression of the communist rebellion, and in the 1980s through the family approach model of evangelization. The increase in numbers created a problem for

the church because there were not enough pastors to teach the new members in the faith. To meet the need, elders and deacons were trained to conduct worship services and take over other tasks of the pastors. A lay training centre was set up and later a school for evangelists. Elders and deacons continue to fulfill important functions in the church, including pastoral responsibilities.

The GBKP is organized according to the presbyterian-synodal model. The general assembly is the highest governing body. In 2005 the general assembly voted a new church order. There are three departments: *Diakonia* (orphanages, care for the mentally handicapped, homes for the elderly, credit unions etc); *Marturia* (evangelization, Christian schools, theological education, pastoral counselling, etc.); *Koinonia* (Sunday schools, youth, women, lay training, retreat centre, etc.). For the next five years the programmes will put emphasis on theological and spiritual development, human resources development, and financial support. Some of the current challenges which the church faces are syncretism, formalism ("Sunday Christians"), materialism, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, violence in the families, poverty and lack of skills in the rural areas, the belief that the church should not be involved in socio-economic and political issues, etc. Therefore the GBKP is giving high priority to programmes of education and training, lay participation, health, social and economic questions, a theology of giving (the tithe has been introduced), and continuous strengthening of all sectors and institutions of the church.

The GBKP would like to enter into partnership relationship with other churches, through the WCC, e.g. short-term exchanges South-North and South-South, twinning of congregations, mutual learning in mission, joint programmes of WCC member churches, etc.

Methodist Church in Indonesia (Gereja Metodista Indonesia, GMI)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 119,000

Districts: 12

Congregations: 469

Pastors: 232

Member of: WCC (2005) – CCA – CCI – WMC

The Methodist Church in Indonesia is the fruit of missionary work of the Methodist Church in America, which began in 1904. The church became autonomous in 1964. From North Sumatra it has spread to the other parts of the island and of the country (Java in particular). The church is organized in two annual conferences, one in North Sumatra and one in Java, each with a bishop. Besides the established congregations there are over a hundred preaching posts with almost the same number of Bible teachers. Theological training of the pastors takes place in the seminary near Medan. Apart from the training for the ministry it also offers a two-year course of continuing theological training for pastors and lay preachers. The church ordains women (currently almost half of the students in the seminary are women). The priorities of the GMI are in the areas of mission and evangelism, education (48 elementary schools, 40 junior and 22 senior high schools, one university and one academy), urban rural ministry, youth and women. Education has played a very central role in the life and history of the Methodist Church in Indonesia, and continues to be its main ministry in the society. Almost each local congregation has its school. In the Medan District there are more school children (24,000) than church members (17,000).

Apart from Indonesian, several other languages are used in the church for worship and congregational life, including Chinese and English. This multilingual diversity is held together in unity in the connexial structure of Methodism. The GMI has evangelism programmes in Riau (central east Sumatra), Kalimantan, Bali and South Sulawesi.

Nias Christian Protestant Church (Banua Niha Keriso Protestan, BNKP)

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 367,721
 Districts: 101
 Congregations: 902
 Pastors: 193 (48 women)
 Preachers/ Teachers: 822
 Member of: WCC (1972) – CCA – CCI – LWF – UEM

The Nias Christian Protestant Church (BNKP) grew out of the work of the Rhenish Mission (Germany) on the island of Nias, which began in 1865. Missionaries from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Netherlands began working in the southern part of the island in 1889. The first synod of the BNKP was held in 1936, when the autonomy of the church was acknowledged by the Mission Society and the Dutch colonial government. The Protestant Christian Church which had grown out of the Dutch Lutheran mission merged with the BNKP in 1960. The church accepts the word of God as written in the scriptures, the Apostolic Creed, and the Small Catechism of Luther. Enriched by its Lutheran heritage, the BNKP is living out its vision and mission along with other churches, nationally and globally. It has identified five major areas of concern: 1) religious pluralism and dialogue with people of other faiths; 2) pursuing justice, serving the needy, opposing gender discrimination; 3) care for creation; 4) science and rapid technological change; 5) gospel and culture. The programmes of the church are grouped under Witness (sending out missionaries and speaking prophetically in the society); Community (worship in Indonesian and Nias languages, weekly Bible studies in the congregations, relations with other churches and ecumenical bodies); Service (orphanages, care for the needy, schools, and rehabilitation and reconstruction).

The majority of the population of Nias belongs to the BNKP. The church has put much emphasis on the formation of lay leadership, because it is scattered over a vast region and there is a shortage of ordained ministers. The training of more pastors is a high priority. The BNKP has its own theological seminary.

Nias is situated west of Sumatra. About 43 percent of the population are considered very poor. It is an isolated area, with a high level of illiteracy. The road conditions are bad, and there is only one hospital on the island. Communications with Sumatra and the rest of Indonesia are difficult. The island of Nias was hit by the tsunami of 26 December 2004, and again by the earthquake of 28 March 2005 which was even more devastating. Many people were killed, many others lost their houses and belongings. Much of the infrastructure of the island was destroyed, including many church buildings. Following these disasters, the main priority of the BNKP has been to reorganize the life of the church and the local congregations, to assist people with trauma counselling and other assistance, and to reconstruct churches and other buildings.

The Nias Christian Protestant Church is in relationship with several regional churches in Germany, and with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands.

Pasundan Christian Church

(Gereja Kristen Pasundan, GKP)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 33,000

Congregations: 51

Pastors: 51

Member of: WCC (1960) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Periodicals: *Berita GKP* (GKP News, monthly) and *Majalah Wawasan* (both in Indonesian).

When Batavia (now Jakarta) was founded in 1619 it already had a Protestant congregation. The evangelization of the Sundanese people in West Java, however, did not take place until the middle of the 19th century. This missionary work in one of Indonesia's strongest Muslim regions grew out of the witness and dedication of Christian lay people. It was not the result of organized efforts by western missionary societies. A Dutch judge started fruitful work in evangelization, with the help of Javanese and Sundanese evangelists whom he trained in his home. The mission spread to the wider area of Jakarta and Banten and Bogor. The Netherlands Missionary Society started work in the Priangan area which spread later to the whole of West Java. Several congregations were established after 1852. The Sundanese Protestant Church of West Java came into being in 1861.

From the beginning the work encountered strong Muslim refusal. Despite resistance, individual Muslims converted to Christianity. During the second world war relations with the Netherlands Missionary Society were totally cut off. Revival movements occurred in the church in the 1970s. New congregations were established in several parts of West Java, Jakarta and the province of Banten.

The structure of the church is presbyterian-synodal. Congregations are not fully autonomous. Each congregation is guided by its pastor and the elders and deacons who are appointed for five years. There are five districts, each grouping a number of congregations. The general assembly of the synod is held every five years. An executive committee is responsible for ongoing activities. Among the challenges the church is facing are ministerial training, lay education, informal education (an electronic course for drop-outs), preparation for in-depth dialogue with Islam, and inter-religious dialogue for women and youth.

The active cooperation of the GKP with Mission 21 is based on its historical relationship with the Basel Mission.

Protestant Christian Batak Church

(Huria Kristen Batak Protestant, HKBP)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 3,500,000

Congregations: 3,500

Pastors: 1,500

Vicars: 550

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – CCI – LWF

Website: www.hkbp.or.id

The Batak Protestant Christian Church is the fruit of the work of the Rhineland Mission (Germany) which began to work in the Batak land of North Sumatra in 1861. The Batak people had strongly rejected earlier attempts to evangelize them. The history of the mission and the church cannot be separated from

the person of I.L. Nommensen, “the apostle to the Batak people”, who arrived in 1864 and stayed until his death in 1918 as ephorus of the church. One of his great insights was the use of indigenous workers. The first school for Batak evangelists was established in 1868. Already in 1881 a church order was introduced, which enabled the church to grow strong in organization and size. The HKBP became autonomous in 1930. From 1940 onwards it was entirely self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. Today it is the largest Protestant church in Indonesia, with congregations in many parts of the archipelago and also in other countries.

The HKBP understands itself as a church of Christ, established by the work of the Holy Spirit, an organism that “lives from age to age and from generation to generation across the borders of continents, nations, races and languages”. It is part of the universal church, holding to one baptism. It has its own confession, adopted in 1951, which is based on the holy scriptures, on the Apostles’, Nicene and Athanasian creeds, the Reformation and more recent confessions like the Barmen Theological Declaration of 1934. According to the latest revision of its constitution, the HKBP has a vision of developing itself to be an inclusive, dialogical and transparent church that, together with other Christians and people of other faiths, strives for the improvement of the quality of life of the people in the light of the love of Jesus Christ, for the glory of God. The mission of the church is carried out through its three departments: Diakonia, Marturia and Koinonia. The main concerns are bringing the gospel to non-Christian people (e.g. among Javanese and Tamil in Medan, tribes in Riau, in areas of transmigration), providing social services (e.g. care for orphans, for the blind, for drop-outs), gender justice, schools (nursery, elementary, high schools and technical, 145 in all), hospitals and health centres, HIV/AIDS, environment, violence and poverty.

An important institution of the HKBP is the Nommensen University which was opened in 1954, in response to the felt need for higher education in the new nation of Indonesia. It has, among many other colleges, a faculty of theology. The church also runs a theological seminary, a teacher-preacher school, a Bible women’s school and a deaconess training school.

It is the conviction of the HKBP that it is God’s plan to save the Batak people in order to be a blessing for Indonesia in particular, and for the world in general.

Protestant Christian Church in Bali*

(Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali, GKPB)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 12,000

Congregations: 72

Pastors: 61

Member of: WCC (1976) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Although in the 1930s the government of the Dutch East Indies did not give its consent to the appointment of an overseas missionary in Bali, the Christian Church of East Java, without official approval, sent one of their ministers there. Through the Church of East Java, the mission of the Netherlands Reformed Church also participated in the work. By the thirties some congregations had emerged. During the second world war the congregations grew and new ones were formed so that they are now spread over a great part of the island. Although from the beginning no important decisions were taken without the consent of the delegates from the congregations, the church did not consider itself fully autonomous until 1948 when the first synod met.

Significant developments took place after 1950. The church contextualized the gospel in the local culture of Bali through architecture, symbols and teaching. Through traditional decoration, woodcarving, painting, dancing and music, the church is also engaged in the development programme of the government. In embodying the kingdom of God in Bali, the Protestant Christian Church in Bali is making Christ known to the people through its departments and institutions. The spiritual formation department is helping people to grow mature in spirituality. The diaconia department is assisting people to be self-sufficient economically. The work of the mission department is to provide people with education. The Dhyana Pura Institutions which look after Dhyana Pura Hotel, Dhyana Pura College and Wisma Nangun Kerti (guesthouse) are being used to help people live responsibly in the island of tourism.

The church has close ties with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, the Evangelical Mission in South-West Germany, the Uniting Church in Australia, the United Church of Christ in USA, the Church of Westfalia in Germany and the Anglican Church in Australia.

Protestant Church in Indonesia

(Gereja Protestan di Indonesia, GPI)

Church Family: Reformed

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCI – WARC

Periodical: *Berita GPI* (in Indonesian)

The Protestant Church in Indonesia is the former East Indian State Church of the Dutch colonial era, a continuation of the church of the period of the East India Company in the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1835 Calvinist and Lutheran congregations came together in Batavia (Jakarta) to become the Protestant Church in the Netherlands East Indies. Its status was recognized by the colonial government in 1927.

The GPI is a corporate body which is now composed of twelve autonomous churches, four of which are members of the WCC in their own right:

Evangelical Christian Church in the Minahasa (GMIM)

Protestant Church in the Moluccas (GPM)

Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT)

Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB).

The others are:

Indonesian Protestant Church Gorontalo (GPIG)	11,103 members
Indonesian Protestant Church Donggala (GPID)	30,114 members
Indonesian Protestant Church Baggai Kepulauan (GPIBK)	29,008 members
Indonesian Protestant Church Papua (GPI-Papua)	30,202 members
Indonesian Protestant Church Buol Tolitoli	11,027 members
Christian Church Luwuk Banggai (GKLB)	42,611 members
Evangelical Christian Church Talaud (GERMITA)	14,734 members
Indonesian Ecumenical Christian Church in California	188 members

The congregations of the GPI are those of the autonomous churches. It is a corporate body which deals with issues on behalf of the twelve member churches and is responsible for some joint programmes. The leaders meet annually. Every five years a conference is held bringing together the delegates of the churches. The major concern of the GPI is to strive for closer ties between the regional churches, and for the unity of the church throughout Indonesia.

Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi (Gereja Protestan di Sulawesi Tenggara, GEPSULTRA)

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 30,000
 Congregations: 89
 Pastors: 64
 Member of: WCC (1991) – CCA – CCI – WARC

The Bible reached South-East Sulawesi in 1916, during the time of Dutch colonialism, through the efforts of the Mission of the Netherlands Reformed Church. The missionary activities began with the opening of a school for teacher training in a place about 150 kms from Kendari, the capital town of the Province of South-East Sulawesi. The first students from among the indigenous people were also the first to be baptized. The teachers founded elementary schools in the villages, until 1930. Besides teaching they served the people, and formed groups of Christian families, who were to become the nucleus of the church. In 1957 the mission handed over the responsibility to the local pastors and the date was marked as the founding date of the Protestant Church in South East Sulawesi. The GEPSULTRA is not an ethnic church. The name refers to the region where the church was born and exists. The language used in the church is not the local language but mainly Indonesian.

The church understands its calling in terms of uniting, witnessing and serving. It has four priority programmes: training in theology and faith; ecumenism, witness and church development; financial and diaconal self-reliance; training and building of groups such as the laity, women, youth, Sunday school and adults. The clergy of the GEPSULTRA are trained at the theological seminary of the church which is a member of the Association of Theological Seminaries in Indonesia.

Protestant Church in the Moluccas (Gereja Protestan Maluku, GPM)

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 575,000
 Dioceses: 27
 Parishes: 720
 Pastors: 782 (438 men; 344 women)
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – CCI – WARC
 Periodical: *Assau* (in Indonesian)

The Moluccas are the “spice islands” to which Columbus thought he was sailing when he discovered America in 1492. The islands cover a land-water area as large as the Philippines. The Christian faith was preached there as early as 1546. The Dutch East India Company and the Netherlands Indies government gave the inhabitants of the Moluccas some military and minor government positions, but did little to improve the economic and social conditions of the people. The church suffered much under the Japanese occupation during World War II. A quarter of the ministers on the island of Ambon were killed and the population of several villages massacred. Much church property was destroyed. Another serious blow to the church was the revolt of the Republic of South Moluccas in 1950, which was repressed by the Indonesian government. All churches in Ambon were destroyed and many others burned or wrecked in Ceram. A great refugee problem

was created which was only solved after many years. It took a long time for places of worship and congregational buildings to be restored.

In 1999, the church faced yet another trial when violent conflicts broke out which lasted almost four years, involving Christians and Muslims in the area. More than one hundred church buildings were destroyed, two dioceses stopped functioning and thousands of people in the villages and in the capital town of Ambon were murdered. Houses and many public facilities, including school buildings owned by the church and the campus of the Christian University were burned down. Over a hundred thousand people were displaced. These were presented as religious conflicts, but the saddest thing was that the communities comprised of Christians and Muslims were also destroyed; prejudice and mistrust developed along with the experience of forced conversion in some Christian villages. Fortunately many have returned to their original Christian faith as security conditions have stabilized, except for some who live in the predominantly Muslim areas.

The church is working hard, not only to rebuild the country physically, but especially mentally and spiritually. The Protestant Church in the Moluccas is focusing on building a “theology of life” and a “spirituality of brotherhood and sisterhood” in its quest to overcome violence and conflict. The church hopes that in the years to come the reconciliation process which is underway will succeed.

Protestant Church in Western Indonesia

(Gereja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat, GPIB)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 600,000

Congregations : 280

Pastors and Evangelists: 430

Member of: WCC (1991) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Periodical: *Tabitha* (in Indonesian)

The Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB) is a member of the Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI). It was set up in 1948 to provide a spiritual home for those members of the other member churches of the GPI (situated in Eastern Indonesia) who for various reasons had migrated to the western part of the country. The GPIB has grown considerably, partly because of the natural increase of the families that formed the initial membership, but also because others have joined the church. It is a national and multi-ethnic church, scattered over 25 of the 32 provinces of Indonesia. The GPIB has many congregations in remote areas, which are marked by poverty and lack of means of communication. Spiritually these communities are very much alive. Apart from the Sunday morning worship, weekly services are held in people's homes, which are attended by as many members as come to church on Sunday. The life of the church is characterized by the differences between these financially poor, rural congregations and the congregations in the cities. In order to bridge the inequalities the GPIB has introduced a centralized fund for salaries from which all the pastors are paid, according to a fixed salary scale. The system functions well. From the time it was founded, the GPIB has never been dependent on any external financial assistance. The church is self-reliant.

The GPIB is organized in 17 regional coordination offices, which have a large amount of autonomy. The highest governing body is the synod which meets once every five years. A smaller annual synod decides on on-going matters of programme, budget, etc.

Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor

(Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor, GMIT)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 2,000,000

Congregations: 2,161

Pastors: 634

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – CCI – WARC

Periodical: *Berita GMIT* (in Indonesian)

The first Dutch pastor came to Timor in 1612. There was no continuous ministry until 1821, partly owing to the scarce commercial interest of the Netherlands East Indies Company in the islands. The Netherlands Missionary Society was active in Timor from 1821 to 1863. The church grew slowly and spread to the islands of Roti and Sawu. The Dutch Church in the Indies (*Indische Kerk*) took over the administration from 1863 to 1942. Only after the 1930s did the GMIT grow and spread to the interior regions of Timor and Alor. Due to mass Christianization the church faced the problem of an insufficient number of leaders to minister to the needs of the people. The church became autonomous in 1947. By that year it had gained a membership of 224,000 in 315 congregations served by 80 ministers. The territory of the GMIT now includes all of the East Nusa Tenggara province, except the Sumba island, and some of GMIT's congregations are in Sumbawa island, West Nusa Tenggara.

The church still faces the problem that there has been little economic and cultural development in the region. A good deal of education is needed to assist Christians in the transition from a traditional society into the modern period, and to face the effects of rapid social change. The whole church needs to be responsibly involved in community development through schools, health centres, orphanages, literature and vocational training centres. The church attempts to motivate lay people to be active in various church ministries in order that the priesthood of all believers may become real. The primary concerns for 2003-2005 are to promote three models of the church's ministry: fellowship, diakonia and witness. GMIT also aims to build partnership with churches around the world, especially churches in Asia. It maintains special relations with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, the United Church of Christ (USA), the Uniting Church in Australia, and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Simalungun Protestant Christian Church

(Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun, GKPS)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 201,000

Congregations: 598

Pastors: 178

Evangelists: 80

Member of: WCC (1973) – CCA – CCI – LWF – UEM

Periodical: *Ambilan pakon Barita GKPS* (monthly, in the local language)

Website: www.gkps.or.id

This church, autonomous since 1963, is concentrated mainly in North Sumatra, among the approximately 300,000 people who speak Simalungun, a Batak dialect, and has congregations in Java where the church has followed its people. The GKPS traces its beginnings back to the work of the Rhenish Mission in the

Batak area in the 19th century. About 70 percent of its members are farmers; others are engaged in various occupations in urban centres in North Sumatra and in the nation's capital Jakarta. A translation of the entire Bible in the Simalungun language by Simalungun scholars, begun in 1957, was completed in 1969. Among the Simalungun people are some 5,000 Roman Catholics and several thousand Muslims. The church continues to work among the latter.

The church organization combines congregational and synodal features. An ephorus and a general secretary, elected once in five years, head the church. Church headquarters in Pematang Siantar are conveniently near the HKBP Theological Seminary where the church's pastors are trained; other students attend Abdi Sabda Theological Seminary in Medan, Jakarta Theological Seminary, and the seminary in Jogjakarta. The church maintains many elementary and secondary schools. It has a development service, contributing drinking water supplies to the village people, motivating rice growing, poultry raising, cattle breeding. Its medical clinic, "Bethesda" in Saribu Dolok and in Pematangraya, helps to relate health services to the community needs.

The GKPS has close ties with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church in Australia and some districts of UEM members in Germany.

Toraja Church (Gereja Toraja)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 350,000

Congregations: 891

Preaching stations: 325

Pastors: 452

Member of: WCC (1967) – CCA – CCI – WARC

This church in the Toraja area of Sulawesi (former Celebes) grew out of the efforts of missionaries sent by the Mission Society of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, beginning in 1913. Early on in its history, schools and teacher-training colleges were established, and a hospital was built in 1929. In 1947, after the second world war, the church became autonomous. A Bible in the native language was published in 1960 which is also used by Roman Catholics. In the late fifties and early sixties, the Toraja Church endured persecution at the hands of the fanatical Darul Islam movement. Christian villages were attacked, houses and churches burnt, and people tortured and killed. The government restored order in 1964. Peaceful relationships with the surrounding Muslim communities remain a daily concern of the Toraja Christians.

The church has grown considerably. About 80 percent of the total population in Torajaland belong to the Toraja Church, and another 30 percent of its members live in other parts of Indonesia. The Toraja region is a very isolated area of Sulawesi which can only be accessed by road. The congregations are scattered in remote places. Education and skills development are high priorities. If the church does not succeed in providing training opportunities the young people will leave the region. Another concern is deforestation and conservation of the environment. The issue of gender is becoming prominent in the church. The majority of the pastors are women.

The Toraja Church continues to wrestle with the dynamic relationship of the gospel and cultures (traditional customs as well as the impact of modernization and globalization). The crucial challenge is how to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ in the midst of a pluralistic society marked by rapidly changing values. The church participates actively in local, regional and national ecumenical activities.

JAPAN

Population: 127,914,376
 Surface area: 377,900 sq.km
 Capital: Tokyo
 GNI per capita: 37,180 US\$
 Classification: Major industrialized economy
 Languages: Japanese
 Religions: Shinto Buddhism 70%; New religious movements 24%;
 Christian 1%
 Christianity: Protestants 541,590; Catholics 528,000; Anglicans 64,500;
 Orthodox 25,200; Independent 493,240

Japan was settled thousands of years ago by people who migrated from China and Korea. For much of its history, it has been an empire with a centralized government. Japan closed itself to the West from the 16th until the middle of the 19th century. It became an imperialistic power with a form of emperor worship in the first half of the 20th century, colonizing Korea, invading China, and eventually occupying most of South East Asia during World War II. It was the first country to suffer a nuclear attack, in 1945 (Hiroshima and Nagasaki). In 1947, a peace constitution based on democratic principles was established under the influence of the US, and Japan renounced the use of military force. The emperor remained the head of state, but with a mostly ceremonial role. Japan's economy developed rapidly and the country has become a major economic power in the world. Tensions with other countries in Asia remain, especially with China and Korea, because of the recent history and the way it is reflected in Japanese textbooks and official commemorations. The original religion of Japan is Shinto, which has intermingled with Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. The Christian churches form a small minority. The Protestant churches, through the national Christian council, have been active in promoting reconciliation between Japan and the Asian countries it has occupied, opposing the re-emergence of nationalism, re-militarization, and nuclear armament. There are a number of small but active Evangelical, Pentecostal and Holiness groups. The Japan Evangelical Association is affiliated with the WEA.

***National Christian Council in Japan**

Founded in 1948.

Basis: The National Christian Council in Japan is made up of Christian churches and organizations which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour as revealed in the Bible.

Member churches:

Anglican Church of Japan (Nippon Sei Ko Kai)
 Japan Baptist Convention
 Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church
Korean Christian Church in Japan
United Church of Christ in Japan

Member organizations:

Association of Christian Kindergartens
 AVACO – Christian Mass Communications Center
 Japan Bible Society
 Japan Christian Cultural Association
 Japan Christian Medical Association

KYOFUKAI – Japan Christian Women's Organization
National Council of YMCAs of Japan
National YWCA of Japan

Associate member churches:

German-Speaking Evangelical Church
International Christian University Church
Japan Free Methodist Church
Kobe Union Church
Tokyo Union Church
Tokyo Seisho Shukai of Mukyokai Group
West Tokyo Union Church
Yearly Meeting of Religious Society of Friends
Yokohama Shukai of Mukyokai Group
Yokohama Union Church

Associate member organizations:

Asian Health Institute
Christian Political League
Fellowship of Reconciliation
German Midnight Mission (MBK Mission)
International Christian Body
Japan Christian Academy
Japan Christian Council for Evangelism with the Blind
Swiss East Asia Mission
Tomisaka Christian Center

The NCCJ is organized in four regional Christian councils: Okinawa, Kyoto, Nagoya, and Sendai Christian Council.

Website: www.jca.apc.org/ncc-j/index.html

Anglican Church in Japan

(Nippon Sei Ko Kai, NSSK)

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 57,003

Dioceses: 11

Parishes: 315

Bishops: 11

Clergy: 288

Lay readers: 219

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCJ – ACC

Periodical: *Shimbun* (monthly, in Japanese) *NSKK Newsletter* (quarterly, in English)

The church was founded in 1859 when the first missionary from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA came to the country. It was legally established in 1887, and became an official province of the Anglican Church in 1930. The first Japanese bishops were consecrated in 1923. The church remained underground during World War II and assumed all church leadership after the war. Since 1978 it has been financially self-supporting. It continues to exchange missionaries with overseas partner churches. All bishops and other church leaders are Japanese. The church is the third largest Christian community in the country, after the Roman Catholic Church and the United Church of Christ. The concern for a more effective mission remains crucial to the church. In order to render a faithful witness, internal organizational structures are being constantly renewed, and there is a continuous emphasis on better stewardship.

Korean Christian Church in Japan*

Church Family: United and Uniting
 Membership: 7160
 Parishes: 100
 Pastors: 116
 Member of: WCC (1963) – CCA – NCCJ – WARC – NEAAC
 Periodicals: *Gospel News* (in Japanese and Korean) *Arirang* (in English)

The Korean Christian Church in Japan traces its history back to 1908, when Korean students in the Tokyo area began worshipping together. In 1912, Korean Presbyterian and Methodist churches combined their efforts to work together for mission among Koreans in Japan. The ecumenical character of the KCCJ today reflects this early history. From 1927, the Presbyterian Church in Canada started to support this mission work. During World War II, the KCCJ was forced to join the United Church of Christ in Japan. But in 1945 it again became autonomous. Today the KCCJ is a self-governing denomination having special fraternal relations with the Methodist Church, the Holiness Church and Presbyterian churches in Korea, with the Japanese churches and with churches in North America.

Over 90 percent of the present Korean minority in Japan consists of Japan-born Koreans and their children. Their parents were forced to migrate to Japan for economic or political reasons. While nearly 1.5 million Koreans returned to their country, about half a million chose to remain in Japan after World War II. As a minority church, the KCCJ has been involved in human-rights activities with a primary focus on the situation of Koreans in Japan. Its commitment to human rights and social issues began in 1968, when the church celebrated its 60th anniversary under the theme “Forward, Following Jesus Christ into the World”. The KCCJ has regarded these activities as its God-given mission within the Japanese and global society. In recent times, together with other Christian denominations and bodies, the KCCJ has been actively involved in the movement for enacting the proposed legislation entitled “Basic Law for Foreign Residents”, which aims at preserving the human rights of foreign residents in Japan.

Since the 1990s the church has been developing its relationship with the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) in North Korea, and has been working towards the reunification of the Korean peninsula. In July of 2002, the KCCJ held its 8th Peace and Reunification Conference, inviting Christian leaders from North and South Korea.

Orthodox Church in Japan

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)
 Membership: 30,000
 Dioceses: 3
 Parishes: 150
 Bishops: 2
 Priests: 30
 Member of: WCC (1973)
 Periodical: *Seikyojiho* (monthly, in Japanese)

In 1861, a young Russian missionary priest monk, St Nicholas Kassathin (canonized in 1977), brought the light of Orthodoxy to Hakodate in Japan. After baptizing a Shinto believer who became the first Orthodox Christian in Japan, he converted almost 20,000 people within a few years. Thus Orthodoxy spread from

Hakodate through Sendai to Tokyo, and from there to the Kansai area to Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe in western Japan, and then to Kyushu. St Nicholas translated the major prayer books of the Orthodox Church into Japanese. He was also active in building churches – the cathedral is now a national landmark in Japan. It was dedicated to the resurrection of the Lord but is affectionately called Nicholai-do, which means the prayer house of St Nicholas. In the early 20th century the church suffered from political and economic problems, and faced internal and external difficulties due to canonical problems with the Russian Orthodox Church after the revolution in Russia.

Since his enthronement in 2000 the current head of the church, Metropolitan Daniel, has been emphasizing the importance of spiritual growth of the clergy as well as the faithful. Books, pamphlets and booklets are being published for the faithful and the general public in order to raise their level of understanding of the Orthodox faith. The aim is to bring Orthodoxy much closer to the Japanese, through the Orthodox families. By doing so, it will help to overcome the stereotype view commonly held by the faithful and the general public in Japan, that Orthodoxy is a religion rather than the life of Christ.

The church participates actively in collecting donations for welfare activities. A major concern is to intensify mutual fellowship among the local Orthodox parishes. Programmes for training people in stewardship and in providing assistance for the growth of the church receive particular attention.

United Church of Christ in Japan

(Nippon Kirisuto Kyodan)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 195,851

Congregations: 1,725

Pastors: 2,189

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCJ

Periodical: *The Kyodan Times* (in Japanese) *Kyodan News Letter* (in English)

The Worker (in Japanese)

Protestant Christianity in Japan began with the work of missionaries from the American Presbyterian and Reformed churches who came to the country in 1858. The first Protestant church, the Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai (Presbyterian-Reformed) was established in Yokohama in 1872. At the 1890 synod meeting the confession of the Church of Christ in Japan was adopted. Later, other missionaries arrived from Europe and North America. With the promulgation of the religious organizations law, all Protestant churches had to become united. Unity was achieved at the Fujimicho Church in 1941. At the end of the second world war, the religious laws were abolished, and the Episcopal, Lutheran and parts of the Baptist and Holiness churches, with the Salvation Army, withdrew from the United Church. The majority of the ministers of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai wanted the United Church to become a federal union, but this proposal was rejected. In 1951, 39 congregations withdrew from the United Church and re-established the Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai. Its confession, published in 1953, is based on the confession of 1890.

The UCCJ reaffirms its determination to move forward towards true unity in Christ, the head of the Church. Standing on its confession of faith and its confession of responsibility in the second world war, the Kyodan endeavours to participate in its Lord's mission in history. The recent revision of the statement on its basic understanding concerning world mission seeks to articulate its present approach in its life and witness in the ecumenical context. Concrete examples

include its efforts to deal with declining church attendance through a renewed emphasis on evangelism, especially towards youth, and covenants with sister churches in Switzerland, Korea, Taiwan and the Korean Christian Church in Japan.

KOREA (REPUBLIC OF KOREA)

Population: 48,182,450

Surface area: 99,260 sq.km

Capital: Seoul

GNI per capita: 12,030 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Korean

Religions: Christian 41%; Buddhist 20%; Confucianist 11%; other 28%

Christianity: Protestants 8,841,570; Catholics 4,400,000; Anglicans 80,000;

Orthodox 5,700; Independent 8,149,460

Korea has a history and culture of over 4,000 years. Ruled since the 7th century by three successive dynasties, it was colonized by Japan from 1910 to 1945. After World War II, Korea was liberated but divided, occupied by the Soviet Union in the north and the US in the south. The 1950-1953 Korean war deepened the division, and a bitter opposition between communist North and capitalist South Korea lasted through the cold war period. South Korea was under military dictatorship and martial law. In 1987 democratic elections were held and a new constitution was ratified. In 1991, North and South Korea joined the United Nations and signed a non-aggression pact. Since 2000, political dialogue and economic cooperation are increasing, and visits have become possible. South Korea has transformed itself into a modern industrialized nation. Christian missions entered Korea at the end of the 19th century. The churches have grown enormously, especially after the Korean war. Korea is home to the largest congregation in the world, the Yoido Full Gospel Church (Pentecostal), with 800,000 members. Korean churches have sent thousands of missionaries to all parts of the world. In the 1960-70s, ecumenically committed churches and Christians were in the forefront of the struggle for democracy and human rights. They developed the *minjung* theology for the church of the poor. Churches in South Korea began in the 1980s a movement of peace and unification and meeting with the Christian Fellowship of North Korea. The Korean Assemblies of God joined the national council of churches in 1997. The Korean Evangelical Fellowship is affiliated with the WEA.

*National Council of Churches in Korea

Founded in 1924, as the National Christian Council in Korea, which became the National Council of Churches in Korea in 1946.

Basis: The NCCK is an ecumenical council of churches which confess Jesus Christ as their Saviour, respond to God's call, and work for God's glory.

Member churches:

Anglican Church of Korea

Evangelical Church of Korea

Korean Assemblies of God

Korean Methodist Church

Korean Orthodox Church

Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
Presbyterian Church of Korea
 Salvation Army in Korea

Associated organizations:

Christian Broadcasting System
 Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development
 Korea Christian Environment Movement in Solidarity for the Integrity of Creation
 Korea Christian Home
 Korea Christian Service
 Korea Church Human Rights Centre

The NCKK is organized in nine regional councils of churches: Kwong-Ju, Tae-Gu, Tae-Jeon, Pusan, Pyeong-Taek, Jeon-Ju, Jeong-Eup, Chung-Ju, Tae-Baek Council of Churches.

Website: www.kncc.or.kr

The National Council of Churches in Korea is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Anglican Church of Korea

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 65,000
 Dioceses: 3
 Parishes: 120
 Priests: 180
 Member of: WCC (1999) – CCA – NCKK – ACC

The Anglican Church of Korea grew out of missionary work from England which began in the late 19th century. After a fruitful beginning the work slowed down during Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945). In 1965 the first Korean bishop was ordained. Since the 1970s the church has increasingly expanded throughout the country. Educational and social institutions have played an important role in the development of the church. There are four religious communities. The theological seminary was upgraded in 1992 to become the Anglican University, in order to serve the needs of higher education.

The Anglican Church of Korea has from its beginnings endeavoured to be an indigenous church rooted in the Korean culture. It took nevertheless until 1993 before the church became an autonomous province within the Anglican Communion. Until that time the dioceses were under the direct jurisdiction of the archbishop of Canterbury.

Korean Methodist Church

Church Family: Methodist
 Membership: 1,500,000
 Annual Conferences: 12
 District Conferences: 207
 Parishes: 5,489
 Pastors: 8,306
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCKK – WMC
 Website: www.kmc.or.kr

The Korean Methodist Church grew out of foreign mission work which began in the late 19th century. The church celebrated its centennial in 1984. It became fully autonomous in 1930, retaining affiliation with denominational bodies in America which later merged into what is now the United Methodist Church. From the time it became autonomous, the entire leadership of the church has been national. In spite of difficulties during the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910-1945 and the devastating Korean War which followed the tragic division of the country in 1945, the church has continued to thrive. In the period 1960 to 1980 Korea was transformed from a predominantly rural society to an overwhelmingly urban and highly industrialized country, which has challenged the Korean Methodist Church in terms of its evangelism and social action. An annual conference in the southern part of the country was formed in 1991 as a result of evangelizing efforts. Another annual conference was set up to undertake the "Evangelistic Unification Movement" which aimed at evangelizing North Korea and re-building churches in the northern part of the peninsula (1993-1995). After going through a phase of rapid growth the membership of the KMC stabilized in the 1990s. In the years 1996-98 the KMC made a major effort for world mission and contributed to global cooperation by hosting the first Asia Methodist Convention in 2001.

To light the fire of revival again, an evangelistic campaign "3 Million Believers Evangelism Movement" was launched in 2002 in an effort to increase the membership to three million. The Honam Mission Conference in 2003 brought together 40,000 Methodists from all over the country in Kwang Ju city, 310 kms south of Seoul, to evangelize the people in this area where there are few Methodist churches. It was the climax of the campaign and became a successful example of fulfilling the evangelistic needs for the next decades.

The main campaign of Korean Methodism for the period 2004-2008 is "The Korean Methodist Church Giving Hope to the World". It includes the continuation of the "3 Million Movement" focusing on domestic mission and evangelism, and setting up a new system for social work and social sanctification, and encourages Korean missionaries all over the world to preach and witness the word of God among the nations, and to respond to global leadership in mission. A major event for the participation of the KMC in global mission will be the hosting of the 19th World Methodist Conference which will take place in Seoul in 2006, under the theme "God In Christ, Reconciling".

Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 334,520

Congregations: 998

Pastors: 830

Member of : WCC (1960) – CCA – NCCCK – WARC – NEAAC

Periodicals: *PROK News* (in English, periodically), *Hoebro* (in Korean, monthly)

The Presbyterian Church of Korea was established in 1907. In 1912, the first general assembly was held. Presbyterian missionaries from Australia, the United States and Canada came to Korea in increasing numbers in the following years. During the Japanese occupation (1910-1945) the church faced many difficulties. As Japan increased its pressure on Koreans by banning the use of the Korean language and Korean names, it also attempted to force Christians to worship at the Shinto shrine. In 1953 the Presbyterian Church faced another serious challenge, centred around theology and methods of biblical study taught at the then Chosun

Theological Seminary, now the Graduate School of Theology, Hanshin University. It developed into a conflict between two groups, those who were influenced by the conservative, fundamentalist theology propounded by the missionaries, including the leadership of the church, and those who stood for the freedom of learning theology and methods of historical critical interpretation of the Bible. The seminary upheld the theological tradition of Calvin and the Reformation and the faculty were deeply committed to developing higher theological education and articulating Christian theology from a Korean perspective. The conservative and fundamentalist faction would not accept this theology and the difference between the two groups became irreconcilable. The conflict divided the Presbyterians in 1953 into the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) and the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK).

The PROK is committed to participating in *Missio Dei*, God's salvation work in society and history. It upholds the spiritual importance of dialogue, engagement, diversity, and reconciliation. It has been serving the poor and the marginalized, the "Minjung", such as the disabled, farmers, the elderly, orphans, undocumented migrant workers, homeless teenagers, sex workers and, particularly since the implosion of the national economy, the unemployed and their families. The PROK has been a prophetic voice for democratization, human rights and reunification, protesting courageously against military dictatorship government. It took the initiative in sending humanitarian food aid, as well as funds, equipment and machinery to North Korea.

The PROK has developed an enduring commitment to ecumenism with strong partnerships with many churches around the world. It was the first Presbyterian denomination to ordain women as elders in 1956 and as ministers in 1974. It elected a woman elder as the lay vice-moderator of the 83rd general assembly in 1998, a first in Korean Presbyterian history. Recognizing that sectarianism is a serious problem facing the whole Presbyterian church, the PROK has led the dialogue among Presbyterian denominations which has resulted in the formation of the Council of Presbyterian Churches.

In 2003 with a major celebration of the milestone jubilee year, the PROK launched a Jubilee proclamation which declares its mission task to be:

- 1) To work for justice and peace by restoring earth's destroyed nature to the order of God's creation, so that the earth may become a true community of life.
- 2) To transform a culture of materialism and violence into a culture of life.
- 3) To work for reconciliation and peaceful reunification of our divided people.
- 4) To make every effort to unite the churches separated by division into "One Church".
- 5) To renew the church, that it may become the whole and perfect body of Christ.
- 6) To build equality between men and women and harmony between generations.
- 7) To share and serve in a spirit of love for our neighbours.

Presbyterian Church of Korea

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 2,395,323

Presbyteries: 61

Congregations: 6,978

Pastors: 10,950

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCKK – WARC – NEAAC – CWM

Periodical: *Kidok Kongbo in Korea* (weekly, in Korean)

The history of the Protestant church in Korea began in 1884, when the first Korean Christian, who was baptized in China by a Scottish missionary, founded a church in North-Eastern Korea. The New Testament was translated into Korean at that time. When the first Presbyterian missionaries from the US arrived in 1884 the Koreans already had the Bible in their own language. From 1884 onwards many missionaries from churches in the West came to Korea. They founded many schools, orphanages, hospitals, etc. The Presbyterian Theological Seminary was founded in 1901. With the devotion of the missionaries, the early Korean Christians were also overflowing with enthusiasm for evangelization and planting churches throughout the country. During that time, there was a special offering called “one day-offering” which meant that Christians happily devoted one day to evangelize. Because of this zeal for evangelism the churches in Korea grew rapidly in the first half of the 20th century.

Under the rule of the Japanese (1910-1945) the Korean church played a leading role in the 1919 independence movement. Koreans went through very hard times under Japanese colonialism. They were forced to worship at the Japanese shrines. Many Korean Christians who refused to do so, as it went against their faith to worship idols, were imprisoned and persecuted.

Overcoming these difficult times the Korean churches have grown up and are now among the biggest churches in the world. The Presbyterian Church celebrated the 120th anniversary of Protestant Christian mission in Korea in 2004. Facing the second century of its history, the PCK decided to change the emphasis of mission from growth in quantity to growth in quality, from the church being missioned to the church missioning. The PCK proclaimed the “Life Saving Movement for a Decade” and decided that the programme should go forward in all the congregations through the year 2012, aiming at unity, peace, social service, human rights, rural and fisheries ministry, medical mission, etc. In memory of the great revival movement of Korean churches in 1907, the PCK has initiated its centennial memorial celebration in 2007. In response to its mission to neighbours in the world, 799 missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of Korea are working in 77 countries.

MALAYSIA

Population: 25,324,813

Surface area: 329,800 sq.km

Capital: Kuala Lumpur

GNI per capita: 4,650 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Malay, English, other

Religions: Muslim 48%; Chinese folk-religion 24%; Christian 9%; Hindu 7%; Buddhist 7%; other 5%

Christianity: Catholics 1,142,208; Protestants 915,590; Independent 217,000

Malay kingdoms existed in the peninsula already in the 10th century. Islam arrived in the 14th century. The area was colonized successively by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British. The struggle for independence began after the Japanese occupation of World War II. The Federation of Malaya was founded in 1957. It became the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, when Sabah and Sarawak in northern Borneo, and Singapore were added. Singapore left the Federation in 1965. The population is made up of Malay, Chinese, Indian, indigenous groups,

and migrant workers from several parts of Asia. Islam (Sunni) is the official religion. Malaysia's policy is to maintain the ethnic and religious diversity in careful balance. The country has succeeded in building a modern economy based on production and processing of oil and petroleum, a high-tech manufacturing industry, and services. The Catholic Church is the oldest and largest Christian church. Protestant missions arrived in the 19th century. The Anglicans, which are part of the Province of South East Asia, are the largest protestant church, followed by the Methodist Church of Malaysia. There are several active Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. The Council of Churches is the ecumenical body. The National Evangelical Christian Fellowship, established in 1983, is affiliated with the WEA. These two bodies, and the Catholic Church, together form the broad-based Christian Federation of Malaysia. The Orthodox Syrian Church in Malaysia is part of the WCC through the Orthodox Syrian Church in India, to which it belongs.

***Council of Churches of Malaysia**

Founded in 1947 as the Malayan Christian Council, which became the Council of Churches in Malaysia and Singapore in 1948. In 1975 this Council split into two, one of them the Council of Churches of Malaysia.

Mission statement: Called into unity by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we seek to be the salt of the earth and light to the nation through the servant ministry of Christ.

Member churches:

- Diocese of Kuching (Anglican Church)
- Diocese of Sabah (Anglican Church)
- Diocese of West Malaysia (Anglican Church)
- Basel Christian Church of Malaysia
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore
- Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore
- Mar Thoma Syrian Church in Malaysia*
- Methodist Church (Chinese Annual Conference) Malaysia*
- Methodist Church (Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference) Malaysia*
- Methodist Church (Sarawak Iban Annual Conference) Malaysia*
- Methodist Church (Tamil Annual Conference) Malaysia*
- Methodist Church (Trinity Annual Conference) Malaysia*
- Orthodox Syrian Church in Malaysia*
- Presbyterian Church in Malaysia
- Protestant Church in Sabah*
- Salvation Army in Malaysia and Singapore

Associated organizations:

- Bible Society of Malaysia
- Boys' Brigade in Malaysia
- Girls' Brigade in Malaysia
- Malaysian Christian Association for Relief (Malaysian Care)
- National Council of YMCA Malaysia
- Young Women's Christian Association of Malaysia
- Seminari Theoloji Malaysia
- Sabah Theological Seminary
- Mobilization Fellowship of Malaysia
- Intercare Malaysia

The Council of Churches of Malaysia is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Website: www.ccmalaysia.org

Christian Federation of Malaysia

Founded in 1986.

Mission statement: We, who are Christians belonging to different Christian churches, denominations and organizations but professing the same Christian faith, have resolved to form the Christian Federation of Malaysia through which we, as a community, shall endeavour, together with other religious communities, to play our part as loyal and useful citizens of our nation.

Members:

Council of Churches of Malaysia
National Bishops' Conference of Malaysia
National Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Malaysia

Methodist Church in Malaysia

Church Family: Methodist
Membership: 97,197 confirmed; 58,315 preparatory
Congregations: 573
Pastors: 387
Member of: WCC (1977) – CCA – CCM – WMC

Methodist work began in Malaysia with the arrival of William F. Oldham in Singapore in 1855. The work of the mission grew in several directions. Singapore and Malaysia Methodists formed the Southeastern Asia Central Conference, along with the Methodists in Indonesia and Burma, in 1950. This general conference was an integral part of the General Conference of the Methodist Church (USA). In 1968, the general conference granted an enabling act for the annual conferences to constitute the affiliated autonomous Methodist Church in Malaysia and Singapore. In 1976 the Methodist Church in Malaysia and Singapore separated into two churches following national boundaries. Now each church has its own bishop. The MCM is no more a mission of the United Methodist Church in the USA. It is now a community of those who are committed to give according to their ability.

The general conference of the MCM is composed of six annual conferences formed on linguistic and cultural bases. In Peninsular Malaysia there are the Trinity Annual Conference (English-speaking), the Chinese Annual Conference (Chinese-speaking), and the Tamil Annual Conference (Tamil-speaking). In Sarawak, there are the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (Chinese-speaking), the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (Iban-speaking) and the Sabah Provisional Annual Conference (Chinese-speaking). This is due to the church's complex social composition and particular needs. The Trinity Annual Conference sponsors a Sengoi Methodist Mission Conference. This mission conference consists of indigenous people who are natives of Peninsular Malaysia.

Protestant Church in Sabah

Church Family: Lutheran
Membership: 30,000
Congregations: 307
Pastors: 144
Full time workers: 56
Member of: WCC (1975) – CCA – CCM – LWF

The roots of the Protestant Church in Sabah go back to German missionary work in Kudat in the beginning of the 20th century. But the PCS was founded in 1952 when the Basel Mission began to work among the Rungus people. The first converts were baptized in December 1952. In the years following, several villages embraced Christianity. Meetings of the headmen of the tribes were organized in order to facilitate evangelization. Another important factor was the training of lay people, not only biblical teaching but also language (Malay) and mathematics. The number of persons following the training was small but grew steadily. Gradually the Momogun people (one of the Rungus tribes) began to respond to the gospel. They noticed the difference between their way of life and that of the missionaries and the converts. They saw that the Christians among them were no longer bound by the traditional fears of evil spirits and other superstitions. Many sought to embrace the new faith. Today a truly indigenous church, the PCS consists of many indigenous tribes such as Rungus, Tobonuvo, Kimaragang, Garo and others. It has a Bible seminary with a four-year course for the training of pastors and a Bible school for shorter courses of one or two years. Since 1976 more than 200 people have been trained but not all serve full-time in the church.

In 1965 the constitution of the church was drafted and in 1967 it received official approval by the Basel Mission and the government of Malaysia. With the departure of the foreign missionaries in 1973, the Basel Christian Church in Malaysia (BCCM) came to support the church, and contacts were established with other Malaysian churches. From 1996, the PCS began to establish local congregations in the Peninsula (Western Malaysia) as well as in Singapore. It has also developed relationships with sister churches in Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of the island of Borneo.

The PCS acknowledges the holy scriptures – namely the Old and New Testaments – as the only basis of faith, with the Apostles' Creed as the safeguard of the faith. Each member is urged to take up the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel and witnessing to Christ.

MYANMAR

Population: 50,695,720

Surface area: 676,600 sq.km

Capital: Yangon

GDP per capita: 1,700 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Burmese, English, other

Religions: Buddhist 73%; Ethnic 13%; Christian 8%; Muslim 2%; Hindu 2%

Christianity: Protestants 2,792,120; Catholics 650,000; Anglicans 66,000;

Independent 651,920

The name of the country was changed in 1989 from Union of Burma to Myanmar. The first Burmese empire was founded in the 11th century. It was invaded by the British in the 19th century. After the Japanese occupation during World War II, the country became sovereign in 1948. From 1962 to 1990 it was ruled by a military dictator, and subsequently a military-controlled government was formed. Mass protests in 1988 were violently repressed, but did result in democratic elections in 1990, which were won by the National League for Democracy (NLD). The military refused to step down and since then have kept tight control of the country. The leader of the NLD, Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu

Kyi, has been under house arrest most of the time. The population of Myanmar is made up of many different ethnic groups. In the north, armed opposition to the central government has been going on for decades. The military were accused of imposing forced labour and committing many other human rights violations. Myanmar's economy is based on agriculture, gems, timber and oil. The majority of the population are poor peasants and workers. Catholic missionaries entered the area in the 16th century and Protestant missions began in the 19th century. The largest church is the Myanmar Baptist Convention. The Assemblies of God and numerous other Pentecostal and Evangelical churches are active and growing. The Myanmar Council of Churches is the ecumenical body. There is an Evangelical Christian Fellowship, affiliated with the WEA.

***Myanmar Council of Churches**

Founded in 1949 as Burma Christian Council, which became Burma Council of Churches in 1972 and was renamed Myanmar Council of Churches in 1989 (forerunner: the Burma Regional Council under the National Christian Council of India, Burma & Ceylon founded in 1914).

Basis: To be a member, a church must believe in the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as being testified by the holy scriptures, the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, and believe that the Bible gives the way to salvation for all humankind.

Member churches:

Church of the Province of Myanmar
 Evangelical Free Church of Myanmar
 Independent Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
 Lisu Christian Church of Myanmar
 Lutheran Bethlehem Church
Mara Evangelical Church
 Methodist Church, Lower Myanmar
Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar
Myanmar Baptist Convention
 Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
 Salvation Army, Myanmar Command
 Self-supporting Kayin Baptist Mission Society
 St Gabriel's Congregational Union Church

Co-operating bodies:

Association for Theological Education in Myanmar
 Bible Society of Myanmar
 Christian Literature Society of Myanmar
 Myanmar Christian Health Workers' Service Association
 Myanmar Youth for Christ
 National Christian Leprosy Mission Board
 National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar
 National ECLOF of Myanmar
 National YWCA of Myanmar

There are more than thirty regional and local councils of churches in seven states and seven divisions throughout the country.

The Myanmar Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Church of the Province of Myanmar

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 62,000

Parishes: 300

Priests: 125

Member of: WCC (1971) – CCA – MCC – ACC

Periodical: *Monthly Newsletter* (in Myanmar)

The Anglican Church was established in today's Myanmar by British army chaplains on the west coast around 1825. It was only in 1853 that the first missionaries arrived. The diocese of Calcutta had pastoral and administrative oversight over the church in Burma. In 1877 the diocese of Rangoon was inaugurated. After World War II, no foreign missions which were not already operating in the country before the war were allowed to enter. The last missionaries were asked to leave the country in 1966. The early emphasis on a trained leadership, lay and ordained, as well as on an educated laity in general has proved an invaluable asset to the church. The Province of Burma was formed in 1970 with four dioceses; there are now six.

The church is not involved in social work as this field of action is totally taken over by the government. In times of catastrophes affecting the country the church provides relief aid. The primary concerns of the church are evangelism, the training of clergy evangelists and the improvement of teaching programmes. The Church of the Province of Myanmar is actively involved with other member churches in the Myanmar Council of Churches.

Mara Evangelical Church*

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 19,810

Congregations: 97

Pastors: 50

Member of: WCC (2001) – CCA – MCC – WARC

The Mara people (formerly known as Lakher) are an ethnic group whose territory is situated on both sides of the border between India and Myanmar. In 1907 a British missionary couple began working among the Mara. Through their efforts and through the work of local evangelists and a series of revivals the entire Mara people were Christianized by 1960. At the independence of India and Burma the Mara were separated in two groups. In 1967 the church was also organized in two entities: the Evangelical Church of Maraland in India (the larger one), and the Mara Independent Evangelical Church in Burma (now Myanmar). In 1970 a split occurred in the latter, which lasted sixteen years. The break was healed in 1987, with the pastoral help of the Myanmar Council of Churches. The two parts adopted a new name, Mara Evangelical Church, to signify their unity.

The church "holds the faith in Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the world and worships one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit". It is evangelical in outlook and strongly committed to a holistic ministry combining evangelism and fullness of life. The church is sending evangelists to work among neighbouring ethnic groups. The MEC is ordered according to presbyterian principles. The ministries of elder and pastor have been traditionally reserved for men, but the church is now also encouraging women to assume these responsibilities.

For about ten years now several pastors of the MEC have been able to study in India, the UK and at the WCC's Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. These contacts have led to a strong desire to be part of the ecumenical movement. The leaders wish to break the isolation of the church, partly caused by its geographical location.

Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar

Church Family: Methodist
 Membership: 27,543
 Circuits: 45
 Districts: 8
 Congregations: 184
 Pastors : 65
 Deaconesses: 4
 Member of: WCC (1987) – CCA – MCC – WMC

The Methodist mission began in Upper Myanmar (formerly Upper Burma) in 1887, by the British Methodist Missionary Society. The basis was Mandalay. From there Methodism spread not only in the plains but also to the hill region. The Methodist Church (Upper Myanmar) became an autonomous church in 1964 because the government did not allow foreign missionaries to stay in the country. The Centenary thanks-giving service was celebrated in 1987. The missionaries had established a Bible training school which became the Theological Training Institution in 1937. The TTI was changed to Myanmar Theological College (MTC) in 1987 and was upgraded to offer a degree programme. The college is approaching its 75th jubilee in 2012, and is aiming at beginning an MD programme on that occasion. The church founded another college in Tahan District called Tahan Institute of Theology, which is affiliated with MTC.

The Methodist Church has gone through hardship and great distress during the past years but the storms are over and all the districts are doing their best to grow and strengthen the Christian community. The Tahan District established a clinic in 1987 where there are now 103 workers. A new branch was opened in 2004 in Letpanchaung District. The clinic conducts a "Community Sick Helper training" one-year course and training for HIV/AIDS care and counselling.

By the grace of God, the Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar is planning to celebrate its 125th anniversary in 2012.

Myanmar Baptist Convention

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 650,293 baptized; 618,588 non-baptized
 Local churches: 3944
 Pastors: 2544
 Unordained pastors: 6483
 Member of: WCC (1957) – CCA – MCC – BWA – ABF
 Periodical: *Myitta Taman Magazine* (monthly, in Myanmar)

The first Christian mission to arrive in present-day Myanmar was the Roman Catholic Barnabite Mission in 1722. In 1807 the English Baptists opened a mission but the first permanent Baptist Evangelists and mission came in 1813 from

America, under Adoniram Judson. During his life time, only the Burman, Mon and Karen ethnic groups responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. At his death in 1850, there were 74 churches and 7904 baptized members. Gradually the Baptist mission spread out to all the peoples in Myanmar. In 1865, the Baptist churches in Burma organized themselves under the name “Burma Baptist Missionary Convention”. In 1954, the name was changed to Burma Baptist Convention. Today, the Myanmar Baptist Convention represents all Baptists in the country. Its beliefs and practices are according to the Baptist principles and polity in general. The main purposes of the MBC are: a) to preach and propagate the good news of Jesus Christ in Myanmar and throughout the whole world; b) to abide in Baptist faith and practice; c) to educate its members for Christian maturity and discipleship; d) to be united with other Christians in Christ for mission and service; and e) to be good citizens of the country.

Myanmar (Burma) has a population of over 50 million. Buddhism is the majority religion, Christians form a minority. The Baptists are the largest protestant denomination in the country. All the Baptist churches aim to be self-supporting and holistic in development, and the members are called to identify themselves as Christians and good citizens. The MBC has undertaken the “Golden Myanmar Baptist Mission” which aims at evangelizing the majority of people of the country for the transformation and betterment of the society. The MBC has taken an active part in the Myanmar Council of Churches from the beginning. Politically Myanmar is heading towards a democratic government and to a market economy and it is one of the ASEAN countries.

NEPAL

National Council of Churches of Nepal

Founded in 1999.

Mission statement: To unite the Christian community in Nepal, equip them spiritually; encourage them to be involved in social issues and work for the betterment of society.

Vision: We envision a better society with peace, justice, equality, religious harmony, faith in God and fullness of life for all.

Basis of membership: Any individual or church or organization which subscribes to the objectives of the NCCN.

Member churches:

The NCCN is establishing a process for the membership of churches. It has been working on the basis of issues. More than 700 church leaders representing over 100 churches have participated in the capacity-building programmes organized by the NCCN.

Website: www.nccnepal.org

PAKISTAN

Population: 161,150,580
 Surface area: 796,100 sq.km
 Capital: Islamabad
 GNI per capita: 600 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Urdu, English, other
 Religions: Muslim 96%; Christian 3%; other 1%
 Christianity: Protestants 1,976,640; Catholics 1,450,000; Independent 805,510

The region of today's Pakistan has been the site of the Indus Valley civilization, and has been occupied by the Aryans, Persians, Greeks, and later the Arabs, Turks, and Moghuls. With the Arabs came Islamization, and the foundation of Islamic rule. The territory was colonized by the British in the 19th century and became part of British India. The independence of India in 1947, and the partition of the sub-continent that followed, resulted in the creation of Pakistan consisting of two parts, on the western and eastern sides of India. In 1971, Eastern Pakistan separated and became Bangladesh. Pakistan has been ruled by both democratic and military governments. Relationships with India have always been tense, because of the unresolved problem of the Punjab. Pakistan has traditionally been allied with the West, and has supported the USA in their fight against the Taliban and terrorism, but is facing internal problems with radical Islamic movements. The economy is based on agriculture and manufacturing industry. The majority of the population depends on subsistence farming and is poor. Pakistan is an Islamic Republic since 1956. The Christians are a small minority. Christianity reached the area as early as the 8th century, but churches were not established until Catholic and Protestant missions arrived in the 19th century. In 1970 the Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, and part of the Presbyterians, united to form the Church of Pakistan. There are several Presbyterian, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. The National Council of Churches is the ecumenical body, the Evangelical Fellowship is affiliated with the WEA.

National Council of Churches in Pakistan

Founded in 1948 as the West Pakistan Christian Council, which became the National Council of Churches in Pakistan in 1975 (forerunner: the North West India Christian Council).

Basis of membership: The council is the representative organization of the Protestant churches and missions working in Pakistan, and which hold the following faith of confession: "We hold the faith that the Church has ever held in Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the world, in whom men and women are saved by grace through faith, in accordance with the revelation of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We accept the holy scripture of the New and Old Testament as containing all things necessary to salvation, as the ultimate standard of faith."

Member churches:

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
Church of Pakistan (all 8 dioceses)
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
 Salvation Army

Associate members:

ABADAT
 Adult Basic Education Society

Christian Study Centre
 Church World Service – Pakistan
 Gujranwala Theological Seminary
 Pakistan Bible Society
 Pakistan Campus Crusade for Christ
 Pakistan Christian Blind Society
 Punjab Religious Book Society.
 Student Christian Movement of Pakistan
 Technical Services Association
 Young Men Christian Association
 Young Women Christian Association

The National Council of Churches in Pakistan is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Church of Pakistan

Church Family: United and Uniting
 Membership: 500,000
 Dioceses: 8
 Parishes: 460
 Bishops: 8
 Pastors: 600
 Member of: WCC (1971) – CCA – NCCP – WARC – WMC – ACC

The history of the churches in Pakistan is part of the history of Christianity in the Indian sub-continent. Their beginnings can be traced to the work of several Christian missions from the 16th century onwards. Pakistan came into existence when British rule ended on the sub-continent in 1947. The predominantly Muslim areas in the west and in the east became a separate state, with over a thousand miles of Indian territory in between. The eastern province broke away in 1971. The Church of Pakistan is the result of the union of four denominations: Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran and Presbyterian (Scottish), which took place in 1970. The United Presbyterian Church which had been involved in the negotiations did not join. Initially there were four dioceses in the Church of Pakistan, i.e. Karachi, Multan, Lahore and Sialkot, but in 1980, through a special resolution and for better ministerial work, four new dioceses were created: Hyderabad, Raiwind, Faisalabad and Peshawar. There are eight active diocesan bishops with an additional bishop for the Gulf Ministries. This appointment was made to take care of the pastoral and worship needs of Urdu-speaking workers in the Gulf. There is a presiding bishop for the Church of Pakistan who is known as the moderator and has responsibility for a three-year term. The United Church of Pakistan is the second largest church in the country after the Roman Catholic Church.

Christians form two percent of the population of Pakistan, which is approximately 140 million; 97 percent are Muslims. Christian scholars, teachers, social workers and lawyers are appreciated for their contributions, but face problems of identity and full participation in the social and political life of the country. There is no legal bar to evangelistic work, but the propagation of the gospel is not always welcomed. Most of the educational institutions like colleges and schools have been nationalized and operate under the control and direction of the government. The Church of Pakistan has initiated some significant steps to continue its role in education in the light of the policy of nationalization. Schools that were nationalized in 1972 have been returned to the church. The largest, Forman Christian College Lahore, was given back to the Presbyterian Church in 2003. It is hoped that in due course other colleges will also be returned. Outstanding institutions include

United Christian Hospital, Gujranwala Theological Seminary, St Thomas Theological College Karachi, Edwardes College Peshawar, Mission Hospital Sahiwal and Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore.

Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 400,000

Presbyteries: 27

Congregations : 340

Pastors: 330

Member of: WCC (1961) – CCA – NCCP – WARC

The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (PCP) was constituted in 1993. It has a long history rooted in the establishment of the Lahore Church Council of the United Church of Pakistan and the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Pakistan. Presbyterian mission in the area was started in 1854 by the United Presbyterian Church of North America. The first presbytery was formed in 1859 and the synod of Punjab in 1893, which was declared autonomous in 1961 under the name United Presbyterian Church of Pakistan. The purpose of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan is to make the work of God known to all and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ through word, thoughts and deeds. The church is organized in sessions (the basic unit which comprises a pastor and a few elders), presbyteries (which consist of at least ten sessions) and the general assembly, which is the highest authority and meets annually.

The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan is actively engaged in evangelism, education, health care, literacy, agriculture and social welfare. Evangelization is done by pastors, evangelists and lay workers and includes the spiritual nurture of the members of the church, church planting and growth, and the building of churches and parsonages. The church's educational work suffered from the nationalization of the schools in 1972, but the church has established new primary, middle and high schools for boys and girls, and boarding houses for students. The PCP runs two hospitals and provides health education for the people. It began the work of literacy in Pakistan which is now carried out by an NGO, and continues to cooperate with the government to promote literacy. The Presbyterian Church is also the initiator of theological education in Pakistan, through a seminary for candidates for the ministry and extension classes for lay people. Agricultural services focus on helping the peasants with techniques of production, preservation of seeds, fertilizers etc. Through its social welfare the church assists the needy, the sick, the disabled, the poor and oppressed. The PCP is also involved in human rights, especially women's rights, minorities and child labour. Its main priorities for the future are women, children, and youth ministries. The church wants to care especially for rural communities in order that they may also enjoy the abundant life in Christ.

PHILIPPINES

Population: 82,808,513

Surface area: 300,000 sq.km

Capital: Manila

GNI per capita: 1,080 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Filipino (Tagalog), Ilokono, English, other

Religions: Christian 85%; Muslim 4%; Indigenous 4%; other

Christianity: Catholics 68,252,000; Protestants 5,196,420; Anglicans 129,000; Independent 18,600,040 (double affiliation).

The Philippines consist of an archipelago of over 7,000 islands, which was inhabited long before it was colonized by the Spanish in the 16th century. In 1898 Spain ceded its colony to the USA after the Spanish-American war. Occupied by Japan during World War II, the Philippines became independent in 1946. For 21 years the country was under the corrupt and authoritarian regime of President Marcos, who was ousted in 1986 by a peaceful popular uprising. Popular resistance to the neo-colonial domination of the ruling elite, and the struggle for democracy, land reform, gender equality and social transformation remain strong. In the southern island of Mindanao, where the Muslim minority is concentrated, a separatist movement fought for independence until 1996, when a treaty was signed. The economy of the Philippines is based on agriculture and the manufacturing industry. Increasing poverty has forced many Filipinos to seek work elsewhere in Asia, Europe and North America. The Philippines is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia, with a majority Catholic Church, established under the Spanish rule. Several large independent churches have separated from the Catholic Church. Protestant missions arrived during the early 20th century. The National Council of Churches was formed in 1963 as an ecumenical group of the "mainline" Protestant churches, committed to unity and service, human rights and social justice. There is some cooperation with the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, which is affiliated with the WEA. Several large Pentecostal and Evangelical denominations make up about 50 percent of the Protestants.

***National Council of Churches in the Philippines**

Founded in 1963 (forerunners: the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches in 1949, Philippine Federation of Evangelical Churches in 1939, National Christian Council in 1929, Evangelical Union in 1901, Missionary Alliance in 1900).

Basis: The National Council of Churches in the Philippines is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and, therefore, seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christian organizations other than churches may be received as associate members.

Member churches:

Apostolic Catholic Church

Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches

Episcopal Church in the Philippines

Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en Las Islas Filipinas

Iglesia Filipina Independiente

Iglesia Unida Ekyumenikal

Lutheran Church in the Philippines

The Salvation Army
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
United Methodist Church

Associate members:

Association of Schools and Colleges
 Consortium of Christian Organizations for Urban Development
 Ecumenical Church Foundation, Inc. (ECLOF)
 Kaisahang Buhay Foundation
 Lingap Pangkabataan, Inc.
 Manila Community Services
 Philippine Bible Society
 Student Christian Movement of the Philippines
 Union Church of Manila

The NCCP is organized in ten regional ecumenical councils: Cordillera, Cagayan Valley, Pangasinan-Ilocos-La Union-Abra, Romblon-Mindoro, Palawan, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Cotabato, Misamis Oriental-Camiguin-Butuan-Lanao, Basilan-Zamboanga-Misamis Occidental Regional Ecumenical Council.

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 100,000
 Local churches: 749
 Pastors: 1,000
 Member of: WCC (2001) – CCA – NCCP – BWA – ABF
 Periodical: *Ang Manugbantala-Herald* (quarterly, in Filipino)

The Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches was formed in 1935 and became fully autonomous in 1969. Its origins go back to the work of Baptist missionaries from Sweden. At a later stage, links were developed and maintained with the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. Originally the work was confined to the Visayas region. While this is still the centre of the CPBC, the church has spread to the islands of Luzon and Mindanao and is now represented throughout the country. Since 1979 the CPBC ordains women and almost half of the local churches are led by women.

The Convention places particular emphasis on educational programmes. Its Christian Education department has the task to help the local churches develop a ministry through which “people and communities are continuously renewed, nurtured, transformed and empowered faithfully to participate in God’s redemptive acts towards a fuller manifestation of God’s reign”. A department for theological education and ministerial concerns has been established to coordinate theological schools and Bible colleges and organize continuing education programmes for pastors. Another important area of activities is development ministries, which include work with indigenous peoples, ecological programmes, adult literacy programmes and support of work of cooperatives. The CPBC has also a department for evangelization and mission, which conducts training for the churches to do evangelization and coordinates actions related to revival work.

Episcopal Church in the Philippines

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 125,000
 Dioceses: 6
 Congregations: 513
 Clergy: 289
 Member of: WCC (1991) – CCA – NCCP – ACC
 Website: www.philippines.anglican.org

The beginning of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines was a worship service in Manila in 1898 for Americans and other English-speaking people conducted by an Episcopal Church chaplain in the US Armed Forces. A mission to Chinese migrants in Manila was started and the bishop of Shanghai was appointed to oversee the church work in the Philippines. In 1901 the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA admitted the church as the Mission District of the Philippine Islands and elected its first bishop. In 1937 the church was allowed to use the name Philippine Episcopal Church. In 1990 it was inaugurated as an autonomous church and a province of the Anglican Communion with the name Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP).

At the time of the formation of the ECP all the inhabitants of the country were Roman Catholic with the exception of the Muslims in the south and tribal people in the mountains. The policy of the first bishop of the ECP was “no altar over against another altar and no planting of churches over against another church”. Thus the ECP started and formed its membership and congregations by the conversion of non-Christian inhabitants, i.e. the Chinese migrants in Manila and the tribal and indigenous peoples. The isolated mountain tribes were self-sustaining communities with no infrastructures for education, health, transport and communication. The Episcopal Church built churches for their souls, schools for their education and hospitals and clinics for their health. It also facilitated the building of roads. This evangelism policy of the ECP explains why most of the members of the church are from the indigenous people in the south and north of the country, and why it took this church 37 years to have its first ordained native clergy, and 69 years to have its first Filipino bishop.

According to its mission statement, the Episcopal Church in the Philippines exists to proclaim with integrity the fulfilling of God’s mission in the world by proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God: baptizing, teaching and nurturing new believers; responding to human needs by loving service; and seeking to transform unjust structures of society.

Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines

(Iglesia Evangélica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas, IEMELIF)

Church Family: Methodist
 Membership: 34,381
 Districts: 10
 Congregations: 225
 Bishop: 1
 Pastors: 196
 Deaconesses: 97
 Lay Preachers: 78
 Member of: WCC (1972) – CCA – NCCP – WMC
 Periodical: *IEMELIF Newsletter* (in Filipino and English)

Protestant missions started in the Philippines after the USA replaced Spain as the colonial power in the early 1900s. Among them were the Methodists. In the latter part of the first decade of the 20th century serious differences emerged between the Methodist missionaries and the Filipinos on the role of the latter in the running of church affairs. The intense spirit of nationalism that burned in their hearts led some Filipino church leaders to set up their own church that would be self-governing, self-sustaining, and self-propagating. Hence, in 1909, the Iglesia Evangélica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas (IEMELIF) was founded under the leadership of the first Filipino ordained pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The early leaders were simple people. Consequently, their ways and methods of evangelism were attuned to the temper of the ordinary Filipinos, which accounted for the early success in building the church. However, the membership has not grown significantly due to several schisms that occurred in the past.

The church's early polity was patterned after that of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The discipline and rituals of the IEMELIF followed those of the mother church and were used for over four decades. However, in 1948, the IEMELIF amended its discipline and lodged the responsibility for leading the church in its consistory of elders, composed of 11 ordained ministers and two lay persons. This discipline was used from then on, with minor amendments from time to time. In 2004, a new discipline was approved by the general conference which introduced major structural change in the church organizational set-up, although retaining the consistory of elders as the policy-making body while the general superintendent runs the affairs of the church.

At the turn of the 20th century, the church re-envisioned its role and the challenges it faces for the 21st century. By God's grace and anchoring itself in its own distinctive identity, the IEMELIF will focus in the near future on church growth in the Philippines and broaden its missions abroad. The church will celebrate its centenary in the year 2009. At this early stage, preparations are being made for a meaningful celebration of this very significant event in the life of the church.

Philippine Independent Church

(Iglesia Filipina Independiente, IFI)

Church Family: Independent

Membership: 6,000,000

Dioceses: 33

Parishes: 726

Village Chapels: 2,218

Bishops: 44

Priests: 688

Deacons: 50

Lay readers: 470

Member of: WCC (1958) – CCA – NCCP

Periodical: *Ang Tagapunta* (The Sower)

Catholic missionary work started in the Philippines in 1565 when Augustinian missionaries arrived with the conquering Spanish army. Within a few years most of the population had been baptized. Franciscans, Jesuits and others joined the Augustinians in the 17th century. The church soon became an integral part of the colonial government. There were instances of protests and revolts against Spanish friars in the 17th and 18th centuries, but it was the 19th century that saw the emergence of organized struggle within the Filipino church. The martyrdom of three Filipino priests in 1872 raised nationalist consciousness. This culminated

in the 1896 Philippine Revolution; independence was proclaimed in 1898. That same year the Americans defeated the Spanish and took over the Philippines as a colony. The Filipino-American war ended in 1902 with the defeat of the Filipinos. It was in this context that the Philippine Independent Church was born in 1902, out of the aspiration of the Filipinos for genuine independence, democracy and abundant life.

Partly because of the appeal of nationalism, the church drew some two million former Roman Catholics into its membership. But in 1906 the supreme court ruled that all the churches they were using should be returned to the Roman Church. This seriously weakened the new denomination. Under the theological leadership of Bishop Gregorio Aglipay, the PIC adopted a Unitarian stance, but after his death in 1941 it returned to a more Catholic position and entered in 1961 into inter-communion with the Philippine Episcopal Church with which it now shares a seminary. Strong relationships were developed with other Anglican churches in the world and with Old Catholic churches, which eventually resulted in full communion with the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht. The PIC and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines signed a covenant of partnership in 1999.

The mission statement of the PIC says that as a community of faith steeped in the nationalist history and the workers' struggle in the Philippines, it affirms its commitment to its historical mission and ministry in empowering the poor, deprived and oppressed through its liberative education, organizing and mobilizing of the Filipino people in pursuing life in its fullness. The church envisions a Philippine nation that is free from foreign domination, where justice and peace reign, and whose people are united in active witness to God's love in the world.

The PIC now has two colleges in Manila and in Southern Leyte, three theological seminaries, 14 primary and secondary schools, and many kindergartens. It is much involved in peace-building ministry, human and democratic rights advocacy and ecumenical linkages. It pursues better Christian education and stewardship; the training of more dedicated priests and more aggressive campaigns against all forms of poverty are high on its agenda. Among its programme objectives the PIC seeks to fully inform its members of its history, mission and ministry, to enhance the interaction between national, diocesan and local levels, to establish effective instruments for the implementation of its activities and to achieve recognition as a pillar of Philippine society.

United Church of Christ in the Philippines

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 500,000

Congregations: 2,564

Pastors: 1,593

Lay workers: 1,894

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCP – WARC – WMC – UEM

Periodical: *United Church Letter*

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the largest and most widespread Protestant church in the country, came into being in 1948. It unites in one church the United Evangelical Church in the Philippines (a 1929 union of Presbyterian, Congregational and United Brethren churches with the small United Church of Manila), the Philippine Methodist Church and the Evangelical Church in the Philippines (a 1944 union of various Evangelical churches). The UCCP considers itself as an integral part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

of our Lord Jesus Christ, called to be a witness to the gospel of the kingdom of God as proclaimed in the life and ministry of our Lord as revealed in the scriptures, and empowered to participate in the ushering in of God's shalom throughout the whole creation.

The vision of the UCCP is to be a responsible, empowered, self-reliant and caring community of Christian believers committed to the pursuit of a transformed church and society, and an abundant and meaningful life for all. In light of this vision, the UCCP commits itself to the mission of establishing and uniting the community of faith for the proclamation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, towards the transformation of both church and society. The UCCP sees itself as journeying towards its next jubilee year carrying on a ministry and witness of proclaiming, articulating and activating the gospel of hope and promise to both its church members and the larger community, as expressed in the following mission statement:

"We, the members of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, affirming our common faith heritage and mandate, centred and founded in the living Christ, cognizant of our diverse historical traditions and experiences, but sensitive to the problems and challenges of the contemporary society where we are located, do commit ourselves to the pursuit of the following life purpose: to be a community living out Jesus' example as a servant-prophet to the people; to transform our life and work towards becoming a more effective witness to the church's vision; to be a faithful proclaimer of the gospel of shalom to and with the people; to work in solidarity with all other sectors and groups in society, and with other faith communities who share the UCCP's vision of society; to continue to work for unity and reconciliation among our own people. We intend to live out these life purposes drawing strength from the resources of our faith heritage, from the edifying traditions and lessons of our history as a church, from the stories of faith, hope and struggle of the Filipino people including the martyrs, and from the empowerment that can only come from the Holy Spirit."

Within the first five to ten years of its jubilee, the UCCP will translate its mission in three areas: strengthening the faith community; enriching the life-work of communities where local churches are located; deepening the impact of its collective response to societal issues and concerns.

SINGAPORE

Population: 4,371,513

Surface area: 680 sq.km

Capital: Singapore

GNI per capita: 24,220

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Malay, English, Chinese, other

Religions: Taoist 43%; Muslim 18%; Buddhist 15%; Christian 12%; Hindu 5%

Christianity: Catholics 210,000; Protestants 190,870; Anglicans 50,000; Independent 166,184

Singapore was under the Sultanate of Johore (Malaysia). It became a British colony in 1867. Occupied by Japan in World War II, it acquired the status of a self-governing colony in 1959, joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, and became independent in 1965. The island state developed rapidly from a situation of mass

poverty and lack of resources into a highly successful free-market economy based on manufacturing, export, and finance. Singapore has a very diverse population and a centrally regulated society, in which the freedom of individuals and groups is conditioned by the objective of stability and harmonious relationships between the different ethnic and religious groups. In 1987, the Christian Conference of Asia's headquarters in Singapore were closed by the government and it was expelled, accused of supporting "subversive movements". In 1991 Singapore introduced the "Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act", to regulate religions and religious activities. The Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches were established in Singapore during the colonial period. With the exception of the Catholics, they are together in the National Council of Churches. The Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) and other Charismatic and Evangelical churches came in the 20th century. The Mar Thoma and Orthodox Syrian churches are also present, among the Indian community. Singapore is a stronghold of the evangelical movement, also in the Protestant and Anglican churches. The Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore is affiliated with the WEA (which had its offices in Singapore at one time).

***National Council of Churches of Singapore**

Founded in 1974 (forerunners: the Council of Churches of Malaysia and Singapore founded in 1961, and the Malayan Christian Council of 1948).

Basis: The National Council of Churches of Singapore is founded on a common belief that God has revealed his eternal purpose for humankind in his Son, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the supreme standard of Christian faith and practice, and that the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds express our historical common faith; and as an association of churches and other Christian organizations, each believing that it is Christ's will that his body, the church, should again be visibly one, and each desiring to work towards this end.

Member churches:

- Anglican Diocese of Singapore
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Singapore
- Presbyterian Church in Singapore
- Lutheran Church in Singapore
- Methodist Church in Singapore*
- Salvation Army
- Mar Thoma Syrian Church*
- St Thomas Orthodox Syrian Church*

Associate members:

- Student Christian Movement
- YMCA Singapore
- YWCA Singapore

The National Council of Churches of Singapore is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Methodist Church in Singapore*

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 32,236

Congregations: 41

Bishop: 1

Pastors: 109

Member of: WCC (1977) – NCCS – WMC

Periodical: *Methodist Message* (in English) *Chinese Annual Conference News* (in Chinese, with most articles translated into English)

The Methodist Church in Singapore derives its beginnings from a missionary initiative of the South India Conference (Methodist) in 1885. The mission and its first English-language school were established in 1886. Thereafter the mission spread rapidly to the main towns of the Malayan Peninsula and Sarawak, where churches and schools were twinned. Like most other missions, the Methodist Mission in Singapore and Malaya expanded and matured – first becoming a conference, then conferences spanning South-East Asia, and the establishment of the South-East Asian Central Conference in 1950. The Malaysian and Singapore components became autonomous in 1968, and thus became an Asian church with a bishop elected from amongst its ministers. In 1976, the process was repeated when it was restructured into the Methodist Church in Singapore, and Malaysia, respectively.

The Methodist Church in Singapore is organized as a general conference composed of three annual conferences, i.e. the Chinese Annual Conference (CAC), Emmanuel Tamil Annual Conference (ETAC) and Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC). It is the largest Protestant denomination in Singapore. There are 15 schools – 13 primary and secondary schools, one junior college, and one school of music. The schools together have more than 22,000 students and 1,200 faculty.

The church has made a significant contribution to the nation. The 2000 census revealed that among those who get a university education, 33.5 per cent are Christians. Many national and community leaders are Christians. The MCS is also actively involved in helping the needy through its social arm, the Methodist Welfare Services (MWS). MWS runs 13 social service hubs, among them the Bethany Methodist Nursing Home. This home can accommodate 279 residents and has day-care facilities for 30 frail elderly.

The MCS also contributes to the needs in the region through its mission arm, the Methodist Missions Society (MMS), by planting churches and running schools, orphanages, women's shelters and clinics. MMS has a presence in Cambodia, China, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam.

A member of the National Council of Churches of Singapore, the MCS also maintains close relations with the United Methodist Church in the USA, the Methodist Church in Britain, the Methodist Church in Indonesia, the Methodist Church in Malaysia and other Asian Methodist churches. The MCS is a founding member of the Asian Methodist Council (AMC), which was established in Seoul, South Korea, in June 2002. With its establishment, Asian Methodists have a common platform to do mission work and a voice in world forums.

SRI LANKA

Population: 19,366,334

Surface area: 65,610 sq.km

Capital: Colombo

GNI per capita: 1,010 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Sinhalese, Malayalam, English, other

Religions: Buddhist 68%; Hindu 11%; Christian 9%; Muslim 9%

Christianity: Catholics 1,361,680; Protestants 182,250; Anglicans 54,000;

Independent 146,340

The Sinhalese arrived in the island in the 6th century BC, probably from northern India. Buddhism was introduced a few centuries later, and became the main religion. Tamils, also from India, established themselves on the northern and eastern parts of the island. Some were brought by the British, as indentured labour. Ceylon became part of the British empire in 1815. It gained independence in 1948, and changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1972. The Sinhalese constitute 74 percent of the population, the Tamils 10 percent. Since 1983, the country has suffered a violent civil war between the Tamil Liberation movement and the government. A cease-fire was signed in 2001, with the help of Norway. In 2005, negotiations for a political solution were still going on. Sri Lanka's economy is based on agriculture, processing and manufacturing industries, and tourism, which has been affected by the on-going conflict. The majority of the population is poor and depends on subsistence farming. The island was hit hard by the tsunami of December 2004. The Catholic Church is the oldest and largest church. Methodism and Anglicanism came in the 19th century. There is a large Assemblies of God church (Pentecostal). The National Christian Council is the ecumenical body, and the Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka is affiliated with the WEA. Christians are a minority in Sri Lanka. Some groups have created tensions because of their aggressive methods of evangelism. The Catholic Church, the National Christian Council, and the Evangelical Alliance have cooperated in trying to maintain peaceful relations with the Buddhists and others.

***National Christian Council of Sri Lanka**

Founded in 1945 (forerunners: the Christian Council of India, Burma & Ceylon formed in 1923, the Christian Council in Ceylon, 1922, the Ceylon Representative Council of Missions, 1920, and the All Ceylon Conference of 1912).

Basis: To affirm and confess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and to seek together to fulfill the common calling, to the glory of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The vision of the NCCSL is to cooperate with God in the establishment of the reign of God here on earth through ecumenical encounter and witness.

Member churches:

Church of Ceylon – Diocese of Colombo

Church of Ceylon – Diocese of Kurunegala

Church of South India – Jaffna Diocese

Dutch Reformed Church

Methodist Church

Presbytery of Lanka

Salvation Army

Sri Lanka Baptist Sangarnaya

Ecumenical organizations:

Ceylon Bible Society
 Christian Literature Society
 Student Christian Movement
 Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association

The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Church of Ceylon

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 50,000
 Parishes: 175
 Priests: 138
 Lay workers: 50
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – NCCSL – ACC

The diocese of Colombo was founded in 1845 as the diocese of the Church of England in Ceylon with its own bishop. Earlier, it had been part of the diocese of Calcutta and later Madras. In 1930 the Anglican Church in India separated from the Church of England and became the Province of India, Burma and Ceylon, still within the worldwide fellowship of the Anglican Communion. In 1947, churches of South India united to form the new Church of South India. The churches in North India and Pakistan followed thereafter. Burma and Bangladesh formed their own church and Sri Lanka therefore became extra-provincial within the Anglican Communion under the metropolitical authority of the archbishop of Canterbury. In 1950 the diocese of Kurunegala was carved out of the diocese of Colombo to include parts of the North-Western, North-Central and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka.

In spite of the fact that Sri Lanka is close to India, it is very conscious of having a history and a culture of its own. It was evident from the beginning that, if Sri Lanka as a whole was to have a united church, it must work in its own way and produce its own independent scheme. The first step towards union was taken in 1934. In 1941, an official committee, representing all the churches that were members of the National Christian Council of Ceylon, was formed. The Anglican diocese of Colombo did not join the Church of South India. The mission of the American Board of Foreign Missions (now UCC, USA) in the north of Ceylon was part of the old South India United Church and therefore joined the Church of South India as the diocese of Jaffna.

The movement towards church union in Sri Lanka – involving the Anglican dioceses of Colombo and Kurunagala, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Jaffna diocese of the Church of South India, and the churches of the Presbytery of Lanka – is still active in spite of decades of delays resulting from various legal disputes. Church union proposals hitherto pursued remain. A wider dimension of ecumenical participation has grown. Conversations are being held between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Sri Lanka for closer fellowship and participation at all possible levels.

With the inauguration of two new archdeaconries in the diocese of Colombo – one for the hill country and the East, in Nuwara Eliya, and the other for the South and South-West, in Galle, there are now four archdeaconries. The other two are Colombo, covering the city, the north-west coast and Sabaragamuwa; and Jaffna covering the Northern Province. This step ensures intensification of mission and

more integrated participation in all departments of work. The diocese of Kurunegala has one archdeaconry.

Methodist Church, Sri Lanka

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 32,000

Congregations: 155

Pastors: 95

Evangelists: 70

Member of: WCC (1950) – CCA – NCCSL – WMC

Methodist mission began in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1814, with the arrival of a team of missionaries sent by the British Conference. At the 150th anniversary, in 1964, the Conference of the Methodist Church, Ceylon received its full autonomy. From the very beginning education has had an important role and schools were established in many places. Of the 177 Methodist schools in 1960, 175 were taken over by the government that year. The church retained one school for boys and one for girls. It has gone into pre-school education, setting up 37 pre-schools, 15 day-care centres, 22 childrens' homes and 25 nutrition feeding centres, serving the poorest of the poor children. The church has a vigorous social service programme with six homes for the elderly, a ministry for the deaf, a hospital and a few clinics, several vocational training projects, two farms and three refugee camps. The Wesley Press, the first printing press in Sri Lanka, is involved in publishing and runs a bookshop.

The evangelists of the Methodist Church are working in frontier areas. New work has begun in some thirty villages and the church is seeking to establish 500 new communities. It is also experimenting with new forms of liturgy, introducing creative, indigenous models of worship. The youth department overlooks the work of the Wesley Guilds, Senior and Junior, the Youth Fellowships and Bible/Sunday schools. The membership of the church is larger than the present figure suggests, because statistics from some areas in the north are not available due to the civil conflict. The ministers are trained at the Theological College of Lanka, an ecumenical institution. The Methodist Church runs two evangelist training colleges for the formation of its evangelists.

With about 45 percent Tamil and 55 percent Sinhala members, the Methodist Church is in a unique position to witness to the unity in Christ. Peace and reconciliation projects include caring for victims of violence, peace education and conflict resolution workshops, exchange programmes for young people belonging to different ethnic communities, statements, peace walks, and mediation in times of ethnic conflict. The interfaith seminars on the peace process, organized by the Methodist Church, have brought together Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities. The church has taken an active part in rehabilitation after the tsunami disaster of December 2004.

THAILAND

Population: 64,081,371
 Surface area: 513,100 sq.km
 Capital: Bangkok
 GNI per capita: 2,540 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages : Thai, English, other
 Religions: Buddhist 94%; Muslim 5%; Christian 1%
 Christianity: Protestants 299,320; Catholics 290,000; Independent 235,140

Known as Siam until 1939, Thailand is the only country in southern Asia that was never under colonial rule. It dates its history as a national kingdom to 1238. The constitutional monarchy was established in 1932. During World War II, Thailand was loosely allied with Japan. The latter half of the 20th century was marked by a number of military coups. In 1995, a new democratic government was elected. Thailand is a Buddhist country. The king is the protector of Thai Buddhism and a symbol of national identity and unity. The population is majority Thai, with smaller groups of Lao, Chinese, tribal people, and Malays, who are Muslim. Tensions with some Islamic groups in the south erupted in 2004 and 2005. Thailand has built a modern and performing economy, based on the production and export of rice, rubber, jewelry, textile, electronic and other manufactured goods, and tourism. In the rural areas subsistence farming is still the main source of livelihood. Thailand was one of the countries hit by the tsunami of December 2004. Catholic missionaries began working in Siam in the 17th and Protestants in the 19th century. Many other churches and groups came after World War II. In spite of these efforts, Christians remain a tiny minority. The Church of Christ in Thailand and the Karen Baptist Convention are the largest Protestant churches. The Church of Christ and the Catholic Church have a joint committee. The Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand regroups a large number of Pentecostal and other churches and groups, and is affiliated with the WEA.

Church of Christ in Thailand

Church Family: United and Uniting
 Membership: 130,000
 Districts: 19
 Congregations: 550
 Other worshipping Groups: 400
 Pastors: 530
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCA – WARC
 Periodical: *Church News* (in Thai)

French Roman Catholic priests began work in Siam in 1662. From 1828 onwards several Protestant missionary groups started mission work in the kingdom, but by the end of the 19th century it was almost entirely the responsibility of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. This mission became the Church of Christ in Thailand in 1934. After World War II other Protestant groups began to enter the country; some of them affiliated with the CCT, others did not. By 1976 the Church of Christ in Thailand was a completely self-governing Thai church. Workers from other countries were still welcome, and today they include missionaries from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Korea, Philippines, Japan and Taiwan, with an increasing percentage coming from Asian countries.

The CCT represents half of the Protestant community in Thailand. Its evangelistic programme uses both the modern media and Thai cultural forms, besides more traditional approaches. The church runs two universities, two theological seminaries, seven hospitals, a rehabilitation institute for leprosy patients and other physically disadvantaged persons, about 30 schools, a Student Christian Centre, and it is entering into a ministry for the very young, and the elderly. The CCT has played an important role in the development of the musical life of Thailand. Social work is carried out in the slum communities of Bangkok, and agricultural and community development programmes are conducted in rural areas. The church took the initiative in organizing relief work among Cambodian refugees in the 1970s and, in cooperation with other agencies, it still plays a part in the work among refugees, now mainly from neighbouring Myanmar.

Local congregations support the presbyterian and national structures and ministries of the church by contributions amounting to one-tenth of their income. Other income comes by way of contributions from some of the church's institutions. The CCT is a member of a national committee representing all Protestant groups in the country. It joins the Roman Catholic Church in arranging services during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Through its Institute for the Study of Religion and Culture it seeks to foster interreligious understanding and dialogue.

TIMOR LOROSA'E

Population: 857,405

Surface area: 14,870 sq.km

Capital: Dili

GNI per capita: 550 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Portuguese, Indonesian, other

Religions: Christian 93%; Muslim 5%; Hindu and Buddhist 2%

Christianity: Catholics 727,209; Protestants 52,000

Timor Lorosa'e is the youngest nation in Asia. It is located on the eastern half of the island of Timor, in the Indonesian archipelago. East Timor was a Portuguese colony until 1975, when the democratization of Portugal made it possible to declare independence. In view of the internal political struggle, the country was immediately invaded and occupied by Indonesia. It is estimated that the Indonesian military action against the East Timor Liberation Front and forced pacification in the twenty-five years of occupation took up to 200,000 lives. In 1999, in a UN-supervised referendum, the population voted for independence. With the support of Indonesia, anti-independence militia conducted indiscriminate violence, killing thousands of people and forcing many more to flee into the mountains or to the western part of Timor. After a successful UN intervention, Timor Lorosa'e was internationally recognized in 2002. The UN assisted also with reconstruction and rehabilitation of the refugees and displaced. Timor Lorosa'e is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an economy that is almost entirely dependent on subsistence agriculture. An agreement has been signed with Australia about the exploitation of off-shore oil and gas reserves. The Catholic Church is the majority church. It has played an important role in the struggle leading up to independence. The Protestant Church of Timor Lorosa'e, although a small minority church, has also been a witness to justice and reconciliation. Another small church is the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal).

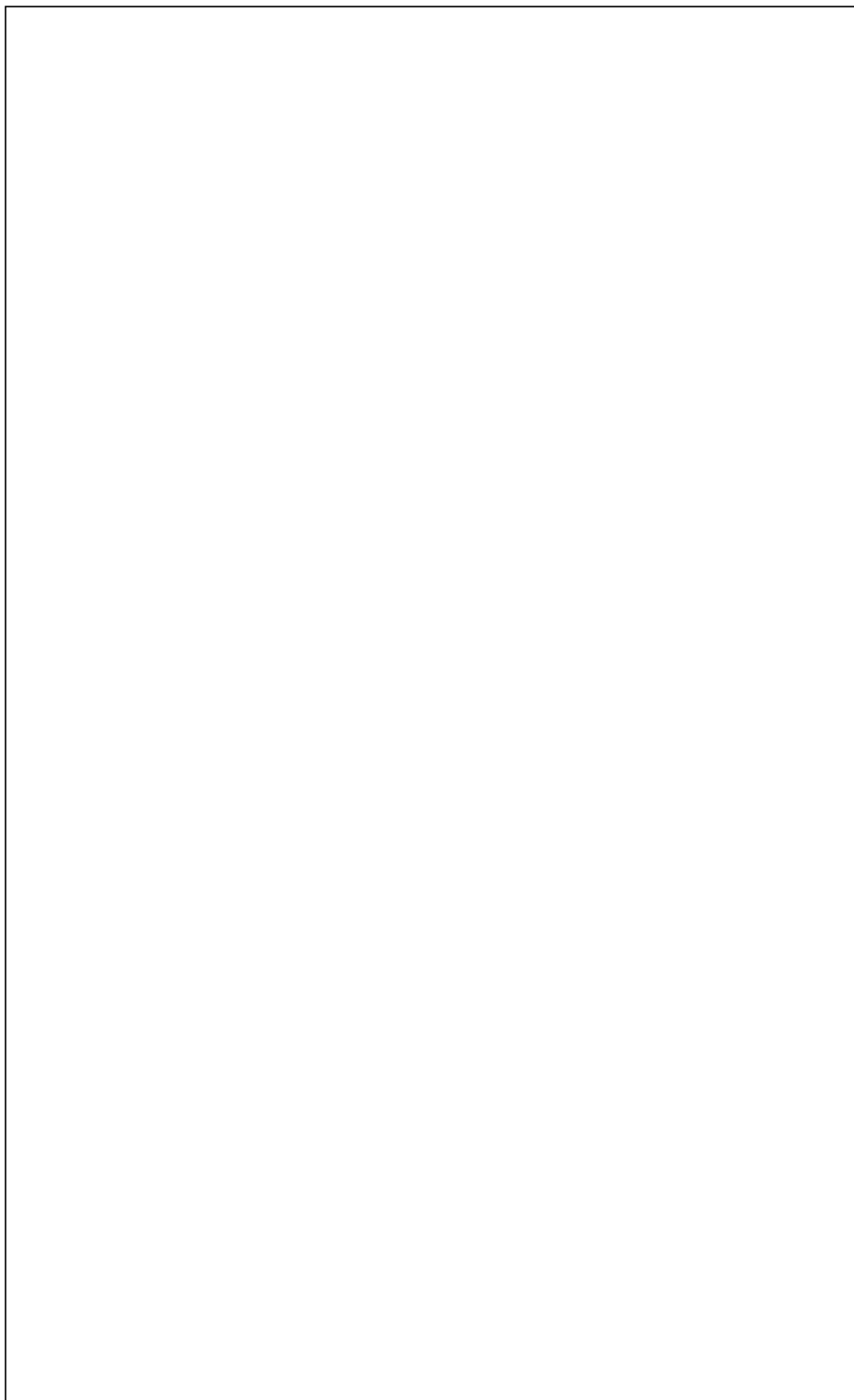
Protestant Church in Timor Lorosa'e

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 17,000
 Congregations: 66
 Pastors: 32
 Evangelists: 56
 Member of: WCC (1991) – CCA – WARC

This is the former Christian Church in East Timor which changed its name in 2000 when Timor Lorosa'e became independent. The church was established in 1988. It is not related directly to any missionary work in the past. The church was gradually formed by individual Protestant Christians among the East Timorese, who constituted small groups in the capital Dili and other places. After the occupation by Indonesia (in 1975) it spread all over East Timor. These groups decided to form an organization, to facilitate their common ministry. In 1979 the decision was taken to found a coordinating body called Protestant Church in East Timor, as a prototype of a synod, and in 1988 the synod was established.

Currently the church is involved in leadership training and on-going education of its pastors, to enhance their effectiveness and improve their pastoral skills. In the villages the emphasis is on the training of lay pastors and evangelists in the rural context, through intensive biblical studies, theology and ethics. Instruction is provided by faculty of the Christian University in Kupang. Some of the lay pastors will become candidates for ordination. The church provides also scholarships for young people in order to develop human resources for the future. It has a foundation to assist local congregations and communities. Another important programme is training of women, to enable them to fully assume their responsibilities in the family, the church and the community. The church has organized reconciliation meetings in many of its congregations. One of its pastors is a member of the National Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation. The church is taking a lead in the formation of a Council of Churches in Timor Lorosa'e. It has excellent working relationships with the Roman Catholic dioceses of Dili and Bacau. It is also developing important relationships with churches in neighbouring Indonesian provinces, particularly West Timor and Tanah Papua.

Caribbean



CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

The Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) is the regional ecumenical organization formed by churches in the Caribbean. From its inception it has had Roman Catholic membership, through the Antilles Episcopal Conference. Its role is to serve the churches in the cause of unity, renewal and joint action. The CCC is also one of the major development agencies at work in the region today.

The CCC grew out of Christian Action for Development in the Caribbean (CADEC) which later on became one of the two major departments of the CCC. The other was Action for the Renewal of the Churches (ARC). The founding assembly of the CCC took place in 1973, in Kingston, Jamaica. The preamble of its constitution reads: *"We, as Christian people of the Caribbean, because of our common calling in Christ, covenant to join together in a regional fellowship of churches for theological reflection, inspiration, consultation, and cooperative action, to overcome the challenges created by history, language, culture, class and distance. We are therefore deeply committed to promoting peace, the holistic development of our people and affirming social justice and the dignity of all persons. We pledge to journey together in Christ and to share our experiences for the strengthening of the kingdom of God in the world."*

The churches that make up the CCC represent a vast diversity of people and cultures, spread over many islands and mainland territories of south and central America, and function in four major languages (English, Spanish, French and Dutch). They share their common conviction that, despite the divisiveness of the long colonial heritage, there is an authentic, unifying Caribbean identity through which Caribbean people must articulate God's will for them and make their response to it. Over the years, they have together taken many initiatives in the areas of theology and Christian education, holistic development, youth and women's concerns, family life, human rights, and communications. Some of the most significant achievements of the CCC have been the media channels *Contact* and *Caribbeat*, the *Caribbean Contact* monthly newspaper and the textbook on Christian education *Fashion Me a People*.

The CCC has brought the Caribbean churches together in the following assemblies:

Kingston (Jamaica)	1973	(Inaugural Assembly)
Georgetown (Guyana)	1977	<i>Working Together with Christ</i>
Willemstad (Curaçao)	1981	<i>Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory</i>
Bridgetown (Barbados)	1986	<i>Jesus Christ: Justice, Hope, Peace</i>
Port of Spain (Trinidad & Tobago)	1991	<i>Participants in God's World – Preserve, Renew, Recreate</i>
Havana (Cuba)	1997	<i>New Vision, New Hope, New Life</i>
Panama City (Panama)	2005	<i>Healing and Transformation. Given in Christ, Fulfilled Through the Spirit</i>

In 1983, the mandate of the CCC was formulated to include the "promotion of ecumenism and social change in obedience to Jesus Christ and in solidarity with

the poor". Since then, the Conference has developed a strategic approach and implemented an integrated programmatic response to the many socio-economic issues and social ills impacting the Caribbean. Among these are endemic poverty, a high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection, drug-trafficking and addiction, and uprootedness as persons move from one territory to another in search of work and a better life. The policy of the CCC is a deeper ecclesial engagement with, and accompaniment of the member churches, through their existing agencies and institutions, and right down to the local congregations. The five major programme initiatives are:

- Priority Regional Initiatives (HIV/AIDS, drugs, violence, family, food, uprooted people)
- Sustainable Socio-economic Development (poverty reduction, project fund, disaster preparedness)
- Advocacy and Communications (public awareness, information, dialogue and exchange)
- International Relations (regional integration, solidarity visits), and cultural affairs.
- The Regional Ecumenical Institute (issues of theology, social justice, development, culture, etc.).

Along with these, the CCC has established a Regional Forum of National Councils of Churches (NCCs), as a space for greater networking of these councils in the region. The Forum has met annually since 2001. The CCC has 33 member churches in 33 countries. Councils of churches may hold the status of associated organizations. The regional office and one of three sub-regional offices of the CCC are located in Trinidad; the other two are in Jamaica and Antigua.

Website: www.ccc-caribe.org

Periodical: *Ecuscope Caribbean*

Member churches of the Caribbean Conference of Churches

African Methodist Episcopal Church
 Antilles Episcopal Conference (Roman Catholic) – Regional
 Christian Pentecostal Church – Cuba
 Christian Reformed Church of Cuba
Church in the Province of the West Indies (Anglican) – Regional
 Church of God (Ebenezer) – Haiti
 Congregational Union of Guyana
Episcopal Church of Dominica (Republic of Dominica)
 Episcopal Church of Cuba
Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Regional
 Evangelical Church of Dominica (Republic of Dominica)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church – Caribbean Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church – Suriname
 Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba
Jamaica Baptist Union
 Lutheran Church in Guyana
Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas
Methodist Church of Puerto Rico
Methodist Church in Cuba
 Moravian Church – Eastern West Indies Province
 Moravian Church – Guyana
 Moravian Church – Jamaica

Moravian Church – Suriname
Presbyterian Church in Grenada
Presbyterian Church of Guyana
Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago
Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba
Presbytery of Guyana
Reformed Church – Suriname
Salvation Army
Salvation Army – Cuba
United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
United Protestant Church of Curaçao

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Population: 78,580
 Surface area: 440 sq.km
 Capital: Saint Johns
 GNI per capita: 9,160 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Language: English, Creole
 Religions: Christian 93%; Spiritist 3%; other 3%
 Christianity: Protestants 29,990; Anglicans 21,200; Catholics 7,500

Antigua and Barbuda is a state in the Leeward Islands. It became independent in 1981, after more than three centuries of British colonial rule, and brief occupations by France in the 17th and 18th century, during which slaves were brought to the islands. Sugar cane plantations dominated the economy in the past. The agriculture has been diversified, and tourism is an important source of income. The WCC member churches present in Antigua and Barbuda are the Church of the Province of the West Indies (Anglican), the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, and the Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province. Together with the Catholic Church, which is relatively small, and the Salvation Army, these churches form the Antigua Christian Council. There is also a United Evangelical Association of Antigua and Barbuda, affiliated with the WEA. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a growing Evangelical church. Rastafarianism, an Afro-Caribbean religion brought to Antigua from Jamaica, has a following among the people of the islands.

Antigua Christian Council

Founded in 1941.

Basis of membership: Acceptance of the objectives of the Council and the unanimous vote of the member churches.

Member churches:

Roman Catholic Church
Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)
Methodist Church (in the Caribbean and the Americas)
 Salvation Army
Moravian Church (Eastern West Indies Province)

Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 62,120

District Synods: 8

Congregations: 700

Pastors and Deaconesses: 168

Member of: WCC (1967) – ACC – CCC – WMC – CIEMAL

Periodical: Annual Minutes of the Conference

The Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas was inaugurated in 1967 at the Methodist Conference Centre, St John's, Antigua. Beginning with the witness and preaching of the speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua in 1760, the work grew into a mission field of the Methodist Missionary Society of London. The first leader of the island's Methodists was appointed by the Baltimore Conference of 1784 as an elder. In 1786 several British ministers arrived, who were stationed in Antigua, St Kitts and St Vincent.

The conference comprises eight districts: Bahamas/Turks and Caicos Islands, Belize/Honduras, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Panama/Costa Rica and South Caribbean. The church therefore covers an area where English, French, Spanish, Dutch, French Creole, Papiamentu and Guyami (the language of the Guyami Indians of Panama) are spoken. Close ties have been maintained with British Methodists through its World Church Office in London, and both churches have a continuing interest in partnership and mission. There are strong and active relationships with the United Methodist Church (USA) and the United Church of Canada. Over the years, links have been established with other autonomous Methodist Conferences such as Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Ghana and Southern Africa.

The church has always been involved in ecumenical activity and, as a founding member, continues to be an active participant in the Caribbean Conference of Churches. The MCCA has among its objectives the releasing of a new spiritual dynamic in the territories, increasing the witness and service of the church, and mobilizing its resources to work for development and Christian unity.

Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 20,000

Congregations: 53

Bishops: 2

Pastors: 48

Lay pastors: 4

Member of: WCC (1971) – CCC – ACC – MUB

Periodical: *Information – A Newsletter of the Province*

In 1731, Nicholas von Zinzendorf attended the coronation of Christian VI of Denmark, where he met a slave of African descent from St Thomas, Danish West Indies. Zinzendorf invited him to Herrnhut, to give Moravians an eye-witness account of the terrible conditions of the slaves on the plantations. The result was that two Moravian missionaries went to St Thomas in 1732. Through their work, the Moravian Church in the Eastern West Indies was established. During the first century of its life, the church was administered by a mission board of Herrnhut. In 1879 a synodal province of the Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies, was constituted. The church was nevertheless greatly dependent on the continental

provinces until 1967, when it was granted full autonomy. The church is made up of six conferences (districts) on four Virgin Island territories in the north – St Thomas USVI, St John USVI, St Croix USVI, and Tortola BVI; the independent nations of St Kitts and Antigua in the Leeward Islands; the independent nation of Barbados, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the south.

The mission statement of the Moravian Church EWIP is: *By the grace of God, we seek to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ; without distinction, we use all that we possess to call all peoples to the truth of the gospel through worship, evangelism, discipleship and service.* The church is open to and draws its membership from all strata of society. It began as a church with a particular interest in the slave population of the region, but has become a church for all people. Worship in the Moravian Church EWIP includes ancient and modern hymns, written litanies, canticles, extemporaneous prayers, and contemporary songs and choruses. Organ music still features prominently, but in some congregations extensive use is made of the drum, steel pan, and tambourine. Having brought education to the slaves in the early mission years of its life, the church continues to pursue a social ministry in which pre-school education features prominently. It also seeks to equip its membership through lay leadership training programmes for the varied leadership roles which the laity play in the life of the church.

BAHAMAS

Population: 320,650

Surface area: 13,880 sq.km

Capital: Nassau

GNI per capita: 14,920 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: English, Creole

Religions: Christian 92%; Spiritist 2%

Christianity: Protestants 197,630; Catholics 48,600; Anglicans 24,600;
Independent 28,690

The Bahamas is constituted by a group of islands southeast of Florida (USA) and northeast of Cuba. Arawak Indians lived in the islands before the arrival of the Europeans. British settlement began in 1647 and the islands became a British colony in 1783. The Bahamas achieved independence in 1973. Although a developing country, Bahamas has a strong economy based on tourism and international banking and investment management. WCC member churches present in the Bahamas are the Church of the Province in the West Indies (Anglican), the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (USA). The largest Protestant church is the Baptist Union. Several Pentecostal churches from the USA are present in the Bahamas, e.g. the Church of God (Cleveland) and the Assemblies of God. The Bahamas Christian Council has a wide membership, including Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox and Pentecostals.

Bahamas Christian Council

Founded in 1948.

Mission statement: The Bahamas Christian Council is constituted to promote understanding and trust between the various parts of Christ's church in the

Bahamas at all levels; to further Christ's mission of service by joint action of Christians in the Bahamas; to witness for the Christian community in the Bahamas on matters of social or common concern.

Member churches:

Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)
 Assemblies of Brethren
 Bahamas National Baptist Union
Greek Orthodox Church
 Lutheran Church of Nassau
Methodist Church (Caribbean and the Americas)
 Pentecostal Church
 Roman Catholic Church
 Salvation Army
 Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Bahamas Christian Council is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Church in the Province of the West Indies

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 770,000
 Dioceses: 8
 Parishes: 260
 Congregations: 621
 Clergy: 449
 Bishops: 21
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCC – BCC – ACC

The Anglican Church came to the West Indies with the original British settlers during the 17th century. The clergy came as chaplains to governors, tutors to the families of wealthy planters or merchants and rectors of parishes. They were not under any ecclesiastical authority. The bishop of London ordained and licensed them but had no power to appoint or remove them. A significant change came in 1824 with the creation of the diocese of Jamaica (which included the Bahamas and the settlement in the Bay of Honduras) and the diocese of Barbados (which included the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, Tobago, Trinidad and Guyana). Later in the 19th century, six other dioceses were created to constitute the present eight. The Province of the West Indies was formally established in 1883. Venezuela, formerly part of the diocese of Trinidad, became a separate diocese in 1975 and separated from the province in 1980.

Initially the provincial synod consisted entirely of bishops. This was changed in 1959, when the synod became fully representative with the addition of clergy and laity. Meetings of synod are held every three years. The doctrinal stance of the province is set out in the following principles: The faith of the Lord Jesus Christ as taught in the holy scriptures, held in the primitive church, summed up in the creeds, and affirmed by the undisputed ecumenical councils; the faith, doctrine, sacraments and discipline of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, such as the Church of England has received the same; the Book of Common Prayer and the ordering of bishops, priests and deacons, as agreeable to the Word of God. The province disclaims for itself the right of altering any of the aforesaid standards of faith and doctrine.

The Anglican Church in this province is concerned to be the leaven for a diverse community, seeking to counter the problems of disunity, economic depen-

dence, and foreign domination. As the societies seek to unite, the church tries to keep alive issues of justice, peace and the integrity of life.

BARBADOS

Barbados Christian Council

Founded in 1976.

Basis of membership: The Barbados Christian Council is an association of churches in Barbados confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, and which through worship, witness and service seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

- African Methodist Episcopal Church*
- Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)*
- Catholic Church
- Church of God (Anderson)
- Ethiopian Orthodox Church*
- Methodist Church (Caribbean and Americas)*
- Moravian Church (Eastern West Indies Province)*
- Salvation Army

BELIZE

Belize Council of Churches

Founded in 1978 as the Belize Christian Council, which became the Belize Council of Churches in 1981.

Mission statement: Being the prophetic voice to the nation through Jesus Christ.

Member churches:

- Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)*
- Black Cross Nurses
- Chinese Church
- Chinese Mission
- Church of God
- Methodist Church (in the Caribbean and the Americas)*
- Presbyterian Church
- Quakers/Friends
- Roman Catholic Church
- Salvation Army

CUBA

Population: 11,353,321

Surface area: 110,900 sq.km

Capital: Havana

GNI per capita: 3,000 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Spanish

Religions: Christian 54%

Christianity: Catholics 5,300,000; Protestants 392,370; Orthodox 40,000;

Independent 208,540

The indigenous population of Cuba died out with the arrival of the Europeans in the 15th century. The island became a Spanish colony. Slaves were imported from Africa, to work on the sugar and coffee plantations. Cuba obtained its independence from Spain in 1902. Since the revolution led by Fidel Castro triumphed in 1959, the country is ruled by the Communist Party. The state has achieved much progress, especially in the areas of education, health, social services and agricultural and industrial production. During the cold war period Cuba was supported by the Soviet Union, while the USA imposed an economic blockade which is still in effect. Since the geo-political changes in the early 1990s, Cuba has suffered severely from the US policy. In spite of many protests, also from churches and groups in the USA, the US government has consistently maintained the restrictions. Christianity in Cuba has been subject to tight control and anti-religious measures by the regime, and the churches lost many members after the revolution. Some of the Protestant churches and ecumenical groups developed a theology of commitment to the objectives of the revolution and to the Cuban people. In the 1990s the government began to allow more freedom for the churches. Since then, there has been a remarkable revival, both in the life of the Christian communities, and in numbers. The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has made strong inroads. About 50 percent of the non-Catholic Christians are Pentecostal. The Catholic Church is also experiencing renewal.

***Cuban Council of Churches**

Founded in 1941 as the Cuban Council of Evangelical Churches, it later became the Cuban Ecumenical Council, and in 1995 the Cuban Council of Churches.

Basis: The Cuban Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches, ecumenical groups, and other ecumenical organizations which confess Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour, according to the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and seek to respond to their common calling, to the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ

Christian Pentecostal Church

Christian Reformed Church

Church of Christ

Church of God in Cuba

Church of the Friends (Quakers)

Church of the Nazarene

Congregational Pentecostal Church

Episcopal Church (Anglican)

Evangelical Church Gethsemane

Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession
 Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba
 Free Baptist Convention
 Free Evangelical Church
 Global Mission Church
 Light of God Pentecostal Church
Methodist Church
 Missionary Church of God
 Pentecostal Holiness Church
Presbyterian-Reformed Church
 Rural Brotherhood Church
 Salvation Army

Member ecumenical groups and centres:

Baptist Workers – Student Coordination
 Christian Centre for Reflection and Dialogue
 Christian Peace Conference
 Evangelical Theological Seminary
 Information and Study Centre “Augusto Cotto”
 Interdenominational Fellowship of Evangelical Ministers and Pastors of Cuba
 Koinonia Movement
 Latin-American Ecumenical Social Action (ASEL)
 Memorial Centre Dr Martin Luther King
 Student Christian Movement
 Study Commission on the History of the Church in Latin America (CEHILA)
 Union of Latin-American Ecumenical Youth (ULAJE)

Observer members:

Open Bible Church
 World-wide Missions (Misiones Amplias Mundial)
Greek Orthodox Church

Fraternal Associates:

Autonomous Bethel Church
 Church of the Moravian Brethren in Cuba
 Hebrew Community of Cuba
 International Christian Community
 Pentecostal Church of Sovereign Grace in Cuba
 United Church
 Yoga Association of Cuba

The Council of Churches of Cuba is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Methodist Church in Cuba*

(Iglesia Metodista en Cuba, IMC)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 10,000*

Congregations: 320*

Pastors: 100*

Member of: WCC (1968) – CCC – CLAI – CIC – WMC – CIEMAL

The Methodist Church in Cuba has its origins in the missionary work of the Methodist Church in the USA, which sent Cuban emigrant pastors in 1883 to start evangelization in Cuba. The work was interrupted because of the independence war which liberated Cuba from the Spanish colonial power. In 1898 some American missionaries arrived in Cuba to take up the mission again, and a new phase of Cuban Methodism began. The first Cuban annual conference was held

in 1923. The church achieved its autonomy in 1968, thanks to the efforts of the Cuban Methodist leaders at that time, and the assistance of the Methodist Church in the USA. Since 1969 the church has been self-supporting. It has well-organized work with women, youth, young adults, men, and activities in the area of evangelization.

Currently the Methodist Church in Cuba experiences growth and progress in its membership and mission. During the past few years some 200 new congregations have been formed and the church is now present in all the provinces of the country. In addition to the registered membership some 30,000 other people are attending worship services. The members live out their faith with great enthusiasm. The church is committed to the gospel of its Lord and eager to share the transforming message of Jesus Christ with the people of Cuba.

*Statistics taken from the World Methodist Council Handbook.

Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba* (Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 15,000

Congregations: 53

Pastors : 31

Member of: WCC (1967) – CLAI – CCC – CIC – WARC – AIPRAL – CANAAC

Periodicals: *Heraldo Cristiano*, *Juprecu Su Voz* (all in Spanish)

In 1890 a small group of Presbyterians began to meet in Havana. They asked the Presbyterian Church in the USA to send them a missionary. A visit was made and the First Presbyterian Church in Havana was established that same year, with the first ordained Cuban Presbyterian pastor. A few years later, in 1895, the church had to close because of the Cuban War of Independence against Spain. In 1900 Protestant missionaries arrived in Cuba, at the time of the intervention of the USA in the war. Among them were several Presbyterians who re-initiated the work of the Presbyterian Church. During the following sixty years the church stood out in the organization of excellent schools and its participation in social service, especially literacy programmes. In the same way, its ecumenical foresight led the church to found the Council of Churches in Cuba in 1941 and, together with the Methodist and Episcopal churches, the Theological Seminary of Matanzas in 1946.

After the Cuban revolution in 1959, the church lost its schools and its membership diminished. It took the status of an autonomous and independent church in 1967, maintaining fraternal relations with the Presbyterian Church in the USA. When, starting in 1990, an opening occurred on the part of the government, the church started growing again rapidly. Currently it has three presbyteries and a synod. Its ecumenical influence is reflected in its participation in the various national, regional and global bodies of which it is a member. The church is now involved in a "Ministry to the Cuban People Today". Taking into account that 70 percent of its members have joined the church in the last ten years, it has strengthened its efforts for Christian education. The church is also exploring new ways of evangelization, organizing many Bible studies and prayer groups in different places. It has developed an important action of liturgical renewal, which includes using Cuban rhythms in the music and providing a balance between tradition and innovation. Also, after many years in which all the social services were in the hands of the government, the church has set up some social projects, which have been very well received by the people.

Today the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba continues to extend its international relations and also its impact in the country. An important factor has been the theological preparation of the laity, in special courses organized by the seminary in cooperation with the local congregations.

DOMINICA

Dominica Christian Council

Founded in the early 1970s.

Basis: Membership in the Dominica Christian Council is open to any Christian denomination satisfying the Council that the applying denomination is willing to work for the objectives of the Council.

Member churches:

- Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)*
- Methodist Church (in the Caribbean and the Americas)*
- Roman Catholic Church

GUYANA

Guyana Council of Churches

Founded in 1967 (as a merger of the Christian Social Council, founded in 1937, with the Evangelical Council, formed in 1960).

Basis: Membership is open to churches which share a common belief in God the Father, in Jesus Christ the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, according to the scriptures, and which express agreement in writing with the aims and objectives of the Guyana Council of Churches, as expressed in the constitution.

Member churches:

- African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*
- African Methodist Episcopal Church*
- Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)*
- Church of God
- Church of the Nazarene
- Ethiopian Orthodox Church*
- Guyana Congregational Union
- Guyana Missionary Baptist Church
- Guyana Presbyterian Church
- Methodist Church (in the Caribbean and the Americas)*
- Moravian Church
- Outreach Ministries International
- Presbytery of Guyana
- Roman Catholic Church
- Salvation Army

HAITI

Population: 8,549,254

Surface area: 27,750 sq.km

Capital: Port-au-Prince

GNI per capita: 400 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: French, Creole

Religions: Christian 96%; Spiritist 3%; Other 1%

Christianity: Catholics 6,628,000; Protestants 1,607,500; Anglicans 115,000;

Independent 479,900 (double affiliation)

Haiti is situated on the western part of the island of Hispaniola, discovered by Columbus in 1492. The indigenous people were exterminated by the Spanish, who ceded the territory to the French in 1697. A century later, the slaves imported from Africa to work on sugar plantations rebelled and finally defeated the French army. In 1804 Haiti became the first nation of the world which liberated itself from slavery and colonial power. But the independence resulted in depletion of the economy and natural resources, political instability and social violence. The hopes for change and development raised by the election of Jean Bertrand Aristide in 1990 were crushed after a few years. Lack of political and economic governance, generalized violence, and a devastated environment contribute to make Haiti one of the poorest countries in the world. Civil society groups, churches and political parties are trying to break the spiral of violence and impoverishment. Traditionally Haiti has been Catholic. Voodoo, the Afro-Haitian cult, has a strong hold on the people. Protestant missions started working in the 19th century. In the 20th century Pentecostal and charismatic groups developed very rapidly. The Protestant Federation of Haiti cooperates with other groups for the renewal of society and a new "social contract". The Council of Evangelical Churches of Haiti, which is an observer member of the Federation, is affiliated with the WEA. The Anglicans are part of the Episcopal Church in the USA, and the Methodists of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, both WCC member churches.

Protestant Federation of Haiti

(Fédération protestante d'Haïti, FPM)

Founded in 1986.

Vision: "That all Haitians may experience the love of Christ, and that Haitian Protestantism may be one, united in solidarity, and strong, so as to promote the Christian and Protestant values within a holistic vision of the human being, men and women, and have an impact on the major national decisions."

Mission statement: "... that all may be one ... the Protestant Federation of Haiti, expressing the unity of churches, missions and protestant organizations, devotes itself to promoting evangelical and social activities within the large family of Haitians, in Haiti and in the Haitian communities abroad, so that each one of its members may become an effective agent of reconciliation."

Member churches:

Apostolic Faith Mission

Assemblies of God

Baptist Convention of Haiti

Baptist Missionary Fellowship of Haiti

Church of God in Christ
 Church of God Mission
 Church of the Evangelical Community of Haiti
 Church of the Nazarene
 Conservative Baptist Mission
 Evangelical Baptist Mission of the South of Haiti
 Evangelical Baptist Union of Haiti
 Evangelical Mission in the Callebasses Region
 Evangelical Tabernacle Mission of Bethel
 Free Methodist Church in Haiti
 Independent Christian Alliance
 International Evangelical Mission
Methodist Church of Haiti (MCCA)
 National Council of Evangelical Missions
 Salvation Army
 Union of the Seventh-day Adventists
 Wesleyan Church of Haiti

Observer member:

Council of Evangelical Churches of Haiti

Baptist Convention of Haiti

(Convention Baptiste d'Haïti, CBH)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 82,000

Local churches: 110

Pastors: 150

Member of: WCC (2005) – FPH – BWA – CBF

The Baptist Convention of Haiti is a grouping of local Baptist churches from various missionary backgrounds, including the American Baptist Churches and the Southern Baptist Convention. It became an autonomous body in 1964. According to its statement of faith the Baptist Convention of Haiti believes in the holy scriptures as the sole authority in matters of faith, the Holy Trinity, the personal regeneration of the believer by the Holy Spirit, the purification from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, the resurrection and imminent return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead. The member churches of the Convention practice the sacraments of baptism (believers' baptism by immersion) and holy communion. The Convention is organized according to the Baptist tradition. The highest governing body is the general assembly at which all the local churches are represented. The Convention has a university with a theological faculty, a conference centre, a hospital and an ophthalmological clinic, two secondary schools and a youth centre. It is mostly concentrated in the northern part of Haiti.

Besides its membership in the Protestant Federation of Haiti, the Baptist Convention is also a member of the Council of Evangelical Churches of Haiti. It shares the conservative heritage of most of the churches of the Evangelical tradition in Haiti. It is involved in an intentional and on-going effort of formation and education to promote openness among its members and pastors. The first woman pastor was ordained in 1998.

JAMAICA

Population: 2,700,868

Surface area: 10,990 sq.km

Capital: Kingston

GNI per capita: 2,900 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: English, Patois

Religions: Christian 65%; Spiritist 34%; Hindu 1%

Christianity: Protestants 915,280; Catholics 115,000; Anglicans 99,200;
Independent 258,490

Jamaica was inhabited by Arawak Indians prior to the arrival of Columbus in 1494. It was first colonized by the Spanish. The British conquered the island in 1655, and turned Jamaica into the most important of their Caribbean slaving colonies, with large plantations owned by absentee landlords. After the abolition of slavery in 1834, Jamaica became relatively prosperous under colonial rule until the early 20th century when the economy went into decline. Since 1962, Jamaica is an independent country within the British Commonwealth with a parliamentary democracy. The economy is mostly based on services, primarily tourism, and bauxite/aluminium, and to a lesser degree on agriculture and manufacturing. Unemployment and crime are major social problems. Christianity in Jamaica dates back to the Spanish colonization, but the Catholic Church was prohibited by the British until 1837. Protestant missions have been very active, especially the Baptists, who played a key role in the abolition of slavery, and the Methodists and Presbyterians who made a significant contribution to education. The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands is one of the pioneering church unions in the ecumenical movement. The largest Pentecostal denomination is the New Testament Church of God, and Pentecostals represent about 25 percent of the Christians. The Jamaica Council of Churches is the ecumenical body, which includes the Catholic Church. The Jamaica Association of Evangelicals is associated with the WEA. The Rastafari movement, an Afro-Caribbean cult, which originated in Jamaica, teaches black pride and return to Africa; it attracts followers across the world.

***Jamaica Council of Churches**

Founded in 1941.

Mission statement: To promote unity, fellowship and ecumenism among Christian churches and agencies, through consultation and co-operation, for the renewal of the churches and the strengthening of the kingdom of God.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Church in Jamaica and Cayman Islands (Anglican, Province of the West Indies)

Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Jamaica Baptist Union

Methodist Church (Caribbean and the Americas)

Moravian Church

Roman Catholic Church

Salvation Army

Society of Friends (Quakers)

United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Associate members:

Church Women United
 Young Men's Christian Association
 Young Women's Christian Association

Observer member churches:

Church of God in Jamaica
 Jamaica Association of Evangelicals
 Jamaica Association of Full Gospel Churches
 Jamaica Pentecostal Union
 West Indies Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist

The Jamaica Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Jamaica Baptist Union

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 43,000
 Local Churches: 314
 Pastors: 122
 Member of: WCC (1995) – CCC – JCC – BWA – CBF
 Website: www.jbu.org

Whenever Jamaican Baptists talk about their early beginnings two significant points in history come to mind: 1783 and 1849. It was in 1783 that the first Baptist missionary arrived, a freed black slave from the USA and an ordained minister. In 1849 the Jamaica Baptist Union was founded. By that time, Baptist work was well established in the country with congregations in almost every parish and an enviable testimony of having played a leading role in the abolition of slavery (in 1834). Three of Jamaica's national heroes were Baptists and the denomination was in the forefront of addressing the educational, economic and social needs of the emancipated people. Baptist work benefited from a partnership with the Baptist Missionary Society (UK) which dispatched its first missionary to the country in 1814 and was instrumental in establishing, in 1842, the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society, an agency to take the gospel to Africa. The Jamaica Baptist Union is very firm in terms of its autonomy with regard to missionary partners. As early as 1842 it declared its financial independence from the Baptist Missionary Society. The JBU itself has a history of sending out missionaries to various islands of the Caribbean and to Africa.

Like all Baptists throughout their history, the JBU has sought to be faithful to the truth of the gospel and to pattern the church on the principles of fellowship found in the New Testament. As a church it is committed to the proclamation of the word – by which God and humankind confront each other – and to social action. The congregations have remained dedicated to the task of confronting persons with the claims of the gospel by employing various evangelistic methods and they are engaged in a wide array of ministries and projects as part of their witness. Many of the congregations are involved in health-related ministries, skills training centres, economic projects, basic/primary/high schools, to name a few. Baptists have two basic things which they share with the peoples of the world, namely common humanity and shared environment. Like other religious groups in general, and other Christians in particular, Baptists differ, however, from the rest of humankind in their understanding of the origins and purpose of humanity in the environment. This particular understanding, along with the basis for arriving at such an understanding, both allows for and defines Baptist distinctiveness, as well as enabling Baptists to affirm common truths with other persons.

Moravian Church in Jamaica

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 30,000

Congregations: 60

Pastors: 37

Lay Pastors: 40

Member of : WCC (1969) – CCC – JCC – MUB

The Moravian Church in Jamaica, which was established in 1754, represents a continuation of the Caribbean Moravian Mission which commenced in 1732. About 130 years after its establishment the church was formally incorporated by an act of parliament. At that time the church had a training college for ministers and a teachers college, along with several primary education institutions. The work in Jamaica was then under the supervision of the Supreme Executive Board in Britain. The period between 1834 and 1894 can be described as the period of settlement. During this time, Moravian mission emanated from 14 centres in various parts of the island. It was not until 1891 that work in Kingston was initiated. Of particular note were the settlements for former slaves, which were attempted or established between 1834 and 1861. The character of the work today in Nazareth, the most successful of these settlements, owes much to the community initiatives of the 1840s. The fact that some 40 schools were established is a testimony to the emphasis that the Moravian Church has placed on education. The programmes of community development, which were undertaken from as early as 1769, are the precursors of the community outreach projects that Unitas of Jamaica is involved in today.

The period between 1894 and 1954 was a time of consolidation. It was during this period (1899) that the first synod was held. Prior to this the provincial meetings were referred to as conferences. Maybe the most critical factor facing the province then was the matter of financial sustainability. The period also saw an intensification of attempts to develop an indigenous clergy and local ecumenical ventures. When the 150th anniversary was observed in 1904, less than twenty-five percent of the clergy was Jamaican but that would change in the ensuing period. The complete transition to local leadership began in 1951, when the first native president of the local provincial board was elected. Today the clergy is one hundred percent Jamaican.

Current areas of work of the Moravian Church in Jamaica include primary, secondary and tertiary education, adult education, rural agricultural development in crops and livestock, rural and urban vocational training, health clinics, inner-city youth programmes, senior citizen care and radio ministry.

United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 60,000

Congregations: 204

Pastors: 86

Member of: WCC (1967) – CCC – JCC – WARC – CANAAC – CWM – DECC

Periodical: *REACH*

Website: www.ucji.netfirms.com

In 1965 the Presbyterian Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman and the Congregational Union of Jamaica merged to form the United Church of Jamaica and

Grand Cayman. The latter was joined in 1992 by the Disciples of Christ in Jamaica, to constitute the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI). The journey began in 1800 when the Presbyterian Church was established in Jamaica through the work of the Scottish Missionary Society. It was not until 1824, though, that work was undertaken on a large scale on the sugar estates. With emancipation in 1838, some 300,000 people were freed. Ten years later, the first synod was held. Congregational churches were formed through the activities of the London Missionary Society from 1834. With practically no financial or manpower resources, a serious crisis soon arose. Appeals were made to the Congregational Union of England and Wales and to the International Congregational Council. This resulted in the Colonial Missionary Society taking over responsibility for financial support and the provision of ministers from Britain. The church began to grow again and subsequent progress led to the gradual withdrawal of the London Missionary Society and the formation of the Congregational Union of Jamaica in 1877. The Jamaican mission of the Disciples of Christ (USA) began in 1839. Between 1870 and 1950 the movement grew considerably. Some 30 congregations were established during this time, either as new churches or as a result of cooperation with Baptist or Methodist connections. The church gained autonomy in the 1950s. Presbyterian mission in the Cayman Islands started in 1845. Since then the Presbyterian and subsequently the United Church have maintained a strong presence in Christian witness in that society.

The United Church maintains a strong tradition of cooperation with other denominations and is actively engaged in the development and consolidation of institutions and churches. The UCJCI has also pioneered projects in community development, vocational training, children's homes, and a rehabilitation home for older prisoners. It has been in the forefront in the fight against social evils like gambling, promiscuity and economic injustices. It is deeply concerned about the plight of the less fortunate, especially in the cities, and has been involved in special ministries to the urban poor. The church is actively involved in education in both Cayman and Jamaica. In addition to playing a major role in helping to establish the foundation for the systems that exist today, the UCJCI continues to make significant contributions to education at all levels in the two societies.

The UCJCI's commitment to society has not only been through congregational social projects or the individual action of ministers, but also through the actions of the laity. Several members of the United Church have been members of parliament. There is a governor general in Jamaica and a national heroine in the Cayman Islands. Leadership development, evangelism and church growth, strengthening of families and peace-building are major concerns for the UCJCI. It is also committed to missions at home and abroad and continues to encourage people to enter full-time ministry and to go overseas in the service of Christ. A significant activity in the life of the church is a youth movement, which centres on an annual youth camp. Through this camp a number of young people have committed their lives to Christ, and serve the church in various capacities.

The UCJCI maintains special relations through the CWM member churches and with the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the United Church of Canada, the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ in the USA.

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Population: 224,207

Surface area: 800 sq.km

Capital: Willemstad (Curaçao)

GDP per capita: 11,400 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Papiamentu, English, Dutch

Religions: Christian 90%; Jewish 1%; Muslim 0,2%

Christianity: Catholics 154,000; Protestants 31,590; Anglicans 2,300;

Independents 2,660

The Netherlands Antilles consist of two groups of islands in the Caribbean, Curaçao and Bonaire off the coast of Venezuela, and St Maarten, Saba and St Eustatius which are part of the Leeward islands. The Dutch took these territories from the Spanish in the 17th century and used them for the slave trade. The majority of the population are Afro-Caribbeans; smaller groups are Carib Amerindians, Asians, and Europeans. The Netherlands Antilles are an autonomous country within the kingdom of the Netherlands. The island of Aruba, which was part of it until 1986, has its own status. The economy of the Netherlands Antilles is based on oil refinery, tourism, and off-shore finance. The poor soil of the islands does not allow the development of agriculture. The Catholic Church is the majority church in Curaçao and Bonaire, but not in the Leeward islands. In Curaçao, the United Protestant Church, the Catholic Church, the Methodists, Moravians, and Anglicans form together the council of churches. Councils also exist in St Eustatius and St Maarten. The Seventh-day Adventists Church is the largest non-Catholic community, and is associated with the council in Curaçao. Several Pentecostal and Evangelical churches are present, such as the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal), the Baptist Association, the Evangelical Church, and others.

Curaçao Council of Churches

Founded in 1962.

Objectives: To foster joint work and action of the churches; to foster joint study and reflection of questions concerning faith; to foster the growth of the ecumenical idea among the members of all Christian churches in Curaçao.

Member churches:

All Saints Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)

Methodist Church (Caribbean and Americas)

Moravian Church (Eastern West Indies Province)

Roman Catholic Church

United Protestant Church

Associate members:

Adventist Mission

Christian Pastors Association (mainly Pentecostal)

Iglesia Reformá

United Protestant Church*

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 5,000

Congregations: 3

Pastors: 3

Member of: WCC (1962) – CCC – CCC – WARC – CANAAC

Periodical: *VPG – News*

The Fort Church in Fort Amsterdam was built in 1769. In 1825, by decree of King William I of The Netherlands, the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church were brought together in the United Protestant Church. The English-speaking immigrants who came to work in the oil refinery joined the United Protestant Church in 1937 and built the Ebenezer Church in 1949. The Emma Church, which was built by the refinery for its employees, merged with the UPC in 1959.

The UPC professes that the Bible is the Word of God, the source of our preaching, the only norm for our faith and the basis of a Christian way of life. We believe in one God, the creator of heaven and earth and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only way to God. We believe in the Holy Spirit who was sent to guide us till his return.

The UPC maintains close relationships with the Protestant churches of Bonaire and Aruba and with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands.

PUERTO RICO

Population: 3,915,379

Surface area: 8,950 sq.km

Capital: San Juan

GNI per capita: 9,620 US\$

Classification: Upper middle income (WB)

Languages: Spanish, English

Religions: Christian 97%

Christianity: Catholics 2,771,937; Protestants 602,020; Anglicans 12,500;

Independents 363,280

Puerto Rico was under Spanish colonial rule from 1493 until the end of the 19th century. The Spanish exterminated the indigenous population, and brought in slaves from Africa. After the Spanish-American war of 1898, Puerto Rico was ceded to the USA. Since 1952 it has the status of free associated state with the USA and has internal self-government. Two distinct cultures co-exist in Puerto Rico, Hispanic and North American. Popular protest has obliged the US government to stop using the island of Vieques, which is part of Puerto Rico, for military purposes. The economy of Puerto Rico is based on agriculture, industry, and service. The Catholic Church is the oldest, and the largest, church. Protestant missions from the USA started working in the island at the beginning of the 20th century, after the cession. Puerto Ricans returning from the US brought Pentecostalism. Today there are many indigenous charismatic groups. The estimate in 2000 was that one third of all Christians in Puerto Rico were Evangelical and Pentecostal/Charismatic. The former Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico became in 2002 the Council of Churches of Puerto Rico. The Methodist Church is the first

church in Puerto Rico to join the WCC (2005). The Anglicans come under the Episcopal Church in the USA, which is a WCC member.

***Council of Churches of Puerto Rico**

Founded in 2002 (forerunners: the Federation of Evangelical Churches of Puerto Rico formed in 1905, which became the Union in 1916, the Association in 1934, and the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico in 1954).

Basis: The member churches of the Council of Churches in Puerto Rico are centered in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, motivated by the gospel to seek the unity of the church (John 17:21), and bound together by bonds of fraternity, a common history and the same witness. They affirm that God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is one in three, and recognize the centrality of the Bible as source of revelation.

Member churches:

- Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico
- Methodist Church of Puerto Rico*
- Presbyterian Church (USA) in Puerto Rico*
- Church of the Brethren
- First Union Church
- Second Union Church

Observer churches:

- Caribbean Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran church
- Episcopal Church Diocese of Puerto Rico (Episcopal Church USA)*

The Council of Churches of Puerto Rico is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Methodist Church of Puerto Rico*

(Iglesia Metodista de Puerto Rico, IMPR)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 12,000

Congregations: 100

Pastors: 170

Member of: WCC (2005) – CLAI – CIPR – WMC

The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico is the fruit of mission work which was started in 1900 by what is now the United Methodist Church. In 1972 the church was offered some autonomy. It became fully autonomous in 1992. The church is very well organized in a self-sustaining structure, with care for the faithful: children, youth, lay and clergy members and the aged. Women have leadership positions in the church hierarchy and in the community, as ordained pastors or lay members. The laity participate very actively in the life of the church.

The IMPR is involved in mission and diakonia, in the defence of human rights, in issues of social justice, and in educational projects. It runs several day-care, primary and secondary schools, and is a member of the Puerto Rico Theological Seminary. The church is pro-active in ecumenical relationships and cooperation in the country and the region. It maintains close relationships with the United Methodist Church.

SAINT KITTS & NEVIS

Saint Kitts Christian Council

Founded in 1970 (forerunner: the St Kitts Ministers Fraternal, formed in 1945).

Mission statement: To promote cooperative action based on a common vision and policy among member churches, in serving the spiritual, moral, educational, and social welfare of the Island.

Member churches:

Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)

Methodist Church (Caribbean and Americas)

Moravian Church (Eastern W.I. Province)

Roman Catholic Church

Salvation Army

SAINT VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

*St Vincent & the Grenadines Christian Council

Founded in 1969.

Basis: The St Vincent & the Grenadines Christian Council is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and seek together to fulfil their common calling through witness and service, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)

Catholic Church

Methodist Church (Caribbean and Americas)

Salvation Army

Invitations for membership have been addressed to the Spiritual Baptist Church, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Association of Evangelical Churches, and the Evangelical Church of the West Indies.

SURINAME

Population: 442,351

Surface area: 163,300 sq.km

Capital: Paramaribo

GNI per capita: 2,250 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Dutch, Sranang Tongo

Religions: Christian 50%; Hindu 18%; Muslim 14%; Spiritist 9%; Baha'i 2%;

Buddhist 1%

Christianity: Catholics 105,635; Protestants 82,530; Independent 4,450

The territory of Suriname was inhabited by Arawak and Carib Amerindians when it was first colonized by the British, in the 17th century. In 1667, the Dutch took over from the British, in exchange for New Amsterdam (now New York).

Slaves were imported from Africa to work in the sugar plantations. The Dutch abolished slavery only in 1863, and brought in large numbers of workers from the East Indies and India. Suriname became independent in 1975. A third of the population emigrated to the Netherlands. The 1980s were marked by military coups, violence, and the insurgency of the Maroons, descendants of slaves living in the interior. After a period of frequent political changes, the elections of 2000 brought into power a more stable government. Suriname's economy depends on bauxite, of which the country has large deposits, and gold mining. There are good prospects for oil production. Protestant churches were established in Suriname in the 18th century, and the Catholic Church followed in the 19th century. The Moravian Church is the oldest and largest Protestant church. The Catholics and Protestants have formed a Committee of Churches, which is the national ecumenical body. There are several smaller Pentecostal and Evangelical churches.

Committee of Christian Churches

Founded in 1942.

Basis: "You have one Teacher, and you are all brethren" (Matthew 23:8).

Mission statement: To work together in the bond of unity and witness.

Member churches:

Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Moravian Church

Reformed Church in Suriname

Salvation Army

Roman Catholic Diocese of Paramaribo

Observers:

Church of the Nazarene

Churches of the Living God in Suriname

Moravian Church in Suriname

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 40,000

Congregations: 60

Pastors: 16

Lay pastors: 40

Member of: WCC (1975) – CCC – CCC – MUB

Periodical: *Kerkbode* (weekly, in Dutch)

The mission in Suriname started from Hernnhut (Germany) in 1735 and was continued after 1928 from Zeist in the Netherlands. Mission among the American Indians began in 1748 and continued later among the (African) slaves and the bush negroes (fugitive slaves). After 1835 several congregations were established in various parts of the country. Mission among the East Indians (Hindustanis) began in 1873 and among the Javanese in 1909. As several members of the Moravian Church in Suriname emigrated to the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands, especially after the second world war, the church in Suriname is also working in the Netherlands Antilles. In 1963 the church became an autonomous province of the Moravian Church, with its own synod meeting every three years. The provincial elders conference, the governing body of the community, is assisted by two other boards, one for church affairs and the other for mission

affairs. The president takes care of those issues which are not entrusted to either of the two boards.

The Moravian Church in Suriname is of the opinion that mission is of the highest importance for the church of Christ. The church has been called and sent into the world as a representative of Jesus Christ, the first apostle. This means that all actions of the church should have a missionary dimension. In 1997 the provincial synod decided in favour of a restructuring of the province. In the new structure the dichotomy between church and mission was banned and since then, every congregation is supposed to be a missionary community. Due to the fact that there are congregations in almost all parts of the country, it seemed helpful to introduce a regional structure. Now there are 14 regions, consisting of about 60 congregations and outstations. The synod is the highest governing body. The provincial board is the governing body in between sessions of the synod.

The church has several departments: for boarding schools, socio-diaconal service, medical assistance to the bush negroes and the Indians, and for agricultural promotion. Clergy and evangelists and all volunteers are trained at the training college. Some 900 teachers teach 25,000 pupils in several kinds of schools.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Population: 1,311,259

Surface area: 5,130 sq.km

Capital: Port-of-Spain

GNI per capita: 8,580 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: English, Spanish, other

Religions: Christian 65%; Hindu 23%; Muslim 7%; Spiritist 2%; Baha'i 1%

Christianity: Catholics 375,000; Protestants 249,840; Anglicans 125,000;

Orthodox 8,730; Independent 45,060+ -

Prior to colonial times, the islands of Trinidad and Tobago were inhabited by Arawak and Carib Amerindians. The territories changed hands frequently, until Britain took full control in 1889. This history explains the extraordinarily diverse population of Afro-Caribbean, Asian, European and Middle Eastern descent. Trinidad and Tobago achieved independence in 1962, and became a republic within the British Commonwealth in 1976. Originally a sugar colony, cocoa dominated the economy in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Since then, the main economic activity is oil production and export. The presence of the Catholic Church in Trinidad and Tobago goes back to the 16th century and that of Protestant missions to the late 18th century. Besides the Presbyterian Church, the Methodists, Moravians and Anglicans are all part of the WCC, through the wider Caribbean church bodies to which they belong. These churches, together with the Salvation Army and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, form the Christian Council of Trinidad. Pentecostal churches have grown rapidly in the 20th century and form about 20 percent of the non-Catholic Christians. The Seventh-day Adventists are the third largest church, after the Catholics and the Anglicans. There is a Council of Evangelical Churches, which is affiliated with the WEA.

Christian Council of Trinidad & Tobago

Founded in 1970.

Basis: "That they may all be one." (John 17:21)

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies)
Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Methodist Church (Caribbean and Americas)
Moravian Church (Eastern W.I. Province)
Presbyterian Church in Trinidad & Tobago
 Roman Catholic Church
 Salvation Army

Observer member:

Caribbean Conference of Churches

The Christian Council of Trinidad and Tobago is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 40,000

Congregations: 105

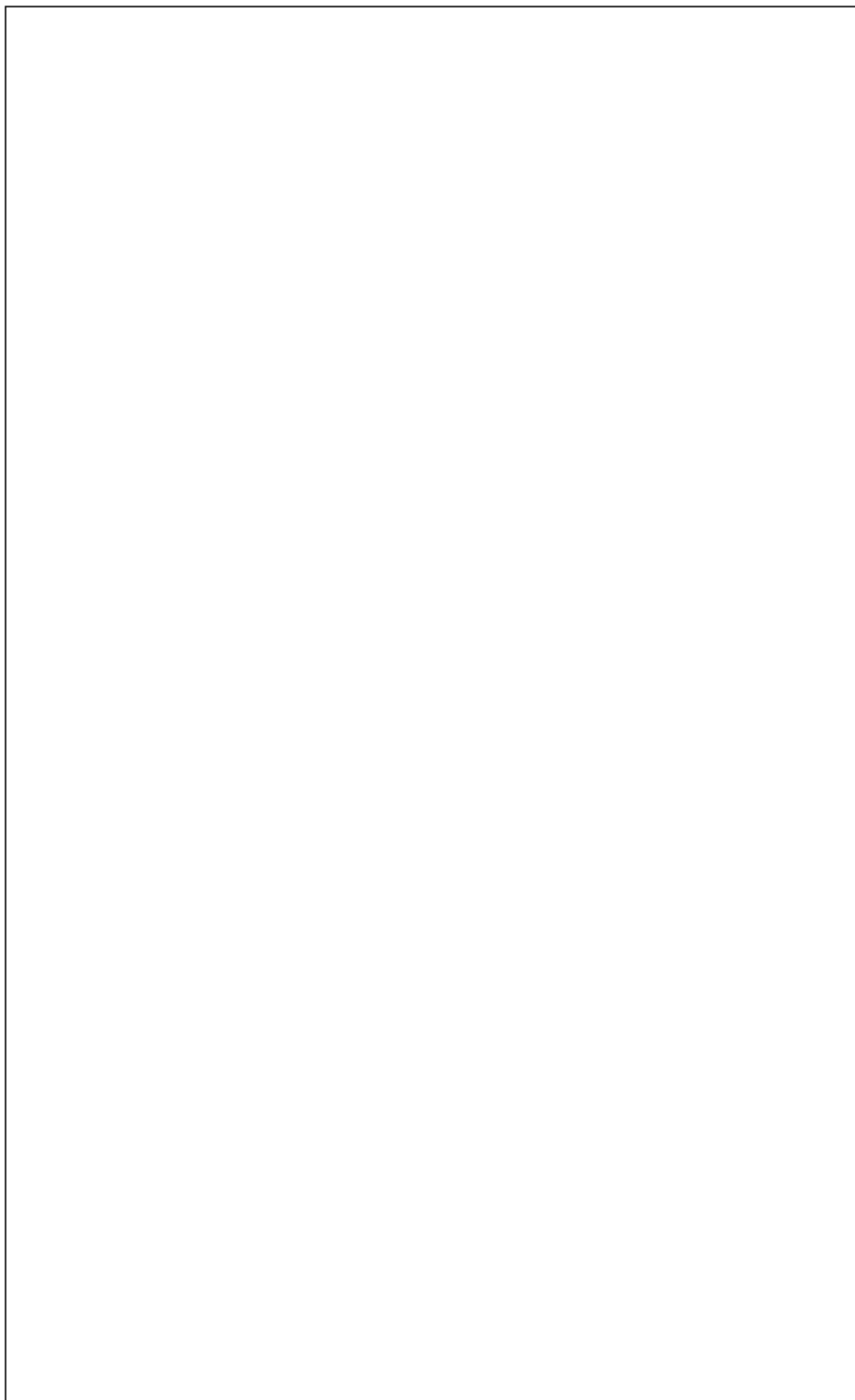
Pastors: 17

Member of : WCC (1961) – CCC – CCTT – WARC – CANAAC

Periodical: *The Trinidad Presbyterian* (monthly, in English)

In the mid-19th century there was an influx of East Indian indentured labourers to Trinidad to work in the sugar cane estates. Because of the language barrier, the evangelizing efforts of the existing Christian churches among these people were very marginal. It was not until the arrival of a missionary sent by the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces of Canada in 1868 that a new dawn of enlightenment for this sector of the population was ushered in. He and another missionary who came two years later became proficient in the Hindi language and started their work among the East Indian immigrants. Their method of operation was evangelism through education. The great contribution made by the church to the development of education in the country is recognized both by the state and the general public. There are 72 Presbyterian primary schools, five Presbyterian secondary schools and one theological college today. In 1960, the church severed its mission status with the United Church in Canada and has since been known as the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago. In 2004, the congregation in Tobago was officially recognized by the synod.

Europe



CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

The Conference of European Churches is an ecumenical fellowship of churches in Europe which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The movement which led to the creation of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) dates back to the period of the cold war. The fragmented and divided Europe of the 1940s and 1950s needed to surmount political divisions, to devote itself anew to the peoples torn apart by the second world war. A small group of church leaders in East and West Europe began to consider together the possibility of bringing into conversation churches in European countries separated by different political, economic and social systems. Their aim was to enable the churches of Europe to become instruments of peace and understanding. Exploratory and preparatory meetings took place in 1953 and 1957. In 1959 representatives of more than 40 churches met in Nyborg Strand, Denmark, for the first assembly of CEC. At that time the organization was a loose association of churches, but with the adoption of a constitution at the 1964 assembly, a significant step was taken towards forming a regional conference of churches. This assembly was held on board a ship in the Baltic Sea, in order to overcome visa problems and ensure that all churches enjoyed representation. CEC has consistently tried to promote international understanding, insisting that no "iron curtain" exist among the churches. CEC has also tried to build bridges between minority and majority churches, between the generations, between women and men, and between Christians of different confessions. The assemblies of CEC have been important moments for the European churches in their efforts to witness together:

Nyborg (Denmark)	1959	<i>European Christianity in Today's Secularized World</i>
Nyborg	1960	<i>The Service of the Church in a Changing World</i>
Nyborg	1962	<i>The Church in Europe and the Crisis of Modern Man</i>
At sea	1964	<i>Living Together as Continents and Generations</i>
Pörschach (Austria)	1967	<i>To Serve and Reconcile – the Task of the European Churches Today</i>
Nyborg	1971	<i>Service of God, Service of Men</i>
Engleberg (Switzerland)	1974	<i>Act on the Message – Unity in Christ and Peace in the World</i>
Chania, Crete (Greece)	1979	<i>Alive to the World in the Power of the Holy Spirit</i>
Stirling (Scotland)	1986	<i>Glory to God and Peace on Earth</i>
Prague (Czech Republic)	1992	<i>God Unites – in Christ a New Creation</i>
Graz (Austria)	1997	<i>Reconciliation, Gift of God and Source of New Life</i>
Trondheim (Norway)	2003	<i>Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles: Our Witness in Europe</i>

The themes of these assemblies present a mirror reflection of the will of the churches in Europe to be agents of service and reconciliation, and to respond to the challenges of an increasingly secularized society. Following the political changes in 1989, the European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society, a body of the churches in Western Europe, and CEC were integrated in 1999 to form the CEC Church and Society Commission. Cooperation between CEC and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (Catholic Church) has resulted in the European Ecumenical Assemblies: "Peace with Justice" in Basel in 1989, and "Reconciliation, Gift of God and Source of New Life" in Graz in 1997. The third EEA will take place in September 2007, in Sibiu, Romania, on the theme "The Light of Christ Shines Upon All – Hope for Renewal and Unity in Europe".

Besides the Commission on Church and Society, which focuses on the European integration process and on peace and human rights, CEC has a Commission on Churches in Dialogue, working on unity and mission, and will soon have a third commission on Migrants in Europe following the integration of CEC with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe. A new desk on women and gender-related issues will also be established, following the closure in 2005 of the former "Solidarity" desk. Another important area of work is relations with Islam in Europe, carried on jointly with the Council of European Bishops' Conferences. CEC has 126 member churches in 38 countries. It has also 43 associated organizations, the majority of which are national councils of churches. CEC has offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasburg.

Website: www.cec-kek.org

Periodical: *Monitor* (CEC News, in English, French, and German)

Member churches of the Conference of European Churches

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Etchmiadzin)
Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania
Old-Catholic Church in Austria
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria
Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession in Austria
Methodist Church in Austria
United Protestant Church of Belgium
 Baptist Union of Bulgaria
Methodist Church in Bulgaria
 Pentecostal Assemblies of Bulgaria
 Baptist Union of Croatia
 Church of God in Croatia
 Evangelical (Pentecostal) Church in Croatia
 Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia
 Reformed Christian Church in Croatia
Church of Cyprus
 Baptist Union in the Czech Republic
Czechoslovak Hussite Church
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
 Church of the Brethren (Congregational)
Evangelical Methodist Church (Czech Republic)
 Moravian Church in the Czech Republic
Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and the Slovak Republic
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic
 Old Catholic Church in the Czech Republic
 Baptist Union of Denmark
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (Canada)
Estonian Methodist Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Orthodox Church in Finland
Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France
Malagasy Protestant Church in France
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine
Reformed Church of France
Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches of France
Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Georgia
Evangelical Church in Germany
Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany (Baptists)
United Methodist Church in Germany
Catholic Diocese of the Old-Catholics in Germany
Lithuanian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany
Baptist Union of Great Britain
Church in Wales
Church of England
Church of Scotland
Congregational Federation of the United Kingdom
Council of African and Caribbean Churches U.K.
Lutheran Council of Great Britain
British Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Salvation Army – UK Territory/Ireland
Scottish Episcopal Church
Shiloh United Church of Christ Apostolic Worldwide (UK)
United Reformed Church
Church of Greece
Greek Evangelical Church
Baptist Union of Hungary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary
Evangelical Methodist Church in Hungary
Reformed Church in Hungary
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
Church of Ireland
Methodist Church in Ireland
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy
Evangelical Methodist Church of Italy
Waldensian Church (Italy)
Baptist Union of Italy
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (Germany)
Evangelical Church in the Principality of Liechtenstein
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania
Alliance of Protestant Churches of Luxembourg
Mennonite Church in the Netherlands
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Old-Catholic Church of the Netherlands
Remonstrant Brotherhood (Netherlands)
Church of Norway
Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
Evangelical Reformed Church in Poland
United Methodist Church in Poland
Polish Catholic Church in Poland
Baptist Union of Poland
Old-Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland
Methodist Church of Portugal

Presbyterian Church in Portugal
Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church (Portugal)
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania
Romanian Orthodox Church
Reformed Church in Romania – Oradea District
Reformed Church in Romania – Transylvania District
 Euro-Asiatic Federation of the Unions of Evangelical Christians-Baptists
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia
Russian Orthodox Church
Evangelical Methodist Church in Serbia & Montenegro
Reformed Christian Church in Serbia & Montenegro
Slovakian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia & Montenegro
Serbian Orthodox Church
 Evangelical Methodist Church in FYRO – Macedonia
 Evangelical Free Church in the Slovak Republic
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia
Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovak Republic
Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia
 Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Republic of Slovenia
Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church
Spanish Evangelical Church
United Methodist Church of Sweden Annual Conference
 Baptist Union of Sweden
Church of Sweden
Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
United Methodist Church in Switzerland
 Trans-Carpathian Reformed Church (Ukraine)
Ecumenical Patriarchate
European Continental Province of the Moravian Church
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States
 Salvation Army International – Headquarters Europe Zone
United Methodist Church – Central and Southern Europe Area
United Methodist Church – Nordic and Baltic Area

Observer member:

- Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
 - Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe and Middle East Section
 - Britain Yearly Meeting

Associated Organizations:

Action of Churches Together in Scotland
 Christian Council of Sweden
 Church Mission Society (UK)
 Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
 Churches Together in England
 Spanish Committee on Cooperation between the Churches
 Conference of European University Chaplains
 Portuguese Council of Christian Churches
 CYTUN, Churches Together in Wales
 Ecumenical Association of Academies and Lay Centres in Europe
 Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania
 Ecumenical Council of Churches in Slovakia
 Ecumenical Council of Finland
 Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women
 Ecumenical Institute for the Nordic Region
 Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe

Estonian Council of Churches
 Eurodiaconia – European Federation for Diaconia
 European Forum for Christian Men
 European Alliance of YMCA's
 European Baptist Federation
 European Contact Group on Urban Industrial Mission
 Protestant Working Group on Adult Education in Europe
 French Protestant Federation
 Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy
 Gustav Adolf Foundation (Germany)
 Inter-European Commission on Church and School
 International Association for Christian Education
 International Prison Chaplains' Association
 Irish Council of Churches
 Church and Peace (Germany)
 Conference of European Pastors' Associations
 Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary
 Christian Council of Norway
 Council of Churches in the Netherlands
 Society for Ecumenical Studies and Inter-Orthodox Relations
 The European YWCAs
 Union of Evangelical Free Churches (Germany)
 World Christian Student Federation – Europe

COMMUNITY OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN EUROPE: LEUENBERG CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

The Leuenberg Church Fellowship was established in 1973, with the adoption of the “Agreement between Reformation Churches in Europe”, known as the Leuenberg Agreement. The signatories of the Leuenberg Agreement, now counting 104 churches, grant one another fellowship in word and sacrament, on the basis of a common understanding of the gospel as expounded in the agreement. They commit themselves to common witness and service at local, regional and European levels and to continuing theological work. A series of important documents has been produced since then, among which the study “The Church of Jesus Christ” (1994), the first concerted Protestant ecclesiology on the European level, stands out. The intensified sense of community of the member churches and the claim formulated at the last general assembly in 2001 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to bring forward a Protestant voice in Europe, is clearly expressed through the new name “Community of Protestant Churches in Europe” (as from 1 November 2003).

Ninety-seven churches have signed the Leuenberg Agreement since 1973 as so-called signatory churches. Besides the classical Reformation churches, pre-Reformation churches such as the Waldensians (Italy) and the Brethren (Czech Republic), and five South American churches emanating from migration, belong to the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE). Seven Methodist churches are part of it on the basis of a “Joint Declaration of Church Fellowship”. Five Scandinavian Lutheran churches have participated in the Leuenberg Church Fellowship since 1973 as so-called participating churches, without signing the agreement. Out of these, two churches (the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark and the Church of Norway) have lately signed the Leuenberg Agreement.

The Leuenberg Agreement is the fruit of a long process of dialogue, mainly between Lutheran and Reformed Churches, which began after the second world

war. This text drawn up in the European context met with astonishingly rapid and sustained approval of the churches. The divisions could be overcome by means of doctrinal discussions among the churches of different denominations. The preamble of the agreement, referring to the key statement of the *Confessio Augustana* (CA VII), confirms: "In the view of the Reformation it follows that agreement in the right teaching of the gospel and in the right administration of the sacraments is the necessary and sufficient prerequisite for the true unity of the church."

The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe serves to promote the unity and community of the Protestant churches through joint theological doctrinal conversations. It also represents the positions of Reformation churches on important spiritual and social challenges such as the question of a just war, the Christian understanding of freedom, the relationship of church, state, people and nation.

The CPCE has an intentionally loose organizational structure for the sake of flexibility. General assemblies take place about every six years, in which basic outlines of future work, new subjects for theological conversations are determined and the new executive committee elected. The executive committee, led by the presidium, is responsible for the work between the general assemblies. The secretariat, which operates under the direction of the executive committee, has been located in the head office of the Union of Evangelical Churches in Berlin since 1987. Well aware of its limits, the CPCE has the whole ecumenical scene in view and considers itself as a step on the way towards the unity of the universal church of Jesus Christ in a reconciled diversity. For this reason it maintains working relations with the World Council of Churches, the Conference of European Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches as well as with the Anglican churches and the European Baptist Federation.

Website: www.leuenberg.net

Member churches of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe

Church of Lippe (Germany)

Church of Norway

Church of Scotland

Church of Sweden

Church of the Brethren (Czech Republic)

Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine (France)

Czechoslovak Hussite Church (Czech Republic)

Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

European Continental Province of the Moravian Church

Evangelical Church in Baden (Germany)

Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz (Germany)

Evangelical Church in Germany

Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau (Germany)

Evangelical Church of Anhalt (Germany)

Evangelical Church of Bremen (Germany)

Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

Evangelical Church of Hesse Electorate-Waldeck (Germany)

Evangelical Church of Palatine (Germany)

Evangelical Church of Slovenia

Evangelical Church of the Province of Saxony (Germany)

Evangelical Church of the Rhineland (Germany)

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic
Evangelical Church of Westphalia (Germany)
Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession in Austria
 Evangelical Methodist Church of Portugal
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick (Germany)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Croatia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg (Germany)
Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Cantons Bern, Fribourg and Neuchâtel
 (Switzerland)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania in Exile (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe (Germany)
Evangelical Methodist Church of Italy
Evangelical Reformed Church (Germany)
 Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality
 of Liechtenstein
 Federation of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Germany
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
 German-speaking Evangelical-Lutheran Synod in Great Britain
 German-speaking Protestant Church in Greece
Greek Evangelical Church
 Lutheran Church in Ireland
Methodist Church in Great Britain
Methodist Church in Ireland
Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Germany)
Pomeranian Protestant Church (Germany)
 Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Presbyterian Church of Wales (UK)
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
 Reformed Christian Church in Croatia
Reformed Christian Church in Serbia & Montenegro
Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia
Reformed Church in Hungary
 Reformed Church in Lithuania
Reformed Church in Romania, District Transylvania
Reformed Church in Romania, Western District
 Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (Ukraine)
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
Reformed Church of France
 Reformed Evangelical Church in Poland

Reformed Synod of Denmark
Remonstrants Brotherhood (Netherlands)
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Czech Republic)
Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia & Montenegro
Spanish Evangelical Church
 Union of Evangelical Churches (Germany)
United Free Church of Scotland
United Methodist Church, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference
United Methodist Church in Germany
United Methodist Church, Eurasia Episcopal Area (Russia)
United Methodist Church, Nordic Episcopal Area (Norway)
United Protestant Church of Belgium
United Reformed Church (UK)
Waldensian Church in Italy

COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF AN AFRICAN APPROACH IN EUROPE

The Council of Christian Churches of an African Approach in Europe (CCCAAE) has developed out of a series of consultations and conferences which began in 1995 in Leeds, UK. These meetings brought together representatives of African and African-Caribbean churches and communities, first from the UK, and later also from Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, The Netherlands, etc. The CCCAAE was officially established in 2001, at Arzier, Switzerland. The executive body was constituted that same year, during a conference in Berlin, Germany.

The objectives of the CCCAAE are 1) coordination and networking of African Christian congregations in Europe; 2) the spiritual awakening and awareness of African Christianity in Europe; 3) furthering the partnership between African and European churches; 4) furthering the advancement of African theology and evangelism in Europe; 5) developing a forum for the problems facing Africans in Europe, in particular social exclusion and discrimination; 6) promoting research on African Christianity in Europe; 7) promoting Christian education of African youths in Europe; 8) supporting projects related to economic development in Africa.

In 2003 the CCCAAE co-sponsored an interdisciplinary conference in Hirschluch (near Berlin, Germany), on "The Berlin- Congo Conference 1884, the Partition of Africa, and Implications for Christian Mission Today", which brought together African, European and North American scholars from universities and research institutions in Africa, Europe and the USA. The next interdisciplinary conference is scheduled to take place in 2007 or 2008. Among the more immediate planned activities of the CCCAAE are the establishment of a small office, seminars for the Christian education of children and youth in African churches in Europe, intra-European and inter-continental exchange programmes for youth, and the formation of an African gospel choir. The latter will be a tool to create cultural awareness and foster mutual support and networking between African congregations in Europe.

The CCCAAE has a provisional office in Berlin, Germany.

Member churches of the Council of Christian Churches of an African Approach in Europe

France

Christian Assembly The Word of Life
 Community of the Desert
 Evangelical Church ZOE
 Evangelical Revival Church and Mission
 Federation of Christian North-Africans of France
 Good News Church
 Oasis Evangelical Church
 Power of Salvation International Evangelizing Ministry

Germany

Adoration of Christ International Centre
 African Christian Church Hamburg
 African Ecumenical Church
 African Evangelical Church
 Apostle's Continuation Church
 Assembly of God, Berlin
Baptist Church of Angola
 Bethel Prayer Ministry Int.
 Blood of Christ Ministry
 Central Faith Ministry e.V.
 Christ Ambassadors Ministry
 Christ Apostolic Church
 Christ Discovery Church
 Christ Divine Ministry
 Christ International Church
 Christ Is The Answer Ministry
 Christ Miracle Gospel Ministries Int.
 Christian Pentecostal Church
 Christ Redemption Ministry
 Christ Reigneth Evangelical Ministry
 Christian Action Faith Ministry
 Christian Church Outreach Mission
 Christian Community of Resurrection
 Christian Faith Ministry
 Church of Bethel Faith Temple
 Church of Pentecost
Coptic Orthodox Church
 Deeper Christian Life Ministry
 Damascus Christian Church
 Ebenezer Ghanaian Methodist Society
 El Shaddai Church
Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Addis Ababa Patriarchate)
 Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
 Ethiopian Bethlehem Church
 Evangelical Church for Christ
 Fountain Gate Chapel
 Francophone Catholic Mission
 Francophone Protestant Church
 Ghana Catholic Society
 Ghanaian Adventist Church
 Gospel Believers Centre
 Gospel Light Church Int.
 Grace Assemblies
 Grace International Foundational Scriptural Ministry
 Harvestime Christian Center e.V.
 International Christian Revival Church

International Gospel Deliverance Church
 International Ministerial Council of Germany
 Jesus Christ Healing Ministry
 Jesus Miracle Harvest Church
Kimbanguist Church
 Kingdom Exploiters Mission
 Kingdom of God Reconciliation Church
 Living Faith Sanctuary
 Living Word Chapel
 Love Chapel Int.
 New Jerusalem Church
 New Life Evangelical Ministry
 New Life in Christ
 Oromo Christian Fellowship
 Pentecostal Church International "Shalom Chapel"
 Pentecostal Revival Ministry
 Precious Blood of Jesus Christ Church
Presbyterian Church of Ghana Hamburg Branch
 Protestant Faith Fellowship
 Redeemed Christian Church of God
 Resurrection Power & Living Bread Int.
 Solid Rock Foundation Ministry
 Sword of the Spirit Ministry
 Temple of Praise Ministry
 Trinity Church International e.V.
 True Teachings of Christ
 Trust In Faith Gospel Mission Berlin
 United Brethren in Christ Church
 United Christian Tabernacle
 Vineyard Prayer Ministry
 Word Miracle Church
 Word of Faith Ministry
 World of Faith Outreach International Church

Switzerland

Basilea Vineyard Francophone of Bern
 Christian Assembly of Basel
 Christian Church of the Chablais
 Christian Assembly of Zürich
 Church of Christ – Central Coordination
 Church of Christ – Christian Assembly of Fribourg
 Crossroads Church
 Evangelical Church of the Grace of Jesus Christ for All Nations
 Evangelical Mission
 Evangelical Mission Bethesda
 Evangelical Revival Community
 Francophone Christian Assembly, Luzern
 Full Gospel Christian Community
 Full Gospel International Church
 Good News Evangelical Church
 Outreach Deliverance
 Protestant Evangelical Church
 Revival Church Amen

United Kingdom

Apostolic Congress of Great Britain
 Born Again Christian Healing Church International
 Calvary Church of God in Christ
 Cherubim and Seraphim Church
 Christ The Resurrection

Deeper Life Christian Ministry
 Full Gospel Revival Church Centre
 Full Gospel Revival Church of God
 Grace Christian Fellowship
 Mosama Disco Christo Church
 Tabernacle Jehovah El Sha Dai Church
 New Testament Church of God
 United Kingdom Church of Christ

Conference of Protestant Churches in Latin Countries of Europe

(Conférence des Eglises protestantes des Pays latins d'Europe, CEPPLÉ)

Founded in 1950

CEPPLÉ groups together churches of different theological traditions (Reformed, Lutheran, Episcopal, Waldensian, Baptist, Methodist, etc.) which desire to assist each other in expressing the witness of the churches of the Reformation in the Latin countries.

Member churches of CEPPL:

United Protestant Church of Belgium
Church of the Confession of Augsburg, Alsace and Lorraine (France)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France
 Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches of France
 French Protestant Federation
 National Union of Independent Evangelical Reformed Churches of France
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
Reformed Church of France
Evangelical Methodist Church of Italy
Evangelical Waldensian Church in Italy
 Evangelical Methodist Church of Portugal
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
Lusitanian Evangelical Catholic Apostolic Church (Portugal)
Reformed Episcopal Church in Spain
Spanish Evangelical Church
Conference of French-speaking Reformed Churches in German-speaking Switzerland
Evangelical Free Church of Geneva (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of Graubünden (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Fribourg (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Neuchâtel (Switzerland)
Reformed Evangelical Church of the Canton of Valais (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Vaud (Switzerland)
Protestant Church of Geneva
Synodical Union Bern-Jura (Switzerland)

Conference of Churches on the Rhine

(Conférence des Eglises riveraines du Rhin, Konferenz der Kirchen am Rhein)

Founded in 1961

The Conference of Churches on the Rhine understands itself as a space for ecumenical encounter and cooperation where, in listening together to the concrete commandments of Jesus Christ, impulses for missionary, diaconal, social and ecumenical commitment may be hoped for. The Conference came into being as an instrument of reconciliation and peace, with the purpose of making the Rhine a symbol of togetherness and no longer of separation and dreams of power to invade each other.

Member churches:

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria
Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine (France)
 French Protestant Federation
Evangelical Church of the Palatinate (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Baden (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wurttemberg (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Rhineland (Germany)
Evangelical Church in Germany
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Aargau (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church in Basel City (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church in Canton Basel Land (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Schaffhausen (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton St Gallen (Switzerland)
Evangelical Church Council of Canton Thurgau (Switzerland)
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Zürich (Switzerland)
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches

ALBANIA

Population: 3,220,164

Surface area: 28,750 sq.km

Capital: Tirana

GNI per capita: 1,740 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Albanian, Greek, Macedonian

Religions: Muslim 39%; Christian 35%; Atheist 26%

Christianity: Orthodox 614,100; Catholics 524,219; Protestants 39,380;

Independent 97,470

Albania has been successively part of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires. It became independent in 1912 and was a monarchy from 1924 to 1939, when it was invaded by fascist Italy. The Albanian Communist Party, formed in 1941, seized control of the country in 1944, installing one of the harshest communist dictatorships of modern history. Under Enver Hoxha, Albania was declared an atheist nation in 1967, and all religious and traditional beliefs were forbidden. It was a fear-driven regime, clamping down on all who resisted, intellectuals, clergy, and other opponents. Many Orthodox and Catholic bishops and priests were killed or sent to prison. Albania was politically and economically isolated from the rest of the world, including the communist world. In 1990, in the context of the end of the cold war and under internal pressure within the party and by the people, the communist regime collapsed. Since then, Albania has gone through several crises of instability, due in part to the conflicts in the Balkans. The political and economic situation is improving, but slowly. The two largest churches, Orthodox and Catholic, have re-established themselves. Islam has also re-affirmed itself in Albania. There has been a considerable influx of Evangelical, Pentecostal and other Christian faith missions. Relationships between the faith communities are on the whole tolerant. There is no council of churches.

Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 400,000

Dioceses: 3

Parishes: 410

Bishops: 4

Priests: 134

Member of: WCC (1994) – CEC

Periodicals: *Ngjallja* (Resurrection), (monthly, in Albanian)

News from Orthodoxy in Albania

Website: www.orthodoxalbania.org

The origins of Orthodoxy in Albania go back to the apostolic age. In Rom. 15:19 St Paul mentions Illyricum, the province of the Roman empire of which the territory of today's Albania was part. The southern part of Albania belonged for centuries to the Orthodox Byzantine sphere of influence. At the time of the schism in 1054, southern Albania retained its tie to Constantinople while northern Albania reverted to the jurisdiction of Rome. From the 15th to the 20th century, Albania was part of the Ottoman empire, and many of the people converted to Islam, often under pressure. At the beginning of the 20th century a nationalist independence movement emerged, which was led by people of Orthodox faith or descent. In 1937 the Orthodox Church of Albania was granted autocephaly by the Ecumenical Patriarch. Two years later the country was occupied by fascist Italy. Attempts were made to unite the Orthodox Church with Rome, but failed. Under communist rule from 1945 onwards, the Orthodox and other churches in Albania came under complete control of the state. Until 1967 it was the same type of persecution as in other communist countries. In 1967 Albania declared itself an atheist state. All forms of religious expression were constitutionally forbidden. Virtually all churches and monasteries were destroyed or turned into warehouses, barracks etc. Clergy were unfrocked, many of them were thrown into prison or sent into exile, and a number went to their martyrdom. Of the 440 priests who had served before communism only 22 survived this time of extreme hardship.

In 1991, following the political changes in Albania, the Ecumenical Patriarch appointed then-Bishop Anastasios Yannoulatos from Greece as Patriarchal Exarch, and subsequently as archbishop of Tirana, together with three diocesan metropolitans, also from Greece. After many difficulties with the Albanian authorities who opposed an all-Greek hierarchy, the holy synod of the Church of Albania was re-established in 1998, with two of the four hierarchs being Albanian. Despite these trials, beginning in 1991 the Orthodox Church of Albania rose from its ruins. A remarkable revival and development began which radiated into many social sectors. The church started by proclaiming the gospel of love and peace. It developed a life of worship and cultivated a Christian (Orthodox) conscience. It re-established Orthodox parishes, with active liturgical lives in many cities and towns, as well as in hundreds of villages, and created Orthodox intellectual groups, women's groups and youth groups, which assist the church with ecclesiastical work. In 1992 an academy was created for the training of a new generation of priests, which is also open to women, who will serve as lay leaders in the church. An ecclesiastical high school was opened in 1998. Youth outreach is a major concern of the church, with national and regional youth offices, camps for youth and children, activities for students in the three universities, youth festivals, etc.

The church has developed social programmes in the areas of health and education, notably the “Annunciation” medical centre and the “Spirit of Love” institute for professional training. It is active in relief work for the destitute, and participated in the care for refugees during the Kosovo crisis in 1999. It is supporting agricultural and many other development programmes. Since 2001, an environmental programme has been ongoing. Beyond its borders, the Church of Albania contributes to peace and reconciliation in the Balkans.

Some 89 new churches have been built and 141 repaired, and more than 20 other constructions including diocesan centres, the academy, a monastery, schools, guest houses, etc., have been set up and 131 priests, all Albanians, have been trained and consecrated. More than statistics can tell, the story of the Orthodox Church in Albania is a story of resurrection (see *The Resurrection of the Church in Albania*, Jim Forest, WCC 2002).

ARMENIA

Population: 3,042,633

Surface area: 29,800 sq.km

Capital: Yerevan

GNI per capita: 950 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Armenian, Russian

Religions: Christian 94%; Muslim 3%

Christianity: Orthodox (Oriental) 2,734,835; Catholics 160,000;

Protestants 8,900; Independent 26,340

Armenia was for many centuries an independent nation and kingdom that in some periods of its history extended far beyond its present geographical location in the South Caucasus. It adopted Christianity as the official religion in 301, and thus became the first Christian nation of the world. From 1920 onwards, Armenia was a republic in the Soviet Union. It regained its independence in 1991. The country is in the process of rebuilding its economy. The Armenian Apostolic Church is by and large the majority church. The Catholic Church has had a minority presence in Armenia since the time of the Crusaders and Catholic missions that begun in the 15th century. Protestant missions (mainly Baptist) arrived in the 19th century. In recent years there has been an influx of some Evangelical and Pentecostal groups. Due to historic circumstances there is a large Armenian diaspora. At present a little over three million Armenians live in the Republic of Armenia, more than two million in Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union, and another three million in the diaspora.

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Etchmiadzin)

Church Family: Orthodox (Oriental)

Membership: 8,023,000*

Parishes: 500

Archbishops and Bishops: 47

Archimandrites: 88

Priests: 365

Member of: WCC (1962) – CEC

Periodicals: *Etchmiadzin* (official monthly record of the Catholicosate)

of All Armenians), *Sion* (monthly, Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem),
The Armenian Church and *Mother Church* (Armenian Dioceses of the USA)

According to sacred tradition, in the 1st century the apostles St Thaddeus and St Bartholomew came to Armenia, preached the gospel and were martyred for their faith. From that time onward, there have been Christian communities in Armenia. In 301, Christianity was proclaimed the official state religion. The historical centre of this autocephalous national church is the Mother See of Etchmiadzin, near the capital city of Yerevan. Doctrinally, the church bases its faith on the Bible, holy Tradition, and on the decisions of the first three ecumenical councils. On the question of Christology, it accepts the definition set by the Council of Ephesus, that "one is the nature of the incarnate word". It does not accept the Council of Chalcedon (451), and renounces the teachings of Nestorius and Eutyches. The church's liturgy is substantially that of St Basil the Great, in classical Armenian. The Gregorian calendar is primarily used. The Bible was translated into Armenian at the beginning of the 5th century, immediately after the creation of the Armenian alphabet, which is still in use today.

Holy Etchmiadzin and other monastic centres have contributed to the advancement of faith, culture, literature, science and the arts for centuries. They represent the religious, linguistic and cultural unity of Armenians in their homeland and abroad. During the last decades many sanctuaries, old monasteries and churches have been renovated. There are currently 18 monasteries. As a result of the historical situation of the Armenians, two patriarchates were established within the hierarchy of the Armenian Church, in Jerusalem and Constantinople, both with local jurisdiction. At present over three million Armenians live in the Republic of Armenia, more than two million in Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union, and another three million in the diaspora. During the last ten years, 16 new bishops have been consecrated, 63 celibate priests and over 100 married priests have been ordained, and hundreds of deacons have graduated from the Gevorkian Theological Seminary located at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. In recent years, the number of believers has considerably increased. Among the principal priorities of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the near future are: (a) the spiritual life of Armenians and the sustenance of newly formed parishes and communities; (b) reorganization of the theological seminaries – two new seminaries have been founded; (c) construction and renovation of new churches, (d) development of church media agencies and advancement of Christian education; and (e) the continuation of ecumenical dialogue and visitation with sister churches and other member churches of the WCC

A new Armenian translation of the Bible was published in 1994. Armed forces chaplaincy and prison ministry programmes were established in the late 1990s. In 2002, at the proposal of the church, the government agreed to add the subject of "Armenian Church History" to the curriculum of the public schools system. A TV studio was founded in 1998, and was granted a licence for a public broadcast in 2002. The studio produces and shows thematic films and documentaries and covers public, economic, cultural, and national-ecclesiastical events as well as church activities. Youth centres were started in 1993 and are spread throughout Armenia providing the youth with places for learning, social and cultural activities. In 1997, the *Christian Armenia* newspaper was established, a bi-weekly periodical distributed to the local public. The *Mother See* is a quarterly English language newsletter published and distributed to the diaspora by the department of information services.

***Distribution of membership:**

Armenia: 3,026,000

Europe: 3,695,000 (including Russia and the other countries of the former Soviet Union)

North America: 1,190,000

Latin America: 112,000

AUSTRIA

Population: 8,120,243

Surface area: 83,860 sq.km

Capital: Vienna

GNI per capita: 26,810 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Language: German

Religions: Christian 90%; Muslim 3%;

Christianity: Catholics 5,770,000; Protestants 363,080; Orthodox 100,600; Independent 72,340

Austria was once the centre of the Austro-Hungarian empire. After World War I it became a federal republic, which was annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938. In the period following World War II, Austria developed gradually into a prosperous country with a healthy economy and a relatively secure social system. It joined the European Union in 1995. Because of its neutrality and its geographical position, Austria has often been a bridge-builder between East and West, politically and culturally. The churches participate also in this mediating role. The main religious group in Austria is the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant churches (Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist and Baptist) are a minority of about 6 percent of the population. The Methodist Church is part of the United Methodist Church and thus also of the WCC. There is an Old-Catholic Church and also a sizeable Orthodox minority, among which the Greek Orthodox Church is the oldest, and the Serbian Orthodox Church the largest group. Ecumenical partnership has been common practice for decades. The churches work together in the Ecumenical Council of Churches, regardless of their size. The Roman Catholic Church has been a full member of the council since 1994. Good interfaith relationships exist with the Jewish and Muslim communities. The official recognition of Islam by the state has helped to create a climate of mutual understanding. There is an Evangelical Alliance of Austria, which is affiliated with the WEA.

***Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria**

(Ökumenischer Rat der Kirchen in Österreich)

Founded in 1958.

Basis of membership: Membership is open to all churches in Austria which approve the aim of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria and agree with its by-laws.

Aim: The purpose of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria is to fulfill ecumenical tasks together. In particular, the council considers it to be its task to put into practice the ecumenical ideal in Austria, making it known, and deepening this ideal in the life of the congregations.

Member churches:

Anglican Church
Armenian Apostolic Church
Bulgarian Orthodox Church
Catholic Church
Coptic Orthodox Church
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession
Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession
Evangelical Methodist Church
Greek Orthodox Church
Old-Catholic Church
Romanian Orthodox Church
Russian Orthodox Church
Serbian Orthodox Church
Syrian Orthodox Church

Observers:

Austria Diakonia
 Austrian Bible Society
 Baptist Union
 Ecumenical Youth Council
 Evangelical Missionary Council
 European Ecumenical Forum of Christian Women
 National Ecumenical Committee Austria
 "Pro Oriente"
 Salvation Army
 Servitas
 Vienna Community Church
 World Day of Prayer
 Website: www.kirchen.at / www.oekumene.at

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria
 (Evangelische Kirche Augsburgischen und Helvetischen Bekenntnisses A.u.H.B.)

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession
 Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 337,778
 Dioceses: 7
 Congregations: 200
 Pastors: 250
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – LWF – ÖRKÖ – CPCE – CERR
 Periodicals: *Die Saat; Amt und Gemeinde* (in German)
 Website www.evangel.at

Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession
 Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 14,097
 Congregations: 9
 Pastors: 18
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – WARC – EAC – ÖRKÖ – CPCE
 Periodical: *Reformiertes Kirchenblatt* (in German)

For purposes of legal recognition by the government, the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Austria form together an ecclesiastical entity called the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions, a designation which provides for cooperation in certain areas but leaves the two groups fully

independent in matters of confessional identity and administration. The dual legal entity both churches agreed to, with the obligation to follow in the way of the reformers, is the basis of Austrian Lutheran and Reformed participation in the WCC, an arrangement akin to that of Germany's Lutherans and Reformed, participating under the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). Austrian Lutherans are members of LWF through their own ecclesiastical body, the ECAC, just as the Reformed are members of WARC through their own Reformed Church of Austria.

The Reformation reached the area of what is today called Austria very early. By the end of the 16th century two thirds of the population were touched by it. At that time a systematic counter-reformation was started in the Habsburg empire. Evangelical preachers had to leave the country, churches were destroyed, books and writings burned. Citizens as well as farmers had to choose between emigration or return to the Catholic Church. For more than three generations they had to decide for their faith or their home country. Thousands chose to emigrate, many turned back to Catholicism and some stayed Evangelicals in their heart. A "secret Protestantism" was able to survive for decades, mainly by withdrawing to the hardly accessible valleys in the mountains of Carinthia and Upper Austria. During this period of persecution evangelical worship services were allowed only in Vienna. In 1781 the emperor issued a Deed of Tolerance, and in 1861 the Protestants were granted complete freedom of confession and public practice of religion. During the "Free from Rome" movement in the late 19th and early 20th century many Catholics joined the Protestant churches. The ideological trends of the 1930s brought about a severe time of testing for Protestants. A few men and women raised their voice and offered resistance but the church as a whole did not follow them. The influx of German refugees from central and eastern Europe after World War II, and of Hungarians after the uprising of 1956, increased once again the membership of the Protestant churches.

Lutheran and Reformed Christians in Austria have been working together in areas of spiritual and administrative concern for many years. One of the reasons is that in both churches membership is mixed, i.e. the Lutheran Church has Reformed members, and the Reformed Church has Lutherans. The law for Protestants voted in 1961 by the Austrian parliament provided for the legal autonomy of the churches and public support for the Protestant faculty of theology, for religious instruction in schools, and for military chaplaincies and church-related welfare services. Finding itself in the very centre of Europe, the church makes great efforts to promote dialogue with various Christian communities in neighbouring nations, in particular in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Italy, Germany and Switzerland. Through its theological faculty in Vienna it contributes to the ongoing European theological debate.

Old-Catholic Church in Austria

(Alt-Katholische Kirche Österreichs)

Church Family: Old-Catholic

Membership: 14,621

Parishes: 11

Bishop: 1

Priests: 29

Member of: WCC (1967) – CEC – ÖRKÖ

Periodical: *Altkatholische Kirchenzeitung* (monthly, in German)

Website: www.altkatholiken.at

The church separated from the Roman Catholic Church after the definition of infallibility and the universal primacy of jurisdiction of the pope as a dogma in 1870. The OCCA became an established church in 1877, through the recognition by the Austrian imperial government, although the authorities did not permit the consecration of a bishop or recognize the validity of marriages performed by the Old-Catholic Church. Neither did the government allow the church tax paid by Old-Catholics to be used for the clergy, as was done in the case of all other denominations. Consequently, Old-Catholics, mostly working-class people, were constantly in financial straits. They also had difficulty in finding priests. After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1918, only three parishes remained. Nine more were established later. The first bishop was consecrated by the archbishop of Utrecht and other bishops during the International Old-Catholic Congress at Bern in 1925. The church suffered much during the period 1933-45, and flourished again from the foundation of the second republic of Austria onwards. In 1982 and again in 1998 the church hosted the gatherings of the International Old-Catholic Congress.

The Old-Catholic Church of Austria seeks to preserve the heritage of the ancient church. It takes seriously the freedom of faith and conscience of the individual. In 2000 it adopted a document stating that the OCCA wants to be an inviting and participatory church, open to diversity, accompanying people in their life journey, a community that is constantly being renewed, a church that offers a home and protection, where each person can receive and live out the faith without fear. All decisions are taken together by the clergy and the laity. Since 1997 the ministry is open to women. The OCCA is ecumenical and is committed to the issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

BELGIUM

Population: 10,359,127

Surface area: 30,510 sq.km

Capital: Brussels

GNI per capita: 25,760 US\$

Classification : Developed economy

Languages: French, Dutch and German

Religions: Christian 88%; Muslim 4%; Buddhist, Jewish and other 1%

Christianity: Catholics 8,747,706; Protestants 143,990; Orthodox 48,200;

Independent 69,710

Belgium has been a constitutional monarchy since 1830. It has a largely federalized government system in order to accommodate the language areas (Dutch-speaking Flanders, French-speaking Wallonia, Brussels where both languages are used, and a small German-speaking area). Belgium has a modern industrialized and commercial economy. It is one of the six founding members of the European Union, and the offices of the EU Commission and Council are located in Brussels. Several European churches and ecumenical organizations have established offices in Brussels, to liaise with the EU. The Catholic Church is the majority church in Belgium. Historically, the Reformation had a strong impact in the area, but the independence struggle of the Netherlands and the Counter-Reformation led to the re-establishment of the Catholic Church. The relationships of the small Protestant churches and groups with the Catholic Church have been difficult for a long time,

but have been normalized in the recent past. The WCC member church is the United Protestant Church of Belgium. Evangelicals and Pentecostals make up about 50 percent of the Protestants, and together with the Charismatics 3 percent of the Christian population (2000). There is a small but growing Orthodox presence. A consultative body groups the Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox and United Protestant churches. There are two Evangelical Alliances, one Dutch, and one French speaking, which are affiliated with the WEA.

Consultation of Christian Churches in Belgium

(Concertation des Eglises chrétiennes en Belgique CECB)

Founded in 1990

Purpose: To express the communion that already exists between its member churches and to promote a greater unity and a more efficient Christian witness; to be a place of common prayer; to be a place of information sharing, listening and dialogue between the churches; to facilitate reflection and possible joint initiatives in the areas of witness, service and Christian presence to the world.

Member churches:

Anglican Church

Catholic Church

Orthodox Church

United Protestant Church of Belgium

United Protestant Church of Belgium

(Eglise protestante unie de Belgique EPUB)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 50,000

Congregations: 103

Pastors: 105

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CEPPLÉ – CECB – WARC – EAC – WMC – CPCE

Periodicals: *De Stem* (in Dutch), *Mosaïque* (in French)

Kerkmozaïek (in Dutch)

This church traces its history back to the Reformation which had a great influence in the country. Political forces and the Counter-Reformation did not eliminate Protestantism entirely. But it found the necessary freedom for its development only after the independence of Belgium in 1830. New churches were then added to those which had survived difficult times. This was a result of evangelization by the Reformed churches in Switzerland, France and the Netherlands. From 1925 onwards two different strands developed in Belgian Protestantism. There were churches which participated in the worldwide ecumenical movement and in the Federation of Protestant Churches in Belgium, and others which stayed away from ecumenism. From 1962 onwards four churches realized an organic church union in two stages. In 1969 the Evangelical Protestant Church of Belgium united with the Belgian Conference of the United Methodist Church to form the Protestant Church of Belgium. In 1971 this church started union negotiations with the Reformed Church of Belgium (founded in 1837 as the Belgian Christian Missionary Church, mainly working in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium), which led in 1979 to the formation of the United Protestant Church of Belgium.

Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion of the nation. There are in the country more and more Orthodox churches, and large immigrant communities adhering to Islam. The UPCB is a minority church, but it contributes to the social and religious life of the people in several ways. It has created a few organizations which work towards the integration of refugees and migrants into society. Programmes of evangelization have been developed. The church sponsors radio and television work and maintains a missionary relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda. It is concerned with issues of development and economic justice. A considerable number of African students, in particular from Zaire and Rwanda, are enrolled in the theological faculty of Brussels. Since the Second Vatican Council the relations with the Roman Catholic Church have improved and deepened, and there is today an atmosphere of confidence and cooperation.

As a united church representing different traditions, the UPCB benefits from its close ties with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland (EKD, Germany) and the United Methodist Church.

CROATIA

Ecumenical Coordinating Committee of Churches in Croatia

Founded in 1997.

Basis of membership: Cooperation in ecumenical institutions.

Member churches:

- Catholic Church
- Evangelical Church in Croatia
- Evangelical Pentecostal Church
- Reformed Christian Church in Croatia
- Serbian Orthodox Church*
- Union of Baptist Churches in Croatia

CZECH REPUBLIC

Population: 10,230,060

Surface area: 78,870 sq.km

Capital: Prague

GNI per capita: 9,150 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Czech, Slovak

Religions: Christian 33%

Christianity: Catholics 2,756,622; Protestants 178,627; Hussite 99,356;

Orthodox 23,053; Independent 31,000

The Czech Republic was established in 1993, after the peaceful division of former Czechoslovakia into two states. The Czech are a Slavonic people who have been living in the area since the 5th century. From the 17th through the beginning of the 20th century the territory was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918. It came under communist rule in 1948, after World War II, until 1989 when the Soviet bloc collapsed. The country was one of the industrial centres of the Soviet bloc. It has been rapidly adjusting to

liberal economy and joined the European Union in 2004. During the communist period, the churches were to a large extent controlled by the Communist Party and were not allowed to work freely. Prague, the capital, was the home of the Christian Peace Conference. However, after the repression of the attempt to create a "socialism with a human face" in 1968, Prague became also a centre of dissidence in the Soviet-ruled part of Europe. The Ecumenical Council groups the main Protestant, Pentecostal, Orthodox, and Old-Catholic churches. The Roman Catholic Church, which is the majority church, is an associate member of the council. There is also a Czech Evangelical Alliance, which is affiliated with the WEA. The Czech land is the area of the early Reformer Jan Hus and the Moravians, who later moved to Hernnhut in Germany. The Baptist Theological Seminary, serving the whole of Europe, is located near Prague. The Czech Republic is today one of the most secularized countries in Europe.

***Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic**

Founded in 1955 as the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Czechoslovakia, it became the Czech Ecumenical Council in 1970, and the Czechoslovak Ecumenical Council of Churches in 1984. In 1993, after the division of Czechoslovakia, it took its current title.

Basis of membership: The ECC is an association of churches, which profess that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Saviour and aspire to fulfil their mission together to the glory of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The ECC is not a supra-church. Each of the member denominations makes its own decisions regarding its teachings, creed, life, and order, as well as regarding its relationship to other churches and church unions. However, membership in the ECC binds individual churches in an ecumenical relationship with all of the other churches that belong to the ECC. It also compels them to strive for the highest possible degree of agreement on all controversial issues.

Member churches:

- Apostolic Church
- Baptist Union in the Czech Republic
- Brethren Church
- Czechoslovak Hussite Church*
- Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren*
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession
- Old Catholic Church
- Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands*
- Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession*
- United Methodist Church*
- Unity of Brethren (Moravian Church – Unitas Fratrum)

Associate member church:

- Czech Bishop's Conference (Catholic Church)

Observers:

- Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic

Website: www.ekumenickarada.cz

Czechoslovak Hussite Church

Church Family: Hussite

Membership: 102,000

Dioceses: 6

Congregations: 303

Bishops: 7

Pastors: 241 (107 women)

Lay preachers: 84 (49 women)

Member of: WCC (1963) – CEC – ECCCR – CPCE

Periodicals: *Cesky Zapas* (weekly, in Czech), *Husita* (monthly, in Czech)

The Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC) declares that it “*came into being through the will and grace of God, so that through it many who would otherwise have been lost in unbelief and despair should be brought into the one, holy, universal church of God, and so that it might strive to bring about the church of God without stain or wrinkle*” (Basic Principles of Faith of the CHC). This took place with the celebration of church services in the Czech language for the first time at Christmas 1919. The CHC was then formally established in January 1920 in Prague by *Focus*, the radical wing of the modernist reform movement of Roman Catholic clergy. The basic theological characteristics of the CHC are: 1) The Spirit of Christ (the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit). This is the highest norm. 2) The apostolic and Reformation character of the church. Both are understood as coming from the Holy Spirit. 3) The presence of Christ as a liturgical principle. The living Christ makes himself present through the power of the Holy Spirit in the sacramental action of the church. 4) Respect for scientific truth and openness towards the world. There is only one final truth and knowledge of this final truth is only partial. Truth is a responsible relationship with God and with fellow human beings. 5) Freedom of conscience, which opens up horizons of pluralism of opinions and viewpoints. 6) Presbyterian and episcopal order. This has its origin in the universal priesthood of the people of Christ. Bishops are elected for a certain period of time. The presbyterian order refers to the participation of elected or approved presbyters (church elders) in the structures of the church.

Through its name, the “Czechoslovak Hussite Church” proclaims its adherence to the Christian traditions of its historical territories, especially the Hussite or Czech Reformation (also known as the first Reformation). The Hussite Church occupies the middle ground between the essence of the Catholic Church (liturgy and the seven sacraments) and the principles of the Protestant churches (teaching and order). Its theology is constantly engaged in the process of critically defining its own church practice. The basic unit of the church is the local congregation, led by a council of elders which is elected by the assembly of the congregation. Together, the local congregations make up five dioceses in the Czech Republic and one in Slovakia. The dioceses are administered by diocesan councils under the leadership of a bishop, elected by the diocesan assembly. The church as a whole is administered by a central council, under the leadership of a patriarch, who is elected by the all-church assembly. The central council consists of both priests and presbyters in equal numbers, who are elected by the diocesan assemblies. In the periods between meetings of the all-church assembly, authority is vested in the whole church vestry, with delegates (clergy and lay) from each of the dioceses.

The CHC seeks to fulfil its vocation in society by bringing into dialogue contemporary moral thinking and scientific knowledge with the Spirit of Christ as preserved in the scripture and the tradition of the early church, and in the Bohemian and 16th-century Reformation movements. The church takes care of

the spiritual growth of all its members, at the parish level through Bible studies, religious education, preparation for the sacraments and pastoral care, at the synod and national levels through seminars, courses, summer camps, etc. Candidates for the ministry are trained at the Hussite theological faculty of Charles University in Prague, which offers also programmes for other professions in the church and is open to students from other churches. A new institution of the CHC is the Huss Institute of Theological Studies where pastoral assistants, deacons and other church workers are trained. The church is actively involved in educational, social and diaconal activities and in cultural manifestations (e.g. the Hussite Music School).

Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 117,000

Congregations: 270

Seniors: 13

Pastors: 230 (55 women)

Lay preachers: 38

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – ECCCR – WARC – EAC – LWF – CPCE

Periodical: *Czech Brother* (bimonthly, in Czech)

Website: www.srcce.cz

The present Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren is the result of the union of the former Czech churches of the Helvetic and Augsburg Confessions. Its history, however, goes back to the 15th century awakening through the work of Jan Hus and his followers, which later on brought into existence the *Unitas Fratrum*. Although the Protestants constituted 90 percent of the population at the beginning of the 17th century, they were outlawed in their own homeland after 1620. They had either to leave the country or accept the Catholic faith. The most notable of the exiles was J.A. Comenius, the last bishop – or senior – of the *Unitas Fratrum*. In 1781, the emperor granted the Protestants a measure of religious liberty. But still they had to belong either to the Lutheran or to the Reformed Church. Only in 1918 was union reached on the basis of a common return to the Hussite and Brethren Reformation, which brought into being the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren. The ECCB is the largest Protestant church in the country.

The congregations of the ECCB have a presbyterian order and the whole church is organized on synodal principles. The synod meets each year and its 80 members are elected by the seniorate meetings. The life and work of the church is closely connected with the work of Evangelical Diaconia with its 32 local centres, which was set up after the political changes of 1989. The new situation made it also possible for the church to appoint pastors in public institutions, like the military chaplains, prison chaplains, diaconal pastors, reporters working in the media, etc. Training for the ministry takes place at the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague. Some 10-15 graduates of this faculty start each year their ordained mission in the church. The publishing house KALICH is also closely linked with the ECCB.

The church is concerned about the spiritual life of its members. Its major programmes include postgraduate theological training of pastors, courses for lay preachers and training of other lay workers. There is a large meeting of youth each year in one or the other of the Czech towns. The main topics of discussion of the last such gathering were: the meaning of ordination, holy communion for chil-

dren, the meaning of the gospel in secular society, the financial resources of the church, etc.

Besides its membership in the ecumenical bodies mentioned above, the church has a large range of bilateral contacts with many churches in Europe and in the world.

Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia

The Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia has two dioceses in the Czech Republic. In 2005 the head office of the church was in the Slovak Republic. See under Slovakia for the description of the church.

Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 30,000

Congregations : 21

Preaching stations: 17

Pastors: 37

Member of: WCC (1955) – CEC – ECCC – LWF – CPCE

Periodical: *Pritel/Przyjacieli* (monthly, in Czech and Polish)

Website: www.sceav.cz

The origins of the church go back to the Reformation. Students studying in Wittenberg brought the ideas of Lutheranism to Silesia. The duke of Silesia favoured the Reformation. After the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and the Counter Reformation, the church continued to exist illegally in the mountains. It endured two centuries of repression. Even in modern times, religious freedom was slow to come. During the 20th century the Silesian Evangelical Church passed through five stages of identity: up to 1918 it was part of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria; from 1918 to 1920 it belonged to the Lutheran Church in the new Poland; from 1920 to 1938 it was autonomous within the new Czechoslovakian Republic; in 1939 it came again under the Lutheran Church in Poland; from 1940 to 1945 it was part of the Evangelical Union Church in Breslau. After the war, it finally became officially recognized in 1948 as an equal among the other churches in the CSSR.

Historically the congregations are located in Tesin Silesia which is an area in the north-eastern tip of the Czech Republic. In recent years the church has begun mission activities in Prague and other parts of the country. It is still in a period of consolidation, overcoming the consequences of the communist regime. The ministry of word and sacraments is the centre of church life. Great stress is laid on work with children, teenagers and the youth. The main focus is Bible study and education for life in accord with the biblical values. The church has a long tradition of Bible study and prayer meetings. It has pietist roots that can still be found in most of the congregations. Spiritual life is promoted by the Christian Fellowship organization. The Evangelical Society promotes the understanding of the Polish culture and heritage of the church. Czech and Polish are both used in the life of the church. Members of the two national groups live in harmony with each other.

Silesian Diakonia runs 34 facilities providing social, psychological, pastoral and educational assistance. The church has also a well-developed ministry for the elderly and the sick. Religious instruction in schools has a high priority. Christian

teachers are formed at the department of Christian education of the pedagogical faculty of the University of Ostrava. A large number of the pastors finished their studies after 1989. In recent years, pastors have been trained in Prague, Warsaw (Poland), Bratislava (Slovakia), and western universities and seminaries. Fellowship with Lutheran believers in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Germany and with the Scandinavian churches has given the church a new lease of life.

DENMARK

Population: 5,385,540

Surface area: 43,090 sq.km

Capital: Copenhagen

GNI per capita: 33,570 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Danish

Religions: Christian 85%; Muslim 4%; Jewish 1%

Christianity: Protestants 4,509,540; Catholics 35,700; Orthodox 9,970;

Anglicans 3,200; Independent 32,500

The name "Danmark" goes back to the 9th century. The Danes have been a strong nation, at times ruling over England and most of Scandinavia, and over large parts of Germany and the Baltic coast line. In the 19th century Denmark lost most of the territories outside its present borders. The Faeroe Islands and Greenland, which have been part of Denmark since the 14th century, became self-governing units within the nation in the 20th century. Denmark is a constitutional monarchy. Since 1955 it has had an Ombudsman, who oversees the conduct of the government and the decisions of the administration. All citizens have the right to appeal government actions to the ombudsman. Denmark has a highly developed welfare system and has been a member of the European Union since 1973. Culturally the country belongs to the Nordic region. It shares with the other Nordic countries a tradition of tolerance, peace and international solidarity. In the 16th century Denmark adopted the Lutheran Reformation. The Lutheran Church is the national church and the "folk church". It participates actively in ecumenical dialogues and is signatory to the Leuenberg Agreement, but not to the Porvoo Agreement. Immigration has strengthened the minority Catholic and Orthodox communities. There is a Baptist Union, and several Charismatic groups. Denmark has an Evangelical Alliance affiliated with the WEA.

***National Council of Churches in Denmark**

Founded in 2004, as a merger of the Ecumenical Council of Denmark founded in 1939, and the Council of Danish Churches founded in 1991.

Basis: The National Council of Churches in Denmark is a community of Christian churches, religious communities and congregations in Denmark who worship and confess one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as Creator and Saviour, and giving life on Earth, in accordance to the Bible and the Apostles' Creed.

Member churches:

Anglican Church

Apostolic Church

Baptist Union of Denmark

Coptic Orthodox Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (Council on International Relations)
 International Church of Copenhagen
Methodist Church
 Mission Covenant Church
Moravian Church
 Reformed Synod in Denmark
 Roman Catholic Church
 Salvation Army
 Swedish Church "Gustafskyrkan" in Copenhagen

Member organizations:

Assisi-society
 Association of Diaconal Services
 Boys' Brigade
 Children and Youth Federation of the Baptist Union of Denmark
 Children and Youth Federation of the Methodist Church
 Christian Movement of High School Students in Denmark
 Church and Media
 Church Centre
 Church Foundation
 Council of Aarhus Churches
 Council of Evangelical Free Church
 Danish Bible Society
 Dialogue Center
 Diocesan Committee of Aalborg
 Diocesan Committee of Aarhus
 Diocesan Committee of Copenhagen
 Diocesan Committee of Elsinore
 Diocesan Committee of Funen
 Diocesan Committee of Ribe
 Diocesan Committee of Roskilde
 Diocesan Committee of Viborg
 Ecumenical Centre in Aarhus
 Ecumenical Women Committee
 Ecumenical Youth
 Girl Scouts in Denmark
 IKON-Denmark
 Movement of Young Peoples Home
 Students' Congregation in Aarhus
 Women's Federation of the Baptist Union of Denmark
 Women's Federation of the Methodist Church
 Y's Men International
 YMCA and YWCA in Denmark
 YMCA-Scouts in Denmark
 Young Catholics in Denmark

Website: www.nccdk.org

Baptist Union of Denmark

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 20,000
 Local churches: 50
 Pastors: 39
 Member of: WCC (1949) – CEC – NCCD – BWA – EBF
 Publication: *Baptist* (bi-weekly, in Danish)
 Website: www.baptistkirken.dk

The Baptist movement in Denmark began in the 19th century, a time marked both by national disasters following the Napoleonic wars, and by strong national, political and spiritual movements. Reformation in the 16th century had left Denmark with a Lutheran State Church which was the clerical counterpart of an authoritarian monarchy and would not allow for other forms of religion. Pietism later created a tradition of conventicles, small groups of lay people meeting for Bible study under the supervision of the clergy. After 1830, one of these conventicles in Copenhagen developed traditional Baptist beliefs on the brotherhood of believers, the Bible, and baptism, independently of Baptists elsewhere. An emissary from the Baptist church in Hamburg, a Danish Jew who had been baptized there, met this group, and after some hesitation they formed a Baptist church in Copenhagen in 1839, the first free church congregation in the Scandinavian countries. Until the constitution in 1849 accorded religious liberty, the Copenhagen Baptist church and churches formed in other parts of the country had to put up with severe persecution by state and clerical authorities. As a result, many Baptists emigrated to the USA. Relations with Baptists from Germany, England, Danish Baptists in the USA, and later the American Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention, helped the Baptist movement to become mature.

Relations have now been established with other free churches and with large parts of the Lutheran Church, through the Evangelical Alliance and later through the Ecumenical Council. Today relations among most local churches – from Roman Catholics to Pentecostals – are cordial. This is due both to the influence of the ecumenical movement and to a recognition of the pluralistic form of modern society. Numerically the Baptist Union is small, but the denomination is very active. Baptists conduct worship services in 70 church locations. The denomination's Sunday school work is the oldest in the country, and young people's unions and children's clubs are active. Children and young people play a very important role in church life. The Union runs two boarding schools for teenagers and supports a few missionaries serving the Baptist Unions of Burundi and Rwanda.

Baptists formed in 2000, with Danish partners and Swedish Baptists, a church-based theological training centre in Copenhagen named SALT (Scandinavian Academy of Leadership and Theology).

A matter of concern is that the average age of baptism is going up, perhaps because of the influence of the pluralistic society. Atheistic thinking as well as new religious movements, often of Hindu origin, and especially Islam, have been gaining ground in Denmark. The growing economic disparities in society as well as an increasingly multicultural population challenge the churches to rethink their role.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 4,500,000

Congregations: 2,100

Pastors: 2,000

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – NCCD – LWF – CPCE

Periodical: *Church News from Denmark*

Website: www.interchurch.dk

Christianity came to Denmark around 825 when Ansgar, a Benedictine monk from France, became apostle to the North. Around 960 King Harald accepted

Christianity as the official religion in Denmark. The 1520s brought the Lutheran Reformation. In 1537 the new king was crowned and seven new superintendents were consecrated to replace the former bishops. With the constitution of 1849 the Evangelical Lutheran Church was established as a folk church supported by the state. The minister for ecclesiastical affairs is the highest administrative authority, and the bishops, each in his or her diocese, have the highest authority and responsibility for the teaching of the church. Since 1903, elected parish councils have been in charge of the affairs of the local churches. During recent years the self-determination of parish councils has increased. The Council on International Relations was established by law in 1989, responsible for the ecumenical and international relations of the church. In each diocese a committee for ecumenical work is elected. The church is divided into 12 dioceses. The bishops are elected by the parish councils and appointed by the queen. About 85 percent of the 5.3 million population are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. All formal connection between church and school has ceased, but still Christianity is part of the curriculum in elementary school. Nearly 80 percent of children aged 13-14 are confirmed.

The Sunday worship service is characterized by a strong emphasis on the eucharist, the sermon and not least the singing of the congregation. The new hymnbook, authorized in 2002 with 791 hymns, contains many translations from other languages, but the majority of the hymns are written by Danish writers, many of them by the most beloved one, N.F.S. Grundtvig.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church cooperates with ten other denominations in the National Council of Churches in Denmark. Many tasks for the church are taken care of primarily by voluntary organizations, for example diaconal work, youth work and mission, and they are understood as instruments of the church. Congregations are actively involved in the work of many of these organizations. Thirty-four missionary societies cooperate in the Danish Missionary Council. DanChurchAid (established 1922), which works for interchurch aid, development, human rights and areas of diaconal work abroad, is one of the oldest specialized ministries of its kind.

ESTONIA

Population: 1,294,143

Surface area: 45,230 sq.km

Capital: Tallinn

GNI per capita: 5,380 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Estonian, Russian

Religions: Christian 63%; Other 1%

Christianity: Protestants 232,240; Orthodox 221,500; Catholics 3,500;

Independent 58,600

The Estonian people are an ethnic and linguistic group which established itself in the area several thousand years ago. Together with Latvia and Lithuania, Estonia is part of the Baltic region. In modern history, Estonia achieved its independence for the first time in 1918, after centuries of Danish, Swedish, German and Russian rule. It was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, and occupied by Nazi Germany. Thousands of people fled the country before the arrival of the Soviet army in 1944. In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia

became again independent, and since then it has sought to strengthen its integration with Europe. It joined the European Union in 2004. Relations with neighbouring Finland and with Sweden have a special importance for the country, culturally and economically. Christianity was first brought to Estonia from Denmark and Germany, in the 13th century. The country adopted the Lutheran Reformation. Orthodoxy came to Estonia from Russia. In the 1990s a conflict emerged in the Orthodox Church, which was eventually settled between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the creation of two separate jurisdictions. Besides the Lutheran Church, the two Orthodox churches and a small Methodist Church are also part of the WCC, through the wider church structures to which they belong. There is a Baptist Union, and several Pentecostal and Evangelical groups are active in Estonia.

Estonian Council of Churches

Founded in 1989.

Mission statement: The Estonian Council of Churches is an independent and voluntary association of Christian churches and associations of congregations for the joint effort to promote the spiritual development of Estonian society on the basis of Christian principles.

Member churches:

Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church
 Estonian Conference of SDA (Seventh-day Adventists) Church
Estonian Congregation of St Gregory of the Armenian Apostolic Church
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Estonian Methodist Church
 Estonian Orthodox Church
Estonian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate
 Roman Catholic Church
 Union of Evangelical Christian and Baptist Churches of Estonia

Associate member:

Charismatic Episcopal Church of Estonia

Website: www.ekn.ee

Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 200,000

Deaneries: 12

Congregations: 165

Pastors: 170

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – ECC – LWF

Periodical: *Eesti Kirik* (in Estonian)

Website www.eelk.ee

Although the first contacts of Estonians with Christianity are more than a thousand years old, organized church life began only in the 13th century. By the end of the 15th century Estonia had 94 parishes with a network of churches and chapels, and 15 monasteries. The Lutheran Reformation arrived in 1524, bringing with it the use of the Estonian language in the church. In the 18th century the country became subject to Russia. During this period, the church was under feudal German Lutheran domination and subject to Russian religious legislation. The whole Bible was translated and printed in Estonian in 1739, followed by

hymnbooks and catechisms. The idea of a free Estonian People's Church emerged at the beginning of the 20th century and was realized when, in 1917, the founding assembly of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church met in Tartu. Estonia became independent in 1918. The second world war and the ensuing 45 years of Soviet occupation with its atheist propaganda and hostile attitude towards religion ruined the authority of the church, alienated it from the majority of the people and denied the nation the possibility to practise Christian values. About 80,000 church members went into exile.

In the past few decades, Estonian society has undergone dramatic political and social changes which have also affected the church. Until World War II the EELK was the established church with a membership of 82 percent of the population. It is not in this position any longer. The structure of parishes remained unchanged during the Soviet period, when the church was unable to go along with demographic and other developments in society. As a result the church has no congregations in many urban areas. There is one pastor for every 200-5000 people in rural areas and one for every 25,000 in towns and cities. However, in people's memories and in the collective memory of society, the church lives on in its former position as an institution which can be relied on and bears some responsibility for the well-being of the people. The Lutheran Church is still the largest church in Estonia, but with the difference that now 10-15 percent of the population are members, and 80 percent do not belong to any church. Yet society still traditionally expects the church to give clear and ethically justified answers to many of today's social problems. Therefore the EELK is facing the challenge to change from a confessing church, which it was during the Soviet period, into an established and people's church once more, and to immerse itself in society. It must clarify its institutional character and structure, and spread its presence over the country, both physically and socially. It must also develop new competence among its clergy and laity. Therefore the first priority is education. The Institute of Theology of the EELK is an educational centre for the entire church: for preparing clergy, other church workers, lay people, church musicians, etc., for various types of work within congregations. The institute also trains teachers of religious education in public schools, as well as military, prison and hospital chaplains and people who are going to work in the mass media.

The membership of the congregations has grown younger, since a considerable number of young people join the church through confirmation. A certain number of them maintain closer contacts with his or her congregation and turn up at regular services. Since 2004, an association for work with children and youth coordinates all the work with children and youth. The church has a Sacred Music Union, and there is a strong tradition of choir singing in Estonian culture.

FINLAND

Population: 5,223,605

Surface area: 338,200 sq.km

Capital: Helsinki

GNI per capita: 27,060 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Finnish, Swedish

Religions: Christian 93%; Muslim and other 1%

Christianity: Protestants 4,454,680; Orthodox 57,360; Catholics 9,000;

Independent 104,220

Finland belongs to the Nordic region of Europe. It was part of the kingdom of Sweden from the 12th to the 19th century, when it was annexed by Russia and became a Grand Duchy in the Czarist Empire. In 1917 Finland declared its independence. In the Winter War of 1939-40 with the Soviet Union it lost part of its territory. Finland fought alongside Germany against the Soviet Union during World War II, and remained a neutral country in the cold war period. In the last 50 years Finland has made a remarkable transformation from a farm-forest economy to a diversified modern industrial economy. It is a member of the European Union. Christianity came to Finland from the East (Orthodox, from Russia), and from the West (Catholic, from Sweden). When Sweden adopted the Lutheran Reformation, the western church in Finland also became Lutheran. The reformation was a peaceful and gradual process. Historically the Lutheran Church was the state church, but the Lutheran and Orthodox churches have the same status since Finland became independent, and both are national churches. Several smaller Protestant denominations like the Baptists and Methodists came to Finland in the second half of the 19th century. The Methodists are part of the United Methodist Church. Pentecostals have established themselves in the 20th century and constitute the largest non-Lutheran group. Finnish Evangelicals are affiliated with the WEA through the Finnish Lausanne Committee.

***Finnish Ecumenical Council**

Founded in 1917 as the Finnish Council, a branch of the World Alliance for Promoting International Fellowship through the Churches. In 1933 the organization became the Ecumenical Council of Finland and in 1963 the Finnish Ecumenical Council.

Basis: Members of the council are churches and Christian communities in Finland, who confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church in Finland
 Catholic Church in Finland
 Evangelical Free Church of Finland
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
 International Evangelical Church in Finland
 Mission Covenant Church (Swedish-speaking)
Olaus Petri Congregation (Church of Sweden)
Orthodox Church of Finland
 Salvation Army
 Swedish-speaking Baptist Union of Finland
United Methodist Church in Finland (Finnish-speaking)
United Methodist Church in Finland (Swedish-speaking)

Observers:

Christian Association for Boys and Girls in Finland
 Christian Peace Movement
 Christian Student Association
 Christian Student Missionary Association
 Evangelical Lutheran Centre for Children's Work
 Swedish Pentecostal Mission in Finland
 Finnish Bible Society
 Finnish Retreat Association
 Finnish-speaking Baptist Union
 International Christian Youth Exchange, Finland

Logos Ministries of Finland
 Missionary Association for Business Men
 Mustard Seed Association
 National YMCA
 National YWCA
 Seventh-day Adventist Church
 Society of Friends, The Quakers
 St Henry Pilgrimage Committee
 Thomas Community

Website: www.ekumenia.fi

The Finnish Ecumenical Council is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 4,400,000
 Dioceses: 9
 Parishes: 548
 Bishops: 10
 Pastors: 2,100
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – FEC – LWF
 Website: www.evl.fi

Christianity came to Finland in the 12th century. St Henry is the patron saint and first bishop of Finland. At the time of the Reformation in the 16th century Finland was part of the kingdom of Sweden. The Evangelical Lutheran Church regards itself as the natural successor of the church that existed in Finland before the Reformation. There was no radical break with the past. A certain continuity was preserved in many significant matters. One of the new aspects the Reformation brought was the use of the language of the people in the sermons and teaching, which created a standard for both written and spoken Finnish. The Reformation also meant a closer relationship between the church and the state. The Lutheran Church consolidated its position as the established church of the kingdom of Sweden. The incorporation of Finland into the Russian empire as a grand duchy in 1809 did not in itself alter the relation between church and state, but new legislation in 1869 created a distinction in principle between the two, in that the church received its own ecclesiastical law and church assembly. This change is still relevant today. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church is not a state church but an established church to which the vast majority of the population belong and which shares in the fate of the Finnish people. The latter is above all an allusion to the events of the second world war, which led many of the pastors to appreciate more deeply this connection with the Finnish people, and helped the church to realize its own vision of working amongst the people as a church for the whole nation.

The central aspects of Lutheran Christianity are the preaching of God's word and administering of the sacraments. Eighty-four percent of the Finns belong to the ELCF. Of the children born in Finland each year, 87 percent are baptized and 89 percent of those aged 15 years attend confirmation classes. About 16 percent of the members of the church attend a service at least once a month. The parishes place much emphasis on working with children and young people. The hymnbook was revised in 1986, and a new Finnish translation of the Bible was introduced in 1992. Particular efforts were made in 1992 to strengthen the tradition of per-

sonal evening prayers, and copies of a prayer book for the home were distributed to about 700,000 families. A new canon law governing the church's administration came into force in 1994, and a new catechism was published in 2000, of which 2.4 million copies were distributed. The books for the occasional services like baptism, weddings and funerals were renewed in 2004.

Relations between the church and the working class used to be somewhat distant in the early decades of Finnish independence. A new era of bridge-building began after the second world war. It is part of the constant preoccupation of the church to maintain contact and solidarity with all sectors of the population. The social work of the church gained new emphasis during the recession of the early 1990s, in response to the sharp rise in unemployment. This led to a broadening of its scope to cover advice on indebtedness, meals for the unemployed and the "food banks" developed in recent years, all representing new activities undertaken in conjunction with the unemployed people's own organizations.

The ELCF has gone through a learning process of its own during the years since Finland gained independence. It has begun to appreciate more clearly its role as part of the universal, undivided church of Christ at the same time as being firmly Lutheran and distinctly Finnish. The church conducts theological dialogues with other churches in Finland and has conversations with the Russian Orthodox Church. It is part of the Porvoo Statement and accepted in 1998 the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church. The ELCF participates in the theological work of the CPCE but has not signed the Leuenberg Agreement.

Orthodox Church of Finland

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 61,000

Dioceses: 3

Parishes: 160

Priests: 110

Deacons: 50

Member of: WCC (1982) – CEC – FEC

Periodicals: *Aamun Koitto*, *Ortodoksiviesti Paimen-Sanomat*, *Ortodoksia*,

Tuohustuli, *Ortodoksinen kulttuuri*

Website: www.ort.fi

Orthodox Christianity was brought to eastern Finland by merchants and missionary monks around a thousand years ago. The first recognized institution was Valamo Monastery on Lake Ladoga, founded by the Byzantine monk Sergius and his Karelian disciple Herman in the 12th century. Orthodox parish life in Finland was already vibrant in medieval times. The Orthodox parishes formed a separate diocese in the Russian Church from 1893. When Finland gained independence in 1917, the Orthodox population still lived mainly in the Province of Karelia, although there were a few parishes in towns in western and southern Finland. In the new republic of Finland the position and the rights of the Orthodox Church were defined and settled by a government edict in 1918. The Orthodox Church received the same status as the predominant Lutheran Church of Finland, and it thus constitutes the second national church of the country. In 1923 the Finnish Orthodox Church had its canonical status clarified and became an autonomous church within the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The church enjoys a high degree of independence. The bishops are elected by the general assembly,

which includes bishops and representatives of clergy and laity. Only the election of a new archbishop has to be confirmed by Constantinople.

The second world war had drastic effects. Of the Orthodox who lived in the eastern part of the country, which was then occupied by the Soviet Union, 75 per cent had to move to other parts of Finland. The church lost most of its property, including the historical sites of its four monasteries. Fortunately the national government granted special financial support to construct more than 50 church buildings and vicarages all over the country.

Everyday Finnish and a modern translation of the Bible are used in liturgical life. Many books for liturgical use and devotional needs are printed. The translation of liturgical texts and adaptation of Byzantine and Russian melodies into Finnish continues. In the field of religious art the church makes an important contribution to the national religious culture. Icon painting has developed a particular Finnish style. There are several hundred active icon painters in the country, many of them Lutheran. Theological studies and research are mainly done at the Orthodox department of the University of Joensuu, where Orthodox pastors, teachers and cantors are trained. Students take a five-year MA degree in theology before priesthood. Students live in a boarding house (seminary), where they participate in regular worship and receive pastoral counselling during their studies.

The Monastery of New Valamo has developed into a national centre for pilgrimage. There are now 12 monks and novices. Its spiritual and cultural mission and witness are supported by the lay academy, icon renovation centre, library and conference facilities. There is also Lintula Convent with 15 nuns nearby. The church supports the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Orthodox missionary activities in Kenya and Uganda. In this connection a number of schools and nurseries have been established.

Orthodoxy is a popular part of the national culture today. Its visibility and influence largely exceed its size. Many converts to Orthodoxy and immigrants today bring new blood and energy, which is being utilized by the church in an open and creative way in a country which also provides a unique model through its ecumenical openness and mutual trust between the two national churches. The Finnish Orthodox Church participates in both pan-Orthodox and ecumenical meetings in a committed way. This includes various bilateral international dialogues. The church hosted the International Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue at New Valamo in 1988 and the Anglican-Orthodox International Commission in 1989. Orthodox youth take a very active role in international Orthodox youth work.

FRANCE

Population: 60,711,084

Surface area: 551,500 sq.km

Capital: Paris

GNI per capita: 24,730 US\$

Classification: Major industrialized economy

Languages: French

Religions: Christian 70%; Muslim 7%; Jewish 1%; Buddhist 1%;

Christianity: Catholics 46,274,000; Protestants 1,445,970; Orthodox 736,200;

Anglicans 22,000; Independent 1,750,880

The territory of France was part of the Celtic area under the Roman empire. It was conquered by the Franks in the 5th century. France became one of the lead-

ing nations in Europe. It was a monarchy until the revolution of 1793, and has been a republic since 1871. It developed a colonial empire, with large territories in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. In the 20th century, France experienced the devastation of two world wars, and fought two colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria. A founding member of the European Union, the country has established itself as one of the major political and economic powers in the world. France was Christianized in the 5th century. The Catholic Church in France has been one of the main centres of western Christianity, and is the majority church. France was the birthplace of the Calvinist Reformation, but Protestantism has remained a minority. As a result of the Enlightenment and the French revolution, a particular concept of separating the temporal and the spiritual developed in France, called "laïcité". Islam has become the second religion, because of immigration, which has also brought many African Christian communities. The Protestant Federation of France embraces a wide variety of denominations, including Evangelical and Pentecostal groups. The Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal church, is not part of the Federation. The Council of Christian Churches groups together the Catholic Church, the Protestant Federation, and the Orthodox churches. There is also an Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

***French Protestant Federation**

(Fédération protestante de France)

Founded in 1905.

Basis: The member bodies of the French Protestant Federation adhere to a charter, which states their conviction that they are called and bound together by the gospel as expressed in the scriptures, and recognize the centrality of the proclamation of salvation by grace, received by faith alone. The preaching of the Reformation, the spiritual movements entailed by the Reformation, and the ecumenical approach, affirm this conviction. In the fraternal love and freedom given by the gospel, they practice mutual eucharistic hospitality in response to the invitation of the Lord and as a sign of their communion in Christ.

Member churches and unions of churches:

- Apostolic Church
- Church of God in France
- Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine*
- Community of Churches of African Approach in France
- Evangelical Church of Rochefort
- Evangelical Gypsy Mission of France
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of France*
- Evangelical Popular Mission of France
- Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches of France
- National Union of Independent Evangelical Reformed Churches of France
- Reformed Church of France*
- Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine*
- Salvation Army
- Union of Evangelical Christian Churches
- Union of Evangelical Churches of the Nazarene
- Union of Evangelical Churches of the Revival
- Union of Evangelical Free Churches

Member associations:

Eighty-four movements, organizations, and institutions, working in a wide range of areas: children, youth, elderly people, health, social work, recreation

and holidays, education, communication, arts, international relations, development, etc.

Website: www.protestants.org

Council of Christian Churches in France

(Conseil d'Eglises chrétiennes en France, CECEF)

Founded in 1987.

Mission statement: The Council of Christian Churches in France is a consultative body for the purpose of Christian presence to the society, service, and witness.

Member churches:

Armenian Apostolic Church

Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France (Eastern Orthodox)

French Episcopal Conference (Catholic)

French Protestant Federation

Observer member:

Anglican Communion

Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine

(Eglise de la Confession d'Augsbourg d'Alsace et de Lorraine, ECAAL)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 210,000

Congregations: 206

Pastors: 246

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CEPPL – FPF – LWF – CPCE – Cevaa – CERR

Periodical: *Le Courrier* (in French)

Website: www.protestants.org/epal

Very early, the region of Alsace-Moselle embraced the ideas of the Reformation. Already in 1521 the theses of Luther were defended in the Cathedral Church of Strasburg, which became an important centre of the Reformation movement through the activities and stories of Martin Brucer. The Protestants of Strasburg were followers of Luther. Jean Calvin had stayed in Strasburg. Metz, Mulhouse, and other cities in the region adhered to the “reformed” stream (Calvinistic or Zwinglian). That history of separation is at the origin of the distinction between the ECAAL (Lutheran) and the Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine (ERAL). Today, the two churches have come close to one another and are in close cooperation. The particular confessional status foreseen by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) made the implementation of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) impossible in this region. In 1905, the region was under German rule and hence was not concerned by the separation of church and state. In other words, Alsace-Moselle was not affected by the two major turning points in the history of French Protestantism. As a result, the pastors (like the priests and rabbis) are paid by the state and religious instruction is given in the schools.

The ECAAL adheres to the creeds of the early church, the Confession of Augsburg and the Small Catechism of Luther. The church is organized in 40 consistories and seven inspections (synods). The highest governing bodies are the consistory and the directory, the executive organ. The church represents about 20 percent of the Protestants in France and 14 percent of the population of Alsace, whereas Protestants form only two percent of the total population of France. By virtue of their geographical situation, the Protestant churches of Alsace and

Moselle play a bridging role between the Protestant minorities of southern Europe and the Protestant majority churches in the North of the continent.

The ECAAL participates in the witness and service of other Christian churches in the world, and strives to deepen the communion and cooperation of the churches. Besides belonging to the French Protestant Federation, the CEC, the WCC and the LWF, it is a member of the Permanent Lutheran-Reformed Council and of the National Alliance of Lutheran Churches in France, of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg) and presides over the Conference of Churches on the Rhine, which is a grouping of 21 churches in France, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of France

(Eglise évangélique luthérienne de France, EELF)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 36,000

Congregations: 54

Pastors: 50

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CEPPL – FPF – LWF – Cevaa – CPCE

Periodicals: *Positions luthériennes* (quarterly), *Fraternité évangélique* (monthly)

L'Ami chrétien (monthly, all in French)

Website: www.eelf.org

This church is composed of two “inspectorates” (districts): Paris, which includes congregations in Lyon and Nice, and Montbéliard, with five consistories. When Alsace and Lorraine became part of Germany in 1871, the contact between the Lutherans in these two territories and in the rest of France was broken, and it became necessary to create the Evangelical Lutheran Church of France (in 1872). But the origins of the church are much older and diverse. In the 16th century the region of Montbéliard, which at that time was part of the Duchy of Württemberg, accepted the Lutheran Reformation. The church order of 1560 introduced compulsory education and urged that book learning be based on genuine piety. Developments in Montbéliard generally paralleled those in Strasburg and Alsace. In 1802 the district of Montbéliard came under the Higher Consistory of Strasburg. In Paris on the other hand, there was an important Lutheran influence in the years 1520-30, but the first Lutheran congregation was the one at the Swedish Embassy (1626). The first more conventional parish was established in 1809. From 1853 to 1870 the district of Paris was part of the church in Alsace and was supported mainly by the Higher Consistory of Strasburg.

Today the EELF is aware of its minority position, even in the region of Montbéliard where it was for a long time the majority church, and is learning to live serenely with that situation by emphasizing the participation of the laity, redistributing its resources to various “church projects” and maintaining its specialized ministries such as home mission, information and communication, youth, industrial mission, Bible learning, etc. One of the challenges the church is facing, like all small churches, is to be sufficiently present in the “oikoumene” of the church and the multiple national and international Protestant organizations and beyond. The EELF lives only from the voluntary contributions of its members. The lack of financial and human resources reminds the church ever more of the temptation to withdraw into a ghetto, and the calling to mission and communion within the universal church.

Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine

(Eglise réformée d'Alsace et de Lorraine, ERAL)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 35,000

Congregations: 55

Pastors: 50

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CPCE – Cevaa – CEPPLÉ – WARC – EAC
– FPF – CERRPeriodical: *Feuille synodale* (in French)Website: www.protestants.org/epal/

It was Jean Calvin himself who founded the first Reformed congregation in Strasbourg. Thus the Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine has its origins in the very early time of the 16th century Reformation. The church is spread over the north-eastern part of France with concentrations in the regions of Mulhouse and Metz. Strasbourg itself and some enclaves in the north of Alsace and the Vosges are only small minority communities. Being in the diaspora is a permanent reality of this church, and requires very mobile forms of pastoral ministry. This has always been a challenge for the ERAL, which has consistently emphasized the commitment and participation of the laity. Almost all the pastoral positions are filled. There is no significant crisis in pastoral vocations and the older pastors are being replaced by the younger generation. The ERAL has a concordat with the state, which means that the salaries of the pastors are paid by the government. However, all other expenses and in particular the maintenance of a great number of buildings have to be covered by the members of the church.

The main difficulties of the ERAL have to do on the one hand with the fact that it is scattered over a wide area (because of the mobility of the population, the members of a same congregation who used to live in one village are now dispersed), and on the other hand with the general phenomenon of de-Christianization. The latter also has, of course, financial implications. In order to cope with the situation the ERAL has conceived of pastoral ministries which do not only serve a local community but have also other commitments: chaplaincies in medical and social institutions, youth work in geographical sectors, public speaking, cultural testimonies, pastoral work with tourists, evangelization, and new relationships with those who have distanced themselves from the church. With a view to providing a relevant witness, the ERAL has undertaken an important activity of biblical and theological formation of the laity. The church is also engaged in a process of union with the Lutheran Church (ECAAL) which should result soon in the creation of a Union of Protestant Churches of Alsace and Lorraine.

Reformed Church of France

(Eglise réformée de France, ERF)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 350,000

Congregations: 400

Pastors: 360 (of which 26% women)

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CEPPLÉ – WARC – EAC – Cevaa – CPCE

Periodical: *Bulletin information-évangélisation* (in French)Website: www.eglise-reformee-fr.org

Established since 1520, the church affirmed itself in 1559 around the Confession of La Rochelle, adopted a discipline and a very sober form of worship (with sung psalms and centred on the sermon), following the model of the Church of Geneva led by Jean Calvin who inspired the Reformation in France. The Reformed churches met with strong opposition from the royal power faithful to Roman Catholicism. In 1598 the Edict of Nantes gave the Protestant minority political rights but deprived it of any possibility of religious expansion. During the 16th century the Protestants were under strong pressure to become Catholics. The Edict was revoked by the king in 1685. To remain faithful to their beliefs, almost a quarter of the 900,000 Protestants left the country. The 18th century was a time of severe persecution; a handful of faithful kept the flame of Protestantism burning. French Protestantism recovered its freedom in 1787. At the beginning of the 19th century Napoleon reorganized the Reformed and Lutheran churches. Reawakened by the preaching of the gospel, inspired, in part, by the Methodist revival, the Reformed churches developed many institutions, in particular for foreign mission and social work. But opposition between those who remained strictly faithful to the Reformers (the "orthodox") and those who were more open to modernity (the "liberals") divided the churches. The separation of church and state in 1905 led French Protestantism, divided into several unions, to organize itself into the French Protestant Federation. The ecumenical movement was one of the factors that inspired the majority of the reformed families to unite in 1938, on the basis of a common confession of faith, constituting the Reformed Church of France on the presbyterian-synodal model.

The ERF finds itself in a situation of contrast: in the south and east, and in the big cities, there are congregations which are geographically close to each other. In other regions the Protestants are very thinly spread. About 400,000 people claim to be or to have been at one time or another in their life, Reformed Protestants – about 0.5 percent of a population of 60 million. Although a minority, the Reformed Church seeks dialogue with the various religious and other groups that make up French society. The local churches are organized around two main concerns: the life of the community, e.g. worship, biblical and theological formation, and witness through diaconal activities, and various cultural manifestations. Responsibilities are assumed by laity and clergy, including worship services. About 15 percent of the pastors of the ERF are from countries other than France. The church has no financial resources other than the contributions of its members. The ERF has on-going relationships with the Roman Catholic Church at the national level. The two churches cooperate in their pastoral work with mixed families. Locally the Reformed and Catholic parishes often work actively together, and there are also many local inter-religious initiatives.

The ERF is in close communion with other Protestant churches and groups through the Protestant Federation and takes part in common ministries: social, biblical, youth, chaplaincies in the armed forces and in prisons, radio and TV programmes, etc. Together with churches in Europe, Africa, Madagascar and the Pacific the ERF has formed a Community of Churches in Mission (Cevaa). Through the sharing of personnel, finances and theological reflection the churches assist each other, with the aim of putting in place appropriate missionary activities in their local situations.

GERMANY

Population: 82,559,636

Surface area: 357,000 sq.km

Capital: Berlin

GNI per capita: 25,270 US\$

Classification: Major industrialized economy

Languages: German

Religions: Christian 76%; Muslim 4,5%; Jewish, Baha'i and other 1%

Christianity: Protestants: 28,947,380; Catholics 26,912,000;

Orthodox 1,015,300; Independent 973,310

Modern Germany goes back to 1871 when a unified German state was formed. The German defeat in World War I and the economic crisis of the 1920s gave rise to the National Socialist (Nazi) regime in Germany, which provoked World War II. After the war, Germany was divided into the Federal Republic (West) and the Democratic Republic (East). The country was re-unified in 1990. Since then, Germany is the most populous nation of Europe; it is also its largest economy. It is a founding member of the European Union. Christianity spread through the area of Germany from the 3rd to the 12th century. In 1517, Martin Luther issued his 95 Theses at Wittenberg, which signalled the start of the Protestant Reformation. Today, Christians are about equally divided between Catholics and Protestants (of the territorial Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches), with a sizeable Orthodox minority (mostly due to immigration) and a number of Free churches, including Protestants as well as Pentecostals and others. Most of the Orthodox churches are indirect members of the WCC through their Patriarchate, the Moravians and Anglicans through their wider church structures, and the Methodists through the United Methodist Church of which they are part. The Council of Christian Churches in Germany is the ecumenical body, which includes the Catholic Church. The German Evangelical Alliance groups Evangelical Christians in the territorial churches and the Free churches, and is affiliated with the WEA. In 2000, the number of Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Charismatics was estimated at 6.3 percent of the total number of Christians.

***Council of Christian Churches in Germany**

(Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland, ACK)

Founded in 1948.

Basis: The churches and ecclesial communities which form the Council of Christian Churches in Germany for the purpose of common witness and service, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to respond together to their common calling, to the glory of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church in Germany

Catholic Diocese of the Old-Catholics in Germany

Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany

Council of Anglican – Episcopal Churches in Germany

Council of Mennonite Churches in Germany

Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Germany

Evangelical Brethren Church – Herrnhut Brethren Community

Evangelical Church in Germany

Evangelical Methodist Church

Map of Germany

Evangelical Old-Reformed Church in Lower Saxony
 Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church
Orthodox Church in Germany – Association of Dioceses
 Roman Catholic Church – Episcopal Conference of Germany
 Salvation Army in Germany
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch in Germany
 Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany (Baptists)

Associate members:

Apostolate of Jesus Christ
 Federation of Free Evangelical Churches in Germany
 Muelheim Association of Evangelical Free Churches
 Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany

Permanent observers:

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) – German Yearly Meeting
 Council of Ecumenical Initiatives and Groups
 Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany

The Council of Christian Churches in Germany is organized in fifteen regional councils: Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin-Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Hessen, North-Rhine-Westphalia, Rhine-Main River, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Sleschwig-Holstein, South-West Region, Thuringia Regional Council of Christian Churches.

Website: www.oekumene-ack.de

Catholic Diocese of the Old-Catholics in Germany

(Katholisches Bistum der Alt-Katholiken in Deutschland)

Church Family: Old Catholic
 Membership: 25,000
 Parishes : 45
 Priests: 86
 Deacons: 12
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – ACK
 Periodicals: *Christen Heute*, *Kirchenzeitung* (monthly, in German)

Website: www.alt-katholisch.de

Immediately after the First Vatican Council in 1870, some German theologians organized a meeting of theologians from various universities and lay people to protest against the new dogma of the infallibility and universal jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome (Königswinter Declaration 14.8.1870). A second meeting drew up a formal manifesto in which it declared that the “First Vatican Council” defining the infallibility was not a true council, for it was neither free, nor unanimous, nor ecumenical. After the opponents were all excommunicated by the Vatican, a bishopric was established in Germany, which chose a bishop who was consecrated in 1873 by the Dutch Old-Catholic bishop of Deventer (Netherlands). Reforms long needed were made and carried out with success, such as a synodal structure of the church, the liturgical use of German, and permission for clerical marriage. The diocese of the Old-Catholics was recognized as a “Catholic Diocese” by the king of Prussia and the grand dukes of Hessen and Baden.

The Old-Catholics are among the pioneers of the ecumenical movement. A first Old-Catholic Congress was held in Munich in 1871, attended by members of Anglican, Orthodox and Lutheran churches. In 1874-75 two conferences were held in Bonn invited by the standing committee of the synod, to promote Chris-

tian unity. In 1889 the Old-Catholic bishops in Europe agreed to form the Union of Utrecht. Since 1931 full communion is practised with the Anglican churches ("Bonn Agreement"), and more recently with the Philippine Independent Church, the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church and the Lusitanian Church of Portugal. Dialogue with the Orthodox churches continues. An agreement on eucharistic hospitality was signed with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) in 1985. The Catholic diocese of the Old-Catholics continues to work for unity among Christians by witnessing to the truth of the gospel and by emphasizing the permanent need for reforms in the church.

Priests are trained at the Old-Catholic seminary of the university of Bonn and the diocesan seminary "Johanneum". Since 1994 all the ordained ministries are open to women. The first woman priest was consecrated in 1996. The church is involved in diaconal work and counselling for families, and has a "Life and Faith" centre. In 1993 an Ecumenical Franciscan Fraternity was founded near Berlin, which offers shelter and spiritual care for homeless and unemployed men. Since 2004 the small monastic order of Port Royal, an ecumenical Cistercian community which was founded in 1999, is under the jurisdiction of the Catholic diocese.

European Continental Province of the Moravian Church

(Evangelisch Festländische Brüder-Unität, EFBU)

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 32,000

Congregations: 36

Pastors: 42

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – MUB – CPCE

Periodicals: *Moravian Daily Texts* (since 1731), *Herrnhuter Bote* (in German)

Website: www.ebu.de; www.ebg.nl

The Unitas Fratrum, founded in 1457, has its origins in the Reformation of Jan Hus. Its members were scattered during the Thirty Years War in Europe and found refuge in 1722 in Herrnhut, a community established by Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760), one of the leaders of German pietism. Reacting to rationalism and formalism in the Protestant churches of his time, Zinzendorf proclaimed a "religion of the heart" based on an intimate fellowship with the Saviour as creator, sustainer and redeemer of the world. He was forced by circumstances to build a separate organization, but continued to maintain a close relationship with Lutheranism. His emphasis on the place of feeling in religion infused new life into Protestantism and profoundly influenced 19th century German theology. He was also a forerunner of the 20th century ecumenical movement. Zinzendorf travelled widely through Europe and the United States. The Moravian Community in Herrnhut was one of the first Protestant churches to start overseas missionary work, as early as 1732. The many mission fields developed into the worldwide Moravian Church, with provinces in almost all continents.

Today the European Continental Province (EFBU in German) consists of congregations and missionary organizations in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Estonia. Missionary work connected with the province is done in Albania and Latvia. There are special relationships with congregations and homes of the Moravian church in the Czech Republic, Great Britain, Palestine, Surinam and Tanzania. Newsletters are circulated among members and friends of the Moravian Church. Diaconal homes offer care for the sick, disabled, mentally disturbed and elderly people. Primary and secondary schools

give education to children from different backgrounds. Missionary activities are important too, especially where the proclamation of the gospel goes along with the improvement of the living conditions of the people and the struggle against all forms of discrimination and poverty.

The EFBU maintains ecumenical contacts in the all regions and helps to bring churches together. About one million copies of the Moravian daily texts are distributed in the countries of the province. Now there are translations of the daily texts in more than 50 languages worldwide. The Herrnhut archives occupy a special position in the worldwide Moravian Church as the official repository of historical documents relating to the unity of the church.

In the past four decades, developments in the Netherlands have brought new perspectives, because of the immigration of members from the Moravian Church in Surinam. Among these groups are members with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, especially Indonesian, Hindu and Marroon (descendants of run-away slaves). Most of the members of the EFBU are now in the Netherlands (about 25,000).

Since 2005 the European Continental Province of the Moravian Church and the British Province of the Moravian Church hold joint membership in the World Council of Churches, under the name "Moravian Church British Province and EFBU".

Evangelical Church in Germany

(Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, EKD)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 26,211,000

Congregations: 16,456

Pastors: 23,087 (28% women)

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – ACK – CPCE – KKR

Periodical: *EKD Bulletin* (in English)

Website: www.ekd.de

The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) is "the communion of its Lutheran, Reformed, and United member churches" (Art. I of the constitution of the EKD). These are today 23 territorial churches (10 Lutheran, 2 Reformed and 11 United churches). The confessional identity of these churches goes back to the 16th century Reformation and the principle of "cuius regio, eius religio".

The EKD was founded in 1948. Essential for the possibility of this new ordering of the Protestant churches after the second world war was the Declaration of Barmen of 1934, in which Protestant theologians had opposed the implication of the church in the Nazi politics. Between 1969 and 1990 the eight Protestant territorial churches in the German Democratic Republic (former East Germany) formed the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR (BEK). Since 1959 the fellowship of the EKD churches was strengthened through the agreed statement on the eucharist (Arnoldshainer Abendmahlsthesen), which was the basis for eucharistic communion between the Lutheran and Reformed churches. Nevertheless the confessionally different churches formed, in addition to their fellowship in the EKD, confessional bodies. Since 1948 the majority of the Lutheran churches are together in the VELKD (United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany), a part of the United churches formed the EKU (Evangelical Church of the Union, going back to 1817), and the Reformed churches support the Reformierter Bund (Reformed Alliance). Another inter-church organization,

mainly bringing together United churches was the Arnoldshain Conference since 1967.

In 2003 a process was initiated to simplify these structures. The EKU and Arnoldshainer Conference merged to the UEK (Union of Protestant Churches) in 2003. By 2007 it is planned to have only one EKD administration, in which the UEK and VELKD are integrated in such a way that only issues concerning confessional identity are dealt with by the bodies of the confessional communions.

The highest legislative body of the EKD is the synod (120 members, elected for six years). The council of EKD (15 members) is the executive body between the sessions of the synod. Its president is the highest representative of EKD. The church conference represents the governing bodies of the member churches. The EKD has an official representative at the seat of the Federal Government in Berlin. The main mandate of the EKD is to assist its member churches effectively by performing the common tasks they have entrusted to it. The EKD gives the territorial churches a common voice in their relationship to the state and the society and in ecumenical relationships.

Among the major EKD agencies may be mentioned Diaconal Work (created in 1957), Bread for the World (founded in 1959), the Protestant Association for World Mission, the Evangelical Development Service. The EKD is a founding member of the WCC. The territorial Lutheran churches which followed the recommendation of the VELKD in 1949 to apply directly for WCC membership are counted direct members of the WCC, though they are represented in the WCC through the EKD.

The EKD has parishes and pastors in more than 60 countries. Through these and other contacts, it has a variety of partnerships and dialogues. With the Church of England the EKD is in relationship through the Meissen Agreement, and with most of the Protestant churches in Europe through the Leuenberg Agreement. With some of the other European Protestant churches the EKD has signed official contracts concerning the status of their pastors in the respective countries. The EKD conducts bilateral theological dialogues with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The Evangelical Church in Germany represents the following regional or territorial churches (see also map of Germany) in the WCC:

EKD – Bremen Evangelical Church

(Bremische Evangelische Kirche)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 248,000

Congregations: 69

Pastors: 140

Member of CPCE

The church grew out of the Reformation as early as 1525. Around 1600, during the so-called Second Reformation, the Protestant population of Bremen turned slowly to the Reformed confession. Soon after 1800 most of the congregations of the church became united. Today the Bremen Evangelical Church is one of the few churches in Germany with United, Lutheran and Reformed congregations. After the first world war the senate of Bremen agreed to a complete separation of church and state. Since 1920 the church has had its own constitution which provides for a maximum of autonomy for each local congregation. As a consequence

the number of central programmes is small. World peace, justice and ecological problems receive a good deal of attention from the congregations. The church maintains particular relations with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Church of Togo.

EKD – Church of Lippe
(Lippische Landeskirche)

Church Family: Reformed
Membership: 200,000
Congregations: 71
Pastors: 155
Member of CPCE – WARC – EAC – LWF – UEM

The Hansa city of Lemgo opened itself to the Reformation in 1533. But only after the Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555 did the synod of Cappel (1556) openly embrace the Lutheran Reformation. In 1571, the consistory of the Church of Lippe was established. Count Simon VI helped to confirm the Reformation in the spirit of Melancthon's theology. In 1605 in Detmold the last supper was for the first time celebrated in the Reformed way. From then on the Lutheran and Reformed confessional streams developed in the church. In 1931 a new presbyterian-synodal constitution was given to the Church of Lippe which has proved adequate to this day.

The small Church of Lippe attaches great importance to a renewed partnership with Presbyterian churches in Ghana and Togo. This solidarity, a result of the missionary efforts of the last century, is now being cultivated through an exchange of delegates and theological ideas through the Northern German Mission. After the end of the cold war the Church of Lippe strengthened its relations by signing an official partnership contract with the Evangelical Reformed Church in the Republic of Poland (1997), the Reformed Church of Hungary (1999) and with the Reformed Church of Romania, Transylvanian district (1999). Intensive contacts are also maintained with the Reformed and the Lutheran churches in Lithuania. Together with the Evangelical Reformed Church and the Reformed Alliance in Germany it maintains a partnership with the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) since 1998. The Church of Lippe continues to stress the missionary structure of the congregation and is engaged in the search for world peace.

EKD – Evangelical Church in Baden
(Landeskirche in Baden)

Church Family: United and Uniting
Membership: 1,323,011
Congregations: 650
Pastors: 939
Member of LWF – CPCE – KKR

The church was founded as a union of Lutheran and Reformed churches in 1821, based on the Heidelberg Catechism, Luther's Catechism and the Augsburg Confession, thereby forming a so-called confessional union. The life of the church is shaped by the diversity of the congregations. There are rural congregations, and congregations in university cities which confront the problems of an industrial society. The central region of the church is the region along the river Rhine where there are many contacts with the churches in France and Switzerland.

The cooperation between different confessional groups is an important feature of the life of the church. It faces theological, ecumenical and diaconal questions on the local level as well as on the European level. Problems of migration in Europe, of human rights and the dialogue with new religious movements are central issues. The church maintains particular relations with the Presbyterian Churches in Ghana and Cameroon, the Church of South India, the National Councils of Churches in Indonesia and Korea, the Moravian Church in South Africa, the Waldensian Church in Italy and the Church of the Czech Brethren

EKD – Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz

(Evangelische Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-Schlesische Oberlausitz)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 1,310,065

Congregations: 1,536

Pastors: 960

Member of CPCE

The history of the Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz started only in 2004 when the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg and the Evangelical Church of Silesian Oberlausitz merged. The Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg had come into being in 1945. Before that it was one of the church provinces of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union. This church was affected and shaped very much by the events after the second world war, the division of Germany, the Berlin wall and later the fall of communism until the reunification of Germany, because the dividing line during the cold war went right through its territory. The Evangelical Church of Silesian Oberlausitz lost about 90 percent of its territory and of its members because of the new border lines after World War II. Nevertheless it decided in 1950 to continue existing as an autonomous church.

The structure of the Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz is based on the parishes. In the governing bodies lay people as well as ordained persons work together equally. Among 44 deaneries with Lutheran and United parishes, one deanery kept its Reformed identity.

The church offers a manifold variety of living one's faith. There is also a manifold offer of diaconal work, formation and culture. The Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz is linked in an ecumenical spirit in partnership with a variety of churches, parishes and Christian organizations in other countries. Many of these relationships are based on a common history in the mission field, especially in Southern Africa, China, India and Tanzania. In the perspective of a "common European house" the partnership with churches in Europe has specific importance. These are the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, as well as Evangelical Lutheran parishes in the Volga region in Russia. There are also partnership relations with the dioceses of Gothenburg (Sweden), Chichester and London (England) and with conferences of the United Church of Christ in the USA and the United Reformed Church in England. These relationships are shaped by exchange of delegations, mutual intercessions, exchange of workers and financial support.

EKD – Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau

(Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 1,854,303

Congregations: 1,1774

Pastors: 1,472

Member of CPCE – KKR – UEM

The Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau was established in 1947 when the three churches of Hessen, Nassau and Frankfurt came together. A long common history, the experience of the church struggle from 1933 to 1945 and the responsibilities of the church in the territories of Rhine and Main led to the united church. From the beginning the inter-relation between witness and service was stressed and led to a strong commitment in the fields of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The particular tasks of the ECHN grew out of the increasing industrialization of the Rhine-Main region, which also affects the countryside. The smaller towns and villages still play a creative role in the life of the Christian community. A major responsibility is the pastoral care of people. The ECHN's main emphasis is on the oikoumene and it is involved in partnership relations with various churches in Africa, Asia and Europe.

EKD – Evangelical Church in Rhineland

(Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 3,029,000

Congregations: 821

Pastors: 2,447

Member of CPCE – KKR – UEM

The history of Christianity in the Rhineland dates back to the Roman empire. Its expansion took place in the 8th century through Anglo-Saxon missionaries and under the reign of the Carolingian kings. After the Reformation, Lutheran and Reformed congregations lived in diaspora. Efforts to introduce the Reformation in the bishoprics of Cologne and Treves failed. Since the Council of Trent, Roman Catholicism has been predominant in the Rhineland countries. Pietism played an important role at the end of the 18th century in bringing Lutheran and Reformed Christians together.

The Evangelical Church in Rhineland was constituted in the territory which was assigned to Prussia in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna after the collapse of the Napoleonic empire. The church inherited the presbyterian-synodal system of the 16th century. During the time of National Socialism in Germany the first synod of the so-called Confessing Church took place in the Rhineland in 1934 and agreed on the "Barmen Declaration" in opposition to the politics of the Nazi regime.

The church seeks today to deepen contacts with the Roman Catholic Church with which it has co-existed for centuries, with free churches which separated from the "Volkskirche", and with the Orthodox churches – the latter as a result of the presence of many migrant workers in the Rhineland. It maintains relationship with various churches throughout Europe, with the United Church of Christ in the USA through the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) and with

34 churches in Africa, Asia and Germany through the United Evangelical Mission (UEM).

EKD – Evangelical Church of Anhalt

(Evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 56,500

Congregations: 187

Pastors: 55

Member of CPCE

The region of the Evangelical Church of Anhalt lies between the Flaeming Forest and the Harz Mountains. Its geographical area is almost identical with the former principality, later duchy and finally the free state of Anhalt, which was formally created in 1918. The Evangelical Church of Anhalt today has congregations in 154 villages and towns. The entire region belongs to the German federal state Saxony-Anhalt. Because of its proximity to Wittenberg, the reformers Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon had considerable influence on the region of Anhalt. In 1541 all ordained pastors of Anhalt were required to use Luther's translation of the Bible. From 1578 on, the candidates for ordination from Anhalt were no longer ordained in Wittenberg, but in Zerbst/Anhalt. From this time on, one can speak of an independent Protestant Church of Anhalt. Both Lutheran and Reformed faiths co-existed in Anhalt, they were united (Church Union) in 1821.

The Enlightenment of the 18th century had a lasting impact on the region. In 1920 the first constitution of the Church of Anhalt did not include any confessional document as a primary basis. In 1960 Anhalt became a member of the Evangelical Church of the Union (today: Union of Evangelical Churches-UEK). Several congregations of the Anhalt Church have partnership with congregations of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom. The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ in the USA is a partner church, and so are the Protestant churches of the Palatinate and Lippe in Germany and the Czechoslovak Hussite Church.

EKD – Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck

(Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 960,000

Congregations: 941

Pastors: 1,037

Member of CPCE – UEM

The church traces its origin to the mission of Boniface in the 8th century. In 1524 the Reformation was introduced. A confessional contrast has been expressed by the fact that an Upper-Hessian Lutheranism around the city of Marburg acknowledged the *Confessio Augustana* and not the *Formula of Concord*. The Lower-Hessian Reformed region around Kassel adopted the *Confessio Augustana*. The ecumenical openness of the Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck goes back to the time when Waldensian and Huguenot refugees asked for asylum. Today it is in continuous dialogue with the Roman Catholic bishopric of Fulda in its territory. In 1934 the Evangelical Church of Hessen-Kassel and the former principality of Waldeck-Pyrmont were united in the Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-

Waldeck. Its primary objective is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its further emphases are pastoral care, education, mission and diakonia. The church struggles to find the right answers to problems of political and social peace, overcoming violence, ecology and issues of economy and technology.

Particular contacts are maintained with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa (Western Diocese), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, the Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the diocese of North-Karnataka of the Church of South India, the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the synod of North Brabant of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands and the Roman Catholic bishopric in the same territory of the Netherlands.

EKD – Evangelical Church of the Palatinate

(Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 627,390

Congregations: 430

Pastors: 578

Member of CPCE – KKR

The Church of the Palatinate is a united church of Lutheran and Reformed Christians, established in 1818. The church constitution is presbyterian-synodal. The EKP is aware of the need for missionary-diaconal renewal of its congregations living in the midst of an increasingly secularized society. This also calls for a permanent openness to ecumenical dialogue, in order to become a more faithful witness to the gospel and to join in common action with others in matters of reconciliation, peace and justice. The church attempts to learn from the insights and experiences of the worldwide Christian fellowship and is challenged to share in the struggle for a more equal distribution of power and wealth.

The EKP has relationships with the United Reformed Church in the UK, the Reformed Church of France, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the Evangelical Christian Church of Tanah Papua (Indonesia) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia. Through the Association of Churches and Missions in South West Germany the EKP is linked to a number of churches in Africa and Asia.

EKD – Evangelical Church of Westphalia

(Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 2,670,000

Congregations: 623

Pastors: 220

Member of CPCE – UEM

From 1524 onwards the Reformation spread through the territory of Westphalia, particularly in the cities. Besides the Lutheran congregations, a few Reformed communities also came into being. A few churches remained Roman Catholic. A presbyterian-synodal church order was devised in 1835.

In 1945 the EKW became independent as a church of the Union and joined the Evangelical Church in Germany. Since the second world war the church has remained a “folk church”. This implies that the overwhelming majority of the

population in Westphalia belongs to the church. Since 1968 (year of the WCC's fourth assembly in Uppsala) the EKW has taken up the challenge of the manifold relations between confessions and churches in the ecumenical movement and the social engagement of the world community of Christians and churches. Of the annual church income 3.5 percent is invested in ecumenical missionary and development projects. The church maintains numerous contacts with congregations and synods of churches in Africa, South-East Asia, Eastern Europe and the Evangelical Church of the River Plate in Latin America.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria

(Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 2,740,840

Congregations: 1,531

Pastors: 2,866

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE – KKR

The gospel was brought to what is now Bavaria by Boniface and other missionaries in the 8th century. The Lutheran Reformation was fully established in Nuremberg by 1524. In 1530, the city of Augsburg gave its name to the major Lutheran confession. The Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555), laying down the principle that the religion of the ruler determines the religion of his subjects, and the rise of the Counter-Reformation, had the effect that more than half of the Lutherans in Bavaria returned to the Roman Catholic Church. The actual founding of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria took place in 1803.

The largest local ecumenical partner of the ELKB is the Roman Catholic Church. Among other partners are Orthodox churches, of which many members are migrant workers, followed by Old Catholics, the Evangelical-Reformed Church and Evangelical Free churches of various traditions. A particular concern is the provision of church services for tourists. The peace question and work on transforming economic globalization are high on the agenda. The church continues to seek and strengthen ecumenical fellowship with other churches through a variety of programmes and activities. It maintains special relations with Evangelical Lutheran churches in Papua-New Guinea, Tanzania, Brazil and Hungary, and with Orthodox churches in Russia and Iraq.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick

(Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche in Braunschweig)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 415,000

Congregations: 414

Pastors: 322

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE

Following the centuries during which the Roman Catholic Church, with its vast monastic properties and many churches, had become firmly established, the Reformation was slowly introduced. The city of Brunswick accepted Lutheranism in 1528, the duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel in 1568. The Enlightenment and rationalism, not pietism and revivalism, influenced this Christian community in the 18th and 19th centuries. After the abolition of the monarchy in Germany in

1918, the church was governed by the bishop. It went through many trials during the national socialist period.

There are also some free churches and several Orthodox congregations in the area. The church maintains good ecumenical relations with these churches and also with the Jewish community in its territory. It maintains special relations with Lutheran churches in Japan, India, Namibia, Czech Republic and, through the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Lower Saxony, relations with several Lutheran churches in Africa and South America.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg

(Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Oldenburg)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 473,442

Congregations: 123

Pastors: 253

Member of LWF – CPCE

The Christianization of this Frisian and Saxon territory began in 780. By the year 1000, part of the organized church came under the archdiocese of Hamburg Bremen and part under the diocese of Osnabruck. In 1050 the duchy of Oldenburg was formed. The Reformation era found Oldenburg opening slowly to Lutheran, then to Calvinist, and – via the city of Munster – also to Anabaptist influences. The Lutheran forces won out. In 1573, the first Lutheran church order was introduced, and Calvinists and Anabaptists were denied freedom of worship.

During the Enlightenment period and under a change of political rule, still another church order was enacted, heavily influenced by rationalism. The 19th century brought renewal in the church and a restoration of confessional emphasis. A specifically Lutheran commitment reasserted itself during the church struggle of the 1930s and early 1940s when a scripturally founded confession of faith was of vital importance. This kind of emphasis underlay the subsequent church constitution of 1950 – still in effect – which is itself a confessionally based and ecumenically oriented document. When the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) was organized in 1948, Oldenburg did not join. The church is headed by a bishop. The synod is the church's legislative body.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg

(Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 2,346,879

Congregations: 1,414

Pastors: 2,330

Member of LWF – CPCE – KKR

In the early 16th century the duke of Württemberg charged a Lutheran as well as a Reformed theologian with the introduction of the Reformation. Thus from the very beginning the church of Württemberg built a bridge between these two confessions. In the second half of the 16th century its life was shaped according to Lutheran orthodoxy, whereas the liturgy remained sermon-centred, that is, 'reformed'. Later on, doctrine and Christian life were influenced by pietism, the Enlightenment and liberalism. Especially pietism, which the church managed to

keep within its boundaries, brought new depth and breadth to the faith and life of the church, especially in the fields of diakonia and mission.

The organizational structure of the church is synodal; it is governed by the synod, the bishop and the consistory. Bishop Theophil Wurm's (d. 1953) efforts on behalf of a confessing Christian unity typified the ecumenical and evangelical mission of Württemberg's Lutherans. Besides the Roman Catholic Church there exist also some smaller churches like the Methodists and Baptists, and some Orthodox congregations in Württemberg. All of them work together in the "Association of Christian Churches in Baden-Württemberg". Increasingly a multifaith situation is developing, mainly because of the presence of immigrants from Muslim countries. There has not been a "state church" since 1918. There is free partnership between state and church, e.g. the content of religious education at public schools is the responsibility of the churches. Tasks for the years to come are: evangelism in an increasingly secular context, strengthening of ecumenical cooperation, diaconal services to the underprivileged and the disabled (migrant workers, the sick, the handicapped and the unemployed), developmental services and assistance in missionary outreach with churches in other continents.

The Württemberg Church maintains close ties with the Evangelical Lutheran churches in Montbéliard (France), Slovakia (together with the Church of Thuringia), Serbia-Montenegro, Georgia and the district of Kronstadt (Brasov) in Romania. Through the Association of Churches and Missions in South-Western Germany there are also partnerships with churches in Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Near East and South Africa. There are also close relations to two dioceses of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover

(Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Hannovers)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 3,142,685

Congregations: 1,561

Pastors: 2,004

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE

During the reign of Charlemagne (d. 814), Anglo-Saxon missionaries assisted in the conversion of the people of Lower Saxony. Many of today's parish boundaries are from medieval times. The introduction of the Reformation began in 1527. Moderating influences kept Hanoverian Lutheranism from extreme confessionalism. Pietism gained little following. The Enlightenment proved more popular, but eventually yielded to the religious awakenings of the early 19th century. Hanover's contemporary contribution to world Lutheranism and to the modern ecumenical movement is best summed up in the dynamic career of Bishop Hanns Lilje (1899-1977), a president of the WCC from 1968-75.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover combines episcopal, synodal and other elements in its organization. The constitution, first adopted in 1922 and most recently amended in 1965, provides for several central church organs. The bishop is the spiritual (clerical) head of the church. He or she chairs the senate, the church council, and the bishop's council which is made up of the district superintendents of the church's eight districts. The church maintains official relations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church of South India, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Siberia, Ural and the Far East, the

Evangelical Church of France, the Lutheran Church of Great Britain and Lutheran churches in several other countries.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg

(Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Mecklenburgs)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 214,266

Congregations: 332

Pastors: 233

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE

Mecklenburg – the name means “the great fortress” – is located on the eastern side of the River Elbe and close to the Baltic. Mecklenburg was Christianized during the 12th century. In 1549, after a period of dual confessionalism, at a meeting of the state parliament in Sternberg the Reformation was accepted for the country. A Lutheran church constitution was introduced in 1552. In 1919-20 a republican constitution led to the setting up of a synodal system of church government. In 1994 the relationship between the state and the Lutheran Church was laid out in the Güstrow Agreement.

Besides 50 Roman Catholic congregations there are some smaller churches like the Methodists and Baptists, and one Reformed congregation in the territory. A particular concern of the church is evangelism and outreach in this part of Germany, where only about 20 percent of the population belong to a Christian church. A new approach to youth, care for the elderly, social and diaconal services to the underprivileged and the disabled (migrant workers, the sick, the handicapped and the unemployed) are high on the agenda. Ecumenical relationships with other churches give ideas and inputs. Especially after the end of the communist era it became possible to develop special relations with the Pare Diocese in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the Lutheran Church in Kazakhstan and the Hungarian-speaking Lutheran Church in Romania. There are other close ties to the Southern Ohio synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the diocese of Lichfield in the Anglican Church of England.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony

(Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Sachsens)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 895,316

Congregations: 919

Pastors: 753

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE

Christianity came to the territory of what is today the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony during the second half of the 10th century. In 1539 the family of the duke joined Martin Luther's reformation, after the population had accepted the Lutheran confession already some time before. Essential impulses for the Christianity of the Reformation came from here, especially in the field of music. Musicians like Heinrich Schütz and Johann Sebastian Bach gave shape to the musical life of this church, the effects of which are still felt today. After 1918 the church became juridically autonomous. In 1989 there were Christians and

parishes especially in the cities of Dresden and Leipzig that gave important impulses for political change.

The bishop together with members of the head office and the synod lead the church. The most important challenge is at present to get people, who have lost contact with the church during the last years, back to the faith. Besides the pastors there are about 4,000 persons working in the field of music, caring for children and youth and in education and administration of the church. Many Christians are working on a voluntary basis in the parishes. About 16,000 people are working in diaconal organizations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony and the churches of Mecklenburg and Thuringia are sponsoring together the Evangelical-Lutheran Leipzig Mission. There are partnerships with churches in India, Tanzania and Papua-New Guinea as well as a number of partnerships with Lutheran churches in Latvia, Russia, Czech Republic and with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Ecumenical contacts are maintained with the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical-Methodist Church, Orthodox churches and other denominations in Germany.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe
(Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Schaumburg-Lippe)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 63,639

Congregations: 22

Pastors: 44

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE

Schaumburg-Lippe, a part of the old duchy of Schaumburg and since 1946 a county in Lower Saxony, some 35 miles west of the city of Hanover, contains one of Germany's smallest autonomous territorial churches. In the period from the introduction of Christianity during the time of Charlemagne until the 16th century, Roman Catholicism was firmly established in this region. By 1559, the entire duchy had become Lutheran, and the sovereign was declared temporal head of the church. In the 18th century the church was influenced by a Lutheran orthodoxy mellowed by a pietism fostered by the followers of Zinzendorf.

Among the superintendents of this church, Johann Gottfried Herder, serving in Bückeburg from 1771-76, is the best known. Although the Enlightenment made its impact, a renewal of Lutheranism swept through the church during the 19th century. The structure of the church has episcopal and synodal elements, with the bishop presiding over the church council.

The church maintains specific relations with the Evangelical Church A.B. in Sibiu, Romania, and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Southern Africa.

EKD – Evangelical Reformed Church in North-West Germany
(Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche in Nordwestdeutschland)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 188,882

Congregations: 142

Pastors: 172

Member of WARC – EAC – CPCE – UEM

The church serves mainly the area of Lower Saxony, especially in East Friesland, the county of Bentheim, and the regions of Gottingen, Osnabruck and Bre-

merhaven. In addition, it has a number of isolated congregations. Most of its congregations originated in Reformation times. Through the work of John a Lasco (at Emden 1540-49), these congregations were led to adopt the Reformed faith. Reformed congregations in the county of Bentheim (since 1588) were influenced by Strasburg, in the county of Lingen, by the Netherlands House of Orange at the end of the 17th century. In 1882, 114 of these congregations united to form the church. Other congregations subsequently attached themselves to it, for example those of Huguenot origin. In 1925 the church adopted its present form of government.

The church is governed on presbyterian lines. The supreme court is the synod. The Evangelical Reformed Church in North-West Germany is one of the smaller members of the EKD. On the basis of the Concord of Leuenberg the church is in eucharistic communion with all EKD member churches. It maintains particular relations with partner churches in Sumatra/Indonesia, Togo, Ghana and South Africa, especially with the "Belijdende Kring" in that country, and with churches in Hungary, Romania and former Yugoslavia.

EKD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia

(Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Thüringen)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 476,500

Congregations: 1,319

Pastors: 579

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE

There have been Christians in the region of Thuringia since the 6th century. Boniface especially played an important role during the 8th century in spreading the Christian faith. Thuringia is the country of Martin Luther. He went to school in Eisenach and studied in Erfurt, where he was also ordained as a priest. On the Wartburg near Eisenach he translated the New Testament into German. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia was created in 1921 when the churches of the eight Thuringian principalities united.

The church is led by a synod; the highest office is the ministry of the bishop. The Thuringian church has intensive contacts with the local Roman Catholic church as well as with the Methodist and Baptist churches in the region. There are also contacts with Orthodox churches. There are partnership links with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the Church of Sweden and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as with the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia.

EKD – Evangelical Church of the Province of Saxony

(Evangelische Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 523,000

Congregations: 2,024

Pastors: 516

Member of CPCE

During the reform of Europe at the beginning of the 19th century – provoked by the wars of independence under Napoleon in 1813 and the Congress of Vienna

in 1815 – the kingdom of Prussia was enlarged by numerous territories. In 1816 some of these regions were united into the Prussian province of Saxony. For the central church administration a consistory was installed in Magdeburg. Since then the province of Saxony belonged to the Evangelical Church of the Prussian Union. In 1947 the Church Province of Saxony became an autonomous church. There are also some Reformed parishes on the territory of the church. The Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony has a synodal structure and a bishop. It has partnership contacts with project groups, parishes and churches in Italy, Poland, the Czech Republic, England, North America and especially in Tanzania.

EKD – Federation of Evangelical Churches in Middle Germany

(Die Föderation Evangelischer Kirchen in Mitteldeutschland, EMK)

Since 1 July 2004, the Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia form the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Middle Germany. In this way the limited financial and personnel resources of these two relatively small churches are pooled together. Many tasks are now being done jointly. The purpose of federating the two churches is not to downsize, but to create a strong evangelical church for the people of the region. The governing bodies are the synod of the federation and the federal leadership, as well as the joint offices at Eisenach and Magdeburg. The church office of the federation is the result of a new structure and a union between the office of the church in Thuringia and the consistory of the church province of Saxony. New common rules and statutes will become effective at the latest on 1 January 2009.

EKD – North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church

(Nordelbische Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 2,212,722

Congregations: 639

Pastors: 1,469

Member of WCC (1950) – LWF – CPCE

The church came into existence only in 1977, as the result of the merger of four formerly independent churches – those of Eutin, Hamburg, Lubeck and Schleswig-Holstein. The whole region had accepted Christianity in the 9th century. One of the most outstanding personalities of that century was Ansgar, the “apostle of the north”. The entire population was Christianized between the 9th and 12th centuries. The Reformation was officially introduced in Hamburg in 1529, in Lubeck in 1531, in Eutin in 1537 and in Schleswig-Holstein in 1542. Johannes Bugenhagen played a decisive role.

The church has spent considerable time discussing issues of disarmament and peace. It continues its conversations with the Russian Orthodox Church, the Reformed Church, the Methodists, Baptists, Moravian Brethren, and other small Christian communities on its territory. Besides questions of justice, peace and the integrity of creation, the church has taken up the challenge of combating racism, and the relation between white and black churches, in particular in Southern Africa. It maintains close missionary relationships with churches in India, Tanzania and Papua New Guinea through exchange programmes and projects of partnership. It coordinates the partnership with the churches in the Baltic states.

EKD – Pomeranian Evangelical Church

(Pommersche Evangelische Kirche)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 106,000

Congregations: 250

Pastors: 161

Member of CPCE – LWF

The history of the Pomeranian Evangelical Church (PEK) goes back to the Christianization of Pomerania in the 12th century, the Lutheran Reformation, and the unification of Evangelical Lutheran and Evangelical Reformed congregations to form a United Church (Old Prussian Union from 1817).

The political developments in this region were also of importance. After 1648 some parts came under Sweden and Brandenburg. From 1815 the region belonged to Prussia. In 1945, what was left of Pomerania was restructured, and the church headquarters were moved from Szczecin to Greifswald. In 1968 the church was renamed Regional Church of Greifswald; in 1990 the name changed back to Pomeranian Evangelical Church. This background has influenced its religious forms and emphases. The PEK is a member both of the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) and of the Lutheran World Federation. It has lively ecumenical relationships with Lutheran churches around the Baltic Sea (Poland, Sweden) as well as with churches in South Africa and Tanzania, and in the USA (UCC).

The life of the (mainly rural) congregations is changing. New tasks have arisen because of a widespread lack of church contact, social problems, depopulation and a shift in the age structure. Work with tourists has increased, and the enlargement of the European Union has brought new challenges. At the same time, there is a decline in the number of (paid) church workers and in church membership. There is an obvious contrast between financial problems, structural changes and questions about a “folk church” approach, on the one hand, and clear expectations about a church with a public witness and promising new beginnings, on the other. The missionary challenge is growing (the new Institute for Research on Evangelization and Congregational Growth in the EKD context is taking up this issue). New spiritual-missionary reflection, educational work and learning to witness to the faith in openness to the world are the challenges for the future. To this end, cooperation with neighbouring regional churches (e.g. the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg) and sharing in fellowship with other Christian churches (Roman Catholic, Free Churches) in our region (also in the framework of the Council of Churches) provide invaluable assistance.

Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 25,000

Congregations: 130

Pastors: 90

Member of: WCC (1971) – CEC – LWF

Periodicals: *Cēļa Biedrs*, yearly almanach, *Baznīcas Gada-grāmata* (both in Latvian)

This church is the former Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia in Exile which established its headquarters in Germany after the occupation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union in the first years of World War II. The members of the

church, about 120,000 at the time, scattered throughout Europe, North and South America, and Australia. The office of the archbishop moved from Germany to the USA, from there to Canada and again back to Germany in 1994. The church is much smaller now but its congregations are still spread widely over 15 countries, with the main concentrations in Canada, the USA and Australia. The archbishop is assisted by an 18-member church council which has executive powers.

During the years of exile the church made a new translation of the Bible in Latvian. It has produced a new hymnal and many theological books. It established a mission in Chennai, India. After the political changes in Eastern Europe the name of the church was changed to Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad, to signify that it is seeking to meet the realities and challenges of a trans-regional church in a long-term perspective. The church is in close relationships and cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.

Mennonite Church in Germany

(Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden)

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 5,724

Congregations: 27

Pastors : 13

Member of: WCC (1948) – ACK – MWC

Periodical: *Die Brücke. Täuferisch-Mennonitische Gemeindezeitschrift*
(all in German)

Website: www.mennoniten.de

In 1536, Menno Simons, a parish priest in Dutch Friesland, joined the Anabaptists, who came from a variety of origins (mainly Switzerland and South Germany). They suffered severe persecution from the Roman Catholic Church as well as the Lutheran reformers.

The Anabaptist's convictions included adult baptism and separation of church and state. Those who included non-resistance in their interpretation of discipleship were called "Mennonites". Later they rejected any hierarchical church structure, infant baptism, and the doctrine of real presence in the eucharist. Mennonites have adopted a congregational church pattern.

The Union of German Mennonite Congregations was established in 1886 and is part of the larger "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland". Not all German Mennonites belong to this body. There are various other communities which have their own organization, in particular approximately 40,000 Mennonites who came from Russia to Germany from the 1970s onwards. Until the 19th century Mennonites lived as "strangers and guests" in society. In modern society, their life has become more demanding and engaging. Their emphasis on freedom of religion and non-violent peace-building has found new theological foundations, through which the community's identity is strengthened. Historical research has become more critical of the conduct of Anabaptists during the Reformation. The commitment to peace, service and mission has found new strength through ecumenical encounter as well as networking with other Mennonites around the world, mainly the Mennonite Central Committee (relief) and Mennonite World Conference.

At the eighth assembly of the WCC, a German delegate presented the motion to start the new century with a "Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace". This has become a major focus for Mennonite ecumenical work.

menical engagement. With other historic Peace churches a new series of ecumenical dialogues has started, reflecting on contemporary peace theologies in all regions.

In the past 20 years various bilateral dialogues on national and international levels were held: with the Baptist World Alliance (1989-1992), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (since 1984) and the Roman Catholic Church (1998-2003). In 2005 a dialogue with the Lutheran World Federation has begun, after several national dialogues with Lutheran Churches in France, Germany and the US. Today, the majority of the 1.3 million Mennonites lives in the southern hemisphere. This has changed the “face” of the community and will continue to do so.

GREECE

Population: 10,978,487

Surface area: 132,000 sq.km

Capital: Athens

GNI per capita: 13,230 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Greek

Religions: Christian 95%; Muslim 3%; other 2%

Christianity: Orthodox 10,007,400; Catholics 55,000; Protestants 21,050;

Independent 281,000

Greece was the centre of ancient civilization, which influenced greatly the later European civilizations, both East and West. When the apostles Paul and Timothy brought the gospel to Greece, it was part of the Roman empire, which became the Byzantine empire from where Orthodox Christianity spread to Central and Eastern Europe. Greece was occupied by the Ottoman empire in the 16th century. It won its independence from the Ottomans in 1821, and became a monarchy. The history of Greece in the 19th and the first part of the 20th century was dominated by the national question, i.e. to extend the territory so as to include all Greeks. This policy succeeded before and during World War I in parts of the Balkans, but in Turkey the Greeks were defeated in 1922 and more than a million were expelled. In turn, 500,000 Turks were sent back from Greece to Turkey. This history explains the still persisting tensions between Greece and Turkey, although relationships have greatly improved. After a period of military dictatorship, democratic elections and a referendum created a parliamentary republic in 1974, and the monarchy was abolished. Greece joined the then European Community (now European Union) in 1981. Its economy has benefitted from the regional aid programmes of the EU. The Greek Orthodox Church is inextricably bound up with the Greek people, nation, state, culture and history. Catholics, Protestants, and Pentecostals represent about 1.5 percent. The largest independent group are the Orthodox Old Calendarists. In recent years, the Greek society has become more and more pluralistic.

Church of Greece

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 10,003,402

Dioceses: 78

Parishes: 7,756

Bishops: 84

Priests : 8,335

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC

Periodicals: *Theologia* (multilingual), *Ekklesia*, *O Ephemerios*, *Phone Kyriou*, *Deltion Plerophorion tes Ekklesias tes Ellados* (all in Greek)

Website: www.ecclesia.gr

The “Church of Greece” emerged with the founding of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in Greece in 1850. Before that, it was an integral part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Christianity was first brought to the geographical area corresponding to modern Greece by the Apostle Paul, although the church’s apostolicity also rests upon St Andrew who preached the gospel in Greece and suffered martyrdom in Patras (c. 66 AD), Titus, Paul’s companion who preached the gospel in Crete where he became bishop, Philip who, according to the tradition, visited and preached in Athens, Luke the Evangelist who was martyred in Thebes, and John the Theologian who was exiled on the island of Patmos where he received the Revelation recorded in the last book of the New Testament. Thus Greece became the first European area to accept the gospel of Christ. Towards the end of the 2nd century the early apostolic bishoprics had developed into metropolitan sees in the most important cities. Such were the sees of Thessaloniki, Corinth, Nicopolis, Philippi and Athens. By the 4th century almost the entire Balkan peninsula constituted the Exarchate of Illyricum which was under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome until the time of Justinian I (527-65). Illyricum was finally assigned to the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople by the emperor in 732. From then on the church in Greece remained under Constantinople till the fall of the Byzantine empire to the Turks in 1453. As an integral part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate the church remained under its jurisdiction up to the time when Greece won her freedom from Turkish domination.

The Greek revolution of 1821-28, while leading to the liberation of southern Greece from the Turkish yoke, created anomalies in ecclesiastical relations. In 1850 the Endemousa Synod in Constantinople declared the Church of Greece autocephalous. The Church of Greece was originally entrusted to a synod, consisting of five members. The permanent president was the Metropolitan of Athens. In 1928 the Ecumenical Patriarchate issued a tome by which it ceded to the Church of Greece on a temporary basis 35 of its metropolitan dioceses in northern Greece. These, while still belonging to the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, were placed under the administration of the Church of Greece.

Today the archbishop of Athens and All Greece presides over both a standing synod of twelve metropolitans (six from the new territories and six from southern Greece, who participate in the synod in rotation and on an annual basis), and a synod of the hierarchy (in which all ruling metropolitans participate), which meets once a year. There are two theological faculties, at the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki. Priests are also educated at several theological schools and colleges.

Among the current concerns of the Church of Greece are the Christian response to globalization, the Christian approach to interreligious dialogue, and a common Christian voice within the framework of the European Union. The church has established a centre for bio-ethics to advise the holy synod on issues like euthanasia, in-vitro fertilization, cloning, etc., and most recently, has been involved in “Solidarity”, a relief and development organization operating as an NGO. The Church of Greece hosted the WCC World Conference on Mission and Evangelism in Athens in 2005, the first in an Orthodox country in the history of this body.

Greek Evangelical Church

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 5,000

Congregations: 33

Pastors : 17

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CPCE – WARC – EAC – REC

Periodical: *Astir tis Anatólis* (The Star of the East, in Greek)

Website: www.gec.gr

Evangelical mission work started in Greece in 1858 with the publication of the magazine *Astir tis Anatólis* (the Star of the East) by a Greek physician and theologian. Soon, Greek Evangelical groups were formed in the main cities. Another evangelical movement among Greeks begun in Asia Minor (Turkey) by the American Board of Foreign Mission was carried on by Greek pastors and missionaries. In 1922, with the catastrophe of the Greek populations in Turkey and their expulsion to Greece, a united body of the Greek Evangelical churches was created, which continues its work to this day.

The Greek Evangelical Church ascribes ultimate authority to the scriptures and is conservative in its theology. Church attendance is high. Much emphasis is given to Sunday schools and the youth movement. The general assembly of the church meets every two years, while local assemblies, consisting of pastors and elders, meet once a year. Lay persons participate actively in church activities and administration. Volunteer workers are engaged in the church's diaconal work. There are churches outside Greece, in Germany and the USA, belonging to the GEC.

The GEC maintains a mission in southern Albania and in Bulgaria. It has founded an inter-Balkan centre of ongoing biblical education named "Michael Kalopothakes". The church is very active in welfare and ecological activities. It sustains a detoxification centre for drug addicts, a home for the elderly, a centre for the feeding of immigrants and a "clean city" environmental programme. Its magazine, the *Star of the East*, has created a small publishing house, and produces documentary films about the history and the present work of the GEC, while it created and supports the website of the church. The church runs three camps for children and adults.

HUNGARY

Population: 10,350,000

Surface area: 93,030 sq.km

Capital: Budapest

GNI per capita: 6,350 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Hungarian

Religions: Christian 77%; Jewish 1%

Christianity: Catholics 5,500,000; Protestants 2,200,000; Orthodox 50,000;
Independent 209,280

The Hungarians (Magyars) are a people that migrated from the Volga area in the east and settled in today's Hungary at the end of the 9th century. Later on,

Hungary became part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. After World War I, large parts of the country were ceded to neighbouring countries by the Treaty of Trianon. Since then, important Hungarian minorities have been living in Slovakia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. During World War II, Hungary was on the side of Nazi Germany, which occupied the country in 1944. After the war Hungary became part of the communist bloc. An insurrection in 1956 was severely repressed by the Soviet army. Many Hungarians fled to the west. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, democratic elections became possible in 1990. Politically and economically, the country has sought integration with Europe. It joined the European Union in 2004. Christianity came to Hungary in the 10-11th century. The Reformation – Lutheran and Calvinist – had a strong impact, but due to the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church is the majority church. In the communist period, the Protestant churches developed a theology of diakonia, as a way of being church in a socialist society. Orthodoxy has been present in Hungary for centuries, but has remained small. The Ecumenical Council includes the main Protestant and Orthodox churches, and the Catholic Church is an associate member. Evangelical and Pentecostal/Charismatic groups represent about 3 percent of the Christians. The Evangelical Alliance of Hungary is affiliated with the WEA.

***Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary**

Founded in 1943.

Basis: The Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary is a community of churches and organizations that confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the holy scripture and seek together to fulfil their common calling, to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church in Hungary
Baptist Union of Hungary
 Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Hungary
Hungarian Methodist Church
Hungarian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Lutheran Church in Hungary
Orthodox Exarchate in Hungary (Ecumenical Patriarchate)
Reformed Church in Hungary
Romanian Orthodox Church in Hungary
Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Buda

Observer members:

Catholic Church in Hungary
 Unitarian Church in Hungary
 Church of God
 International Church of Budapest
 Salvation Army
 Federation of the Evangelical Free Churches
 Hungarian Bible Foundation
 Ecumenical Study Centre
 Hungarian Folk's College
 Hungarian Interchurch Aid
 Ecumenical and Diaconal Order of Jesus's Brothers and Sisters
 Hungarian Blue Cross Association
 Habitat for Humanity Magyarország Foundation
 Hungarian Christian Medical Fellowship
 Hungarian Scouts Association

Young Men's and Women's Christian Association
 Student Christian Movement in Hungary
 Christian Ecumenical Fellowship

Website: www.oikumene.meot.hu

Baptist Union of Hungary

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 11,400

Local churches: 240

Pastors: 120

Member of: WCC (1956) – CEC – ECCH – BWA – EBF

Periodicals: *Bekehírnök* (weekly, in Hungarian)

Szolgatárs (quarterly for pastors and leaders, in Hungarian)

In 1846 some young Hungarians who had been converted and baptized in Hamburg initiated Baptist missionary work in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. A new start was made in 1873 when a missionary of the British and Foreign Bible Society came to the country and established the First Baptist Church in Budapest. He distributed Bibles and Christian literature, preached the gospel, organized Sunday schools, helped poor children with clothing and food, and fought for the social and legal recognition of Baptists. He was persecuted, several times beaten and imprisoned, but remained a faithful evangelist. His best co-worker brought more than 10,000 people to conversion and baptized them, over a period of about forty years. This work had an impact on Romanian-speaking people also. In 1894 two Hungarians who had completed their study at the Baptist theological seminary in Hamburg brought together the Austro-Hungarian Baptist churches in the Hungarian Baptist Association. They also founded the church paper *Bekehírnök* in 1895, which continues to be published. The Hungarian government recognized the Baptists in 1905. The Baptist Theological Seminary was established in 1906. During World War II the seminary and many church buildings were destroyed. The Baptists in Hungary have two homes for the elderly which date back to beginning of the 20th century, and three holiday places for families and youth. They have regularly published hymnals and evangelical literature.

Presently, the Baptist Union is concerned about the deepening of its theological scholarship, the improvement of diaconal services and efficient participation in the international ecumenical movement, and in Christian missionary work within and outside Hungary. It maintains relations with Hungarian-speaking Baptist churches elsewhere, mostly in Transylvania (Romania), Slovakia, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia, United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil and Australia. There are regular radio and television programmes run by the Union, for the building up of believers and for evangelization. Many people do not believe and are not affiliated to any church. During the last 15 years 20 new chapels and parsonages have been built, and several others are under construction. The number of students at the theological seminary has increased to more than 200 in recent years.

Lutheran Church in Hungary

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 305,000

Districts: 3

Parishes: 300

Places of worship: 500

Bishops: 3

Pastors: 360

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – ECCH – LWF – CPCE

Periodical: *Evangelikus Élet, HÍD, Lelkipásztor* (all in Hungarian)

Website: www.lutheran.hu

The Lutheran Reformation began to spread to today's Hungary in 1518. The common work of the Hungarian followers of Luther and Calvin lasted until 1591. Later on the Lutheran and Calvinist (Reformed) churches developed separately. Hungarian Protestantism had to face the Counter-Reformation, which used the Society of Jesus and the principle "cuius regio eius religio", which meant that the nobility determined the religion of their subjects. The re-catholicization of influential landowners entailed the loss of huge Lutheran congregations, as well as church buildings and schools.

The Hungarian Protestants secured the achievements of the Reformation through successive wars of independence. Under the Habsburg dynasty the Protestants were considered the secret enemy of the empire. During the "Mourning Decade" (1671-1681) many hundreds of Lutheran and Calvinist pastors were put in prison and taken away as galley slaves. During the 18th century, Hungarian Protestantism was influenced by Pietism. The preaching of the Pietists and their writings brought hope and renewal in a dark period but also clashed with the Enlightenment. The Deed of Tolerance issued by the emperor in 1781 granted religious freedom and the Protestant churches were fully recognized after the restoration of the sovereignty of Hungary in 1867. The second half of the 19th century saw mass emigration of Hungarians because of dire poverty, which affected the Lutheran Church. After World War I Hungary lost many territories to the surrounding countries, which again touched the Lutheran Church in particular because about 50 percent of the Lutherans were living in these areas. Under the communist regime after World War II all the churches, including the Lutheran Church, suffered severe oppression. State-controlled registration was introduced, clerical privileges were abolished, properties were confiscated and the church lost its schools.

The political changes in 1989 ushered in a new age with new, democratic legislation, also for and in the churches. The synod of the Lutheran Church is now able to hold sessions regularly. The congregations are governed by their own sessions, headed by the pastor and under the supervision of the inspector. The Lutheran Church has 40 educational institutions, from nursery to primary and high school, and seven hostels for students. During the last 15 years the number of diaconal institutions has grown to 38, including homes for the elderly and centres for handicapped children. The Hungarian Lutheran Youth Federation assists with the organization of summer camps for hundreds of disabled young people. The church employs three university pastors, four prison chaplains working in eight prisons and four pastors in charge of spiritual care in hospitals. There are five centres for continuing education and formation. The media team produces regular TV and radio programmes and ensures the presence of the church on the internet.

Reformed Church in Hungary

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 620,000

Presbyteries: 27

Congregations: 1,230

Pastors: 1,535

Member of : WCC (1948) – CEC – ECCH – WARC – EAC – CPCE

Periodicals: *Református Egyház* (monthly), *Reformátusok Lapja* (weekly)

Confessio (quarterly), (all in Hungarian)

Website: www.reformatus.hu

By the middle of the 16th century there was a considerable Protestant movement in Hungary, mainly in the eastern part of the country where it enjoyed the protection of the princes of Transylvania. Lutheran in inspiration, the major part of the movement came under Calvinistic influence and the church became Presbyterian in its polity. In the 17th century the movement was severely oppressed through the combined efforts of the Habsburg dynasty and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The work of the Counter-Reformation culminated in 1673. Catholicism was ruthlessly re-imposed all over the country. Pastors were forced to renounce their faith, many were expelled, and some sold as galley-slaves. It was only the Diet of 1790-91 which restored civil rights to Protestants. The agreement of 1867 set the pattern of church-state relations till the end of the second world war. In 1948, Marxist-Leninist ideology, with its strong anti-religious bias, became the official position of the communist regime. The churches came under tight government control, their institutions were confiscated and religious life confined within church walls. While there was courageous resistance by individuals, the church generally sought to survive by working together with the authorities. A new era began in 1989. After the first democratic elections in 1990, the parliament passed a constitutional law guaranteeing the enactment of freedom of conscience and religion. Many properties were returned to the churches.

Doctrinally the Reformed Church in Hungary is based on the ancient creeds, the Heidelberg Catechism and the II Helvetic Confession. The church ordains women to the ministry. It practises infant and believer's baptism. As to the internal life of the church, the 17th and 18th centuries saw the setting up of presbyteries and the acceptance of the position of the elder. The synod of 1881 laid the basis of the constitution which, with additions, is still in force today. The church has retained the office of bishop, though it has administrative rather than hierarchical authority. It is organized in four districts, each led by a bishop and a curator. The highest authority is the general synod, equally composed of clergy and laity.

The Reformed Church of Hungary now has the immense task of grasping the new opportunities offered to her today in a democratic society which is deeply affected by secularization. In many fields new initiatives have been launched: evangelistic work among the gypsies, education (e.g. church schools), and social work. The church runs several hospitals, numerous elementary and secondary schools, four seminaries, a university and various diaconal institutions. The aim of the immediate future is to focus on inner mission in an environment which is, after the official materialism of socialism, now characterized by the moral crisis and nihilism of a consumer society. The text of a new church constitution is under consideration.

The RCH continues to cherish its cultural heritage, which in earlier centuries made a considerable contribution to the development of Hungarian language, literature and general culture. Based on Calvinistic features, it still plays an active role in the society. Close relations are maintained with the Hungarian Reformed churches in the surrounding countries and in the United States. There is also a large diaspora around the world. The RCH has partnerships of varying intensity

with several European and American Reformed/Presbyterian churches; lately a fruitful relationship has been built up with Presbyterian churches in Asia (Korea, Taiwan, South India).

ICELAND

Population: 293,702

Surface area: 103,000 sq.km

Capital: Reykjavik

GNI per capita: 30,910 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Icelandic, Danish

Religions: Christian 97%

Christianity: Protestants 260,000; Catholics 5,000; Independent 13,280

Iceland, an island in the North Atlantic just below the Arctic Circle, is the westernmost country of Europe. The population is descended from Scandinavian Vikings and Celtic immigrants, and is quite homogeneous with very insular institutions and traditions. Iceland has the world's oldest functioning legislative assembly, which was founded in 930. Independent for over 300 years, it was subsequently ruled by Denmark and Norway, until it was granted limited home rule in 1874, and full independence in 1944. Iceland's economy and prosperity is based on the fishing industry. The country has an extensive welfare system. Iceland became Christian by a decision of its assembly in the year 1000. It adopted the Lutheran Reformation. The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the national church, and is an integral part of the history and culture of the Icelandic people. There is a small Lutheran Free Church, and a Pentecostal church.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 250,661

Parishes: 284

Pastors: 150

Deacons: 25

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CPCE – LWF

Periodicals: *Vidforli*, *Kirkjuritid* (in Icelandic)

Website: www.kirkjan.is

Iceland's Christian beginnings are traced back to the year 1000 when the Althingi - the parliament - voted for the acceptance of Christianity. Missionary work by Irish monks had prepared the ground. Highlights of the ensuing ten centuries include the establishment of two dioceses, in the South and the North, and the founding of monasteries which became centres of culture. In 1380 Iceland came under the Danish crown. Some violence and a measure of Danish pressure accompanied the Althingi's adoption in 1541 of the Lutheran Church order. An Icelandic translation of the New Testament in 1540 was a landmark, followed by the first Icelandic Bible printed in 1584, which had a profound influence on Icelandic language and culture. In a sparsely populated country, family devotions were important. As a result of the early pietistic movement, literacy was wide-

spread in the country from the 18th century onward. Hymns of the passion of Christ have commonly been read aloud during Lent in homes and are still recited on the state radio during Lent. During the 19th century, the effects of rationalism were widely felt. Religious currents like spiritism, theosophy and liberal theology gained ground. An active lay movement was founded around 1900, influenced by inner mission and pietistic movements in Denmark.

The constitution of 1874 introduced religious freedom but stated that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is a national, established church, which it still is today. In 1998 a new law came into effect defining the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland as a free and independent church, and transferring the responsibility for most of the decisions from the parliament to the annual church assembly. At present 90 percent of the population are Lutherans, of which 85 percent belong to the ELCI, and 5 percent to Lutheran free congregations. The state collects membership fees for all registered religious bodies. Through a church-state agreement the state also contributes to central church funds and pastors' salaries, as compensation for church lands. Since 1801, the entire island has been a single diocese with the bishop residing in Reykjavik. Presently there are two suffragan bishops in the old episcopal sees. Bishops are elected by pastors, professors of theology in the University of Iceland, and lay people from the deaneries. The church assembly, with a lay majority, is the highest legislative body and elects the church council, the church's highest executive organ, presided by the bishop.

A third of the pastors in the ELCI are women and the number of theological students has increased, creating a surplus of qualified theologians. Icelandic pastors are increasingly going abroad for further studies, mostly to Europe and the USA. The ordained diaconate was introduced in the 1960s and since the 1990s deacons receive their education at the theological department of the University of Iceland. Ten pastors and some deacons work in specialized ministries in hospitals and other institutions. The church also has chaplains serving Icelandic congregations abroad. Immigration and urbanization have brought new challenges to the church. The ELCI provides service to all, regardless of church membership, throughout the country. The need for service in the capital is constantly increasing, calling for structural changes, but at the same time the presence of the church is important to rural communities. The ELCI is now focusing especially on the home and family, in support to parents, and on diakonia.

The ELCI cooperates with eight other churches and societies in local ecumenical affairs. For fifty years Icelanders have conducted missionary work in Ethiopia and Kenya. Icelandic Church Aid is active in emergency and development projects on other continents. The ELCI participates in the work of the CPCE but has not signed the Leuenberg Agreement.

IRELAND

Population: 5,619,831

Surface area: 70,270 sq.km

Capital: Dublin

GNI per capita: 32,835 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Irish, English

Religions: Christian 97%; Muslim 0,5%

Christianity*: Catholics 4,141,068; Anglicans 389,280; Protestants 438,530;

Other (including Orthodox): 126,004

Ireland was settled by the Celts between 800 and 100 BC. From the 12th through the 18th century, England gradually imposed its rule and in 1801 a union of Ireland and Great Britain was formed. In the 1840s Ireland suffered the great famine, in which one million people died, and several millions emigrated. The struggle for Irish independence led in 1922 to the partition of the island into the Irish Free State (now the Republic of Ireland), and Northern Ireland (Ulster) that remained with Great Britain. The Irish government has been involved with Britain in the efforts to end the conflict in Northern Ireland, which resulted in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. For most of the 20th century Ireland was struck by poverty and emigration. In 1973 it joined the European Economic Community (now the EU). In the 1990s the economy developed rapidly and the country is now among the wealthiest in Europe. Ireland was being Christianized by the 3rd century, and Irish missionaries participated in spreading the Christian faith to the European continent. During the Reformation most of Ireland remained Roman Catholic, and the Roman Catholic Church is the majority church. After the Church of Ireland (Anglican), the largest Protestant churches are the Presbyterians and the Methodists. All the churches, as well as the Irish Council of Churches, cover the Republic and Northern Ireland. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting brings together the Catholic Church and the Irish Council of Churches. The Irish churches have actively worked for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

*statistics from Ireland

Irish Council of Churches

Founded in 1922.

Basis: The Irish Council of Churches is constituted by Christian communions in Ireland willing to join in united efforts to promote the spiritual, physical, moral and social welfare of the people and the extension of the rule of Christ among all nations and over every region of human life.

Most of the member churches of the Irish Council of Churches are all-island organizations that serve in both political jurisdictions of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The ICC has its office in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Member churches:

Antiochian Orthodox Church
Church of Ireland
Coptic Orthodox Church of Ireland
Greek Orthodox Church in Britain and Ireland
 LifeLink Network of Churches
 Lutheran Church in Ireland
Methodist Church in Ireland
Moravian Church Irish District
 Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland
 Presbyterian Church in Ireland
 Religious Society of Friends
 Rock of Ages Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ireland
Romanian Orthodox Church in Ireland
Russian Orthodox Church in Ireland
 Salvation Army (Irish Division)

Website: www.irishchurches.org

The Irish Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Irish Inter-Church Meeting

Founded in 1973.

The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) is “a forum for discussion and exchange” on an equal basis between the Irish Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church and the member churches of the ICC.

Efforts to integrate the ICC and the IICM were made in 1999 but were not accepted by all the participating churches so the status quo remains with the Irish churches continuing to be served by two national ecumenical structures in the island.

Church of Ireland

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 365,000

Parishes: 471

Bishops: 12

Priests: 597

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – ICC – CTBI – IICM – ACC

Periodicals: *The Church of Ireland Gazette Search* – a Church of Ireland Journal

Website: www.ireland.anglican.org

The Church of Ireland is that part of the Irish Church which was influenced by the Reformation while maintaining its origins and continuity with the mission of the early Celtic church of St Patrick, who brought Christianity to Ireland in the 5th century. The Church of Ireland has a strong local identity, but it is also conscious of being part of the Catholic Church, not least through its membership of the Anglican Communion. The Church of Ireland is happy to describe her faith and order, witness and worship as being both “Catholic and Reformed” in substance and expression.

Ireland today is a divided island. The six counties of the north, Northern Ireland, are a part of the United Kingdom and the other 26 counties form the Republic of Ireland, which is a fully independent country, though maintaining close links with the rest of the British Isles, as well as with the European Union of which it is a member. The Church of Ireland’s membership embraces both unionist and nationalist perspectives. It believes it has an important reconciling contribution to make towards resolving Ireland’s political problems, not least through confronting the evil of sectarianism by its “Hard Gospel” programme. Within the ecumenical context, the Church of Ireland is committed to serious dialogue and active cooperation with all the main churches in Ireland, through its membership of the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. It endeavours to contribute positively to the development of interfaith dialogue within the pluralist nature of society, particularly in the Republic and to provide a welcome for the large number of refugee and asylum seekers currently seeking a new beginning in Ireland. It is also a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Apart from other Anglican churches, the Church of Ireland is in full communion with the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, the Church of Pakistan, the Church of South India, the Church of North India, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar and through the Porvoo Agreement, with the Baltic-Nordic Lutheran Churches.

Methodist Church in Ireland

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 60,000

Districts: 8

Congregations: 271

Pastors: 193

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – ICC – WMC – CPCE

Website www.irishmethodist.org

The Methodist Church in Ireland owes its origins largely to John and Charles Wesley who visited Ireland on many occasions, beginning with John Wesley's historic visit in 1747. But he had come to see a Methodist Society already firmly established in Dublin by a Methodist preacher who had been converted in England under Charles Wesley in 1738. From Dublin, the Wesleys journeyed into the midlands of Ireland and eventually, in 1756, on his sixth tour, John Wesley broke new ground when he visited the Palatines in County Limerick, penetrated into Connemara and Mayo in the far west and entered Ulster for the first time. From County Limerick, Methodist converts emigrated to America in 1760 where they founded a Methodist Society, and later built the first Methodist chapel in New York, in John Street, believed to be the first Methodist chapel in America. About the same time another Irishman began preaching in Maryland.

Today the majority of Irish Methodists live in Northern Ireland, the north-east corner of the country. However, there are Methodist churches in most of the larger cities and towns in the Republic of Ireland as well. The membership of the Methodist Church in Ireland is growing, especially because of the major influx of refugees and asylum seekers in recent years. Although closely linked to British Methodism, the Methodist Church in Ireland is autonomous, with its own president (one-year appointment) and secretary. The Methodist president takes an active part in the church leaders' meeting of the four main churches in Ireland. Of the 193 ministers, 120 are in active work in Ireland itself, the others being retired or engaged in other work both within and outside of Ireland. Irish Methodism has developed a wide ranging social-work service, largely through the activities of its city missions in Dublin, Londonderry, Belfast and Newtownabbey, with oversight of several old people's homes, places of care for youth and children, and day and night shelters for needy men and women. In the educational field the church has two large grammar schools, an agricultural college and a theological college.

In 2002 a covenant was signed between the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland (Anglican). This has led to closer cooperation between the two churches in major and significant ways. The Methodist Church in Ireland is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

ITALY

Population: 57,252,557

Surface area: 301,300 sq.km

Capital: Rome

GNI per capita: 21,570 US\$

Classification: Major industrialized economy

Languages: Italian

Religions: Christian 98%; Muslim 1%; other 1%
 Christianity: Catholics 55,300,000; Protestants 331,060; Orthodox 127,500;
 Anglicans 10,400; Independent 680,490

Italy was the land of the Roman empire and the early Church of Rome. As of the 5th century, the Barbarian invasions resulted in the establishment of several kingdoms. In the Middle Ages city-states were formed, like Venice, that made Italy a powerful force, dominating much of the Mediterranean Sea region. Italian cities were at the centre of the European Renaissance. Italy became a nation-state in 1861 when it was united in a monarchy. During World War II, under the fascist dictator Mussolini, Italy allied with Nazi Germany. A democratic republic replaced the monarchy in 1946, and industrialization set in, especially in the north. The south is less advanced economically. Italy is a founding member of the European Union. Its culture, society and political life have been greatly influenced by the Catholic Church, which was the state church until 1984. The vast majority of Christians in Italy are Catholic. The Waldensians, a small, pre-Reformation church, have been present in the northern part of the country since the 13th century, in spite of severe persecution. Other small Protestant churches were established in the 19th century. They have come together in the Protestant Federation. In the 20th century several large Pentecostal churches emerged, and the Charismatic movement developed in the Catholic Church. In 2000 it was estimated that 6 percent of the Italian Christians were Evangelical/Pentecostal/Charismatic. Immigration from Africa and Asia has brought into being new Christian migrant communities.

Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy

Founded in 1967.

Basis: The Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy is formed of various Christian Protestant churches, who confess together their faith in God. They have been called, by God's grace alone, to be his people in Christ, the only Lord of the universal church, and in the Holy Spirit who gathers, guides and renews the church time and again. The member churches of the Federation acknowledge as their only rule of faith the holy scriptures, the Old and New Testament, and as their reason for being to give witness to the kingdom of God who has come close to humanity through Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour.

Member churches:

Christian Community Fiumi di Vita
 Communion of Free Churches
Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy
Evangelical Methodist Church
 Helvetic Congregation of Trieste
 Italian Apostolic Church
 Italian Lutheran Church
 Salvation Army
Waldensian Church

Website: www.fcei.it

Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy*

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 4,437
 Local churches: 105

Pastors: 43

Member of: WCC (1977) – CEC – FCEI – CEPPL – BWA – EBF

Periodicals: *II Seminatore* and *Riforma* (in Italian)

Baptist work in Italy began with the arrival of British missionaries in 1863 and from the USA in 1867. A few churches in some of the main towns and in some villages were established. In 1905 a Baptist theological school was started, but was closed in 1932 under Fascist persecution. Until that time two magazines published by the Baptists had considerable influence on the religious culture of Italy. In 1921 the British missionaries withdrew, leaving the work in the hands of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of the USA. In 1939 the “Opera Battista” was created, and in 1956 the Baptist churches organized themselves into the Baptist Union of Italy. In the 1960s two major themes characterized Italian Baptist life and discussion: ecumenism and the relationship between faith and politics. This was followed by a phase of internal discussion and militancy on ethical issues. In 1983 a national conference was held on ecclesiology, which resulted in a new constitution and rules and bylaws. A confession of faith was discussed and finally approved in 1990. That same year an important agreement was made between the Baptist, Waldensian and Methodist churches in Italy. In a joint session the three churches adopted a document of mutual recognition of members and ministers. Since 1990 the three churches also have a common weekly journal, “Riforma”.

In 1995 the Baptist Union established an agreement on religious freedom with the Italian state that was voted in parliament. No financial aid was requested, according to the principle of the separation of church and state. The Union is operating on the basis of a cooperative plan for the life and development of the Baptist work in Italy. It is now completely independent of American support. All the properties which the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptists still had in Italy (mostly church buildings) were passed on to the Union in 1993. In 2004 the IMB signed an agreement with the Union with the aim of promoting, in communion with the UCEBI, a “Church Planting Movement” in Italy. The IMB declared its recognition of the theological affirmations expressed in the confession of faith of the UCEBI and its respect for the Christian freedom of the Union. The UCEBI signed important agreements for mission with the Baptist Missionary Society (UK) and with the Brazilian Mission Board. Recently the Baptist Union started a dialogue with the Italian Pentecostal Federation.

In the last decade the UCEBI has accepted a number of new migrant churches which include Nigerian, Ghanaian, Eritrean, Filipino, Korean, Chinese, Romanian and Latin American communities. The main concerns of the church are evangelization and social cooperation. Two departments, for theology and evangelism, deal with the burning issues of the time. The former works to enhance the theological awareness of the churches and takes care of the theological students. The latter helps the local churches to develop new strategies for mission. The Italian Baptist Union is a founding member of the Italian Federation of Protestant Churches. It is active in ecumenical work, mainly at the local church level and in ministries of peace, human rights and reconciliation.

Evangelical Methodist Church in Italy

Church Family : Methodist

Membership: 4,000

Congregations: 50

Pastors: 23

Member of: WCC (1954) – CEC – FCEI – WMC – CPCE
 Periodical: *Riforma* (in Italian), *Il Cenacolo* (monthly, in Italian)

The Methodist Church in Italy came into being in the second half of the 19th century. Methodism was spread by returning emigrants and by British and American missionaries who were convinced that with the “political revolution” for the unification of Italy (Risorgimento) the time had come for the 16th century Reformation finally also to take root in Italy. Their aim was not to establish yet another Protestant denomination but to support the Italians in their own spiritual awakening. They saw it as a ministry of “creating small centres in order to stimulate an enquiring spirit, bringing people to read the gospel and live it”, and “planting, preaching, praying and working for the future”. In 1904-05 the Free Church, an independent Italian Protestant church which had been very involved in the Risorgimento, merged with the Methodist churches. The work met with great difficulties during the fascist period (1920-45). In 1946 the two branches of Italian Methodism joined together and the Evangelical Methodist Church was born. It was a district of the British conference until 1962, when it achieved full autonomy. Since 1975 the Italian Methodists have brought their spiritual heritage and theological sensitivity into the covenant with the Waldensian Church: one church with one synod, but the two parts maintaining their individual identities, ecumenical and international relationships, finance and administration, and special projects.

From the very beginning, Italian Methodists have been committed to the poor, the marginalized, and the powerless. Schools, orphanages, workshops, mutual benefit societies, were founded throughout the country. It was a response to the problems confronting the poor, and at the same time a Christian contribution to the formation of new citizens for a more free and democratic society. As the social situations have changed, many of these church “institutions” no longer exist but some are still active and others have been created since the second world war, e.g. *Ecumene*, near Rome, built with the cooperation of young volunteers from all over the world and from different Christian denominations, as a witness to the unity of the church of Jesus Christ and a reference point for all those who identify reconciliation, justice and peace as the witness that churches are called to give.

Today no less than in the past, the Italian Methodist churches are an “open space” where everyone can receive the message of the liberating grace of Jesus Christ and have the personal experience of the inner transformation that makes the human being a witness of the kingdom of God within the life of the society. The main new challenge is the issue of a multicultural and religiously pluralistic society. The immigrants coming from Africa and Asia need to be received and supported, and above all to be listened to, in order to make their culture and religious sensitivity a richness for the whole nation. The Methodist Church has encouraged the development of integrated congregations, and new specific initiatives have been undertaken in various places. Almost every local congregation is in some way involved in this mission. Through their preaching and their testimony within the society, the Methodist churches intend to give the Italians transparent signs of the coming kingdom of God and to share their commitment with all those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness”.

Waldensian Church

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 25,000
 Congregations: 129

Pastors: 94

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – FCEI – CPCE – CEPPL – WARC – EAC
– Cevaa

Periodical: *Riforma* (in Italian)

Website: www.chiesavalde.org

The Waldensian movement has its origins in the 12th century, when a rich merchant of Lyons, Valdes or Valdesius, decided to dedicate himself to the preaching of the gospel to the lower classes of society. At the Third Lateran Council (1179), Valdes and his followers sought ecclesiastical recognition. The pope expressed approval of Valdes' vow of voluntary poverty, but he and his companions were forbidden to preach except by invitation of the clergy. Valdes and his community refused to obey, and the Council of Verona (1184) placed the "poor of Lyons" under the ban of excommunication. The Waldensians grew rapidly and spread, first in southern France, then in Piedmont, Lombardy and Germany. In the 15th century they made contacts with the Bohemian Hussites. For a brief period they enjoyed in Piedmont a relative measure of freedom and built many churches. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) in France, many were compelled, in terrible conditions, to cross the mountains to Switzerland. The small minority that stayed was forced to live in an alpine ghetto for 150 years, excluded from the cultural, social and political life of Piedmont at the time. They survived thanks to the international contacts of the Waldensian movement. It was not until 1848 that they were given real political and religious freedom in Italy. Today Waldensians still live as a diaspora, scattered over Italy, Uruguay, Argentina, western Europe and North America.

Waldensians and Methodists in Italy merged to become a united church in 1975, although both have kept their specific identities. The ecumenical scene in Italy is encouraging today. In addition to the dialogue with Judaism and with other living faiths, there are programmes of practical cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, particularly the plan to publish an ecumenical Bible translation.

Waldensians are mainly located in the so-called Waldensian valleys, to the west of Turin, where the congregations are numerically important. But they are also spread countrywide and in many Italian cities they represent an interesting partner for ecumenical and cultural dialogue. Even if there has not been a rise in the number of church members, every year there are new people who find in these churches a different way to live their Christian faith, to debate and to exercise democracy.

Among the church's institutions are a high school at Torre Pellice (near Turin), a theological faculty in Rome, a religious publishing house, the centre of Agape in North Italy (built by international youth teams after the war to provide a meeting place for young people concerned by the renewal of the church), and the diaconal centres in the Sicilian towns of Riesi and Palermo, which bring hope and help in a situation of poverty and apathy. The church also runs several old people's homes and institutes caring for children and handicapped persons. In recent years the progressive dismantlement of welfare in Italy has caused many difficulties for the Waldensian Church which was forced to transfer its three hospitals of Piedmont to the health public service.

Today an important challenge is represented by the remarkable number of evangelical immigrants who join the Waldensian churches, introducing important changes. About 200,000 evangelical immigrants (from Africa to the Far East) are estimated to live in Italy. The purpose is not only hospitality towards these brothers and sisters, but also collaboration and integration (old people's homes, institutes for child care or handicapped persons).

LATVIA

Population: 2,264,965
 Surface area: 64,600 sq.km
 Capital: Riga
 GNI per capita: 5,460 US\$
 Classification: Economy in transition
 Languages: Latvian, Russian
 Religions: Christian 67%; Jewish 1%
 Christianity: Orthodox 720,340; Catholics 434,421; Protestants 280,200;
 Independent 124,350

Latvians are an Indo-European people who settled the area several thousand years ago. Together with Estonia and Lithuania, Latvia is part of the Baltic region. From the 13th century onwards, the country was under German, Polish and Swedish rule, until it became part of the Russian empire in 1710. In 1921, Latvia became for the first time independent. It was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, occupied by Nazi Germany, and again incorporated into the communist bloc in 1945. During this period, 35 percent of the population perished. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country regained its independence in 1991. One of the major issues it had to face is the question of citizenship for the Russians living in Latvia, about 30 percent of the population, and the use of the Latvian language. Economically, the country is orientating its industry and trade towards the West. It joined the European Union in 2004. Latvia was Christianized in the 12th and 13th century, from the East (Orthodox) and the West (Catholic). Part of the Catholic Church adopted the Lutheran Reformation of the early 16th century. During the communist era, atheism was actively promoted. Since then, there has been a revival in the churches, and several new groups have entered the country. The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the largest Protestant church. Baptists and Pentecostals are also well represented. The Russian Orthodox Church in Latvia comes under the Moscow Patriarchate, and is therefore indirectly member of the WCC. There is an independent Old Believers church.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 39,000
 Congregations: 299
 Pastors: 136
 Member of: WCC (1962) – CEC – LWF – CPCE
 Periodical: *Svetdienas Rīts* (Sunday Morning, weekly, in Latvian)
 Website: www.lutheran.lv

The beginnings of Christianity in Latvia go back to the 12th century. The first bishop was consecrated in 1186. The Reformation penetrated the area already in the early 16th century. Riga became one of the first cities to actively support Luther's ideas. The spiritual renewal touched only the German-speaking, ruling minority (almost all the pastors were German). The Latvian-speaking majority remained largely alienated from the church up to the beginning of the 18th century when the pietistic movement of Moravian (Herrnhut) Brethren reached Latvia. But the German domination of the Lutheran Church continued throughout the 19th century. A uniform Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL)

began to develop only after 1922 when the central board was established and the synod elected a bishop for the Latvian-speaking congregations.

For the first time in the history of the country an independent Republic of Latvia was proclaimed in 1918. The short period between World War I and World War II was the golden age for the Latvian state and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church. The faculty of theology was founded with the University of Latvia, new churches were built, choir and Sunday school work flourished, contacts with churches abroad and mission work were established, carrying the name of Latvia as far as India. All this came to an end with the Soviet occupation in 1940 and World War II, and the church entered a period of great hardship and persecution. Many pastors were killed or deported to Siberia, all property of the church was nationalized, many church buildings were turned into workshops, stables, amusement halls or museums. The church was denied any activities apart from Sunday services.

With the opening up of the former Soviet Union new social processes emerged in Latvia. After decades of ideological oppression people joined in the struggle for a truly dynamic, independent and free religious life. The church could produce its own publications, prepare television and radio broadcasts, organize Sunday schools, reclaim abandoned sanctuaries, hold services in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, military bases, etc. It enjoyed great popularity. The number of church-goers increased six times within less than a year. The strength which the church acquired as a result of moral purification and spiritual rebirth communicated itself to society as of 1987, when the ELCL was socially the most active denomination and the one that determined the spiritual dimension of national awakening and revival.

The ELCL convened a synod in April 1989 at which a new head and a completely new governing body were elected, effecting a total turnover in church leadership. Dozens of new congregations were established all over Latvia and there was a dramatic lack of pastors. One of the objectives became the formation of a qualitatively superior system of theological education. The faculty of theology at the Latvia University could not provide the necessary number of pastors, so the church established the Luther Academy as its own institution for the formation of clergy. The work of diakonia has developed greatly during the last years. Soup kitchens, clothing, medical consultations and medicine are made available to those in need. Telephone counselling, chapels in hospitals, work with ex-prisoners, street children, are areas where the church is actively involved. Sunday school and youth activities are growing fast, hopefully as a preparation for future congregation members. The ELCL is especially concentrating on securing ministers with a living wage and adequate transportation so that they can serve two or three remote country congregations. With the entry of Latvia into the European Union since 2004, the ELCL is looking for ways to best protect its Christian faith in Latvia within the European context, and to be a part of the European Christian community, standing firm and speaking out with one voice when needed.

LITHUANIA

Ecumenical Council of Churches of Lithuania

Founded in 1995.

Basis: The Ecumenical Council of Churches of Lithuania is an association of Lithuanian churches which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and seek to fulfil together their mission for the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By fidelity to the gospel, preserving their identity, council member churches are striving to grow together in unity of faith, hope and love, strengthening common witness and solving actual problems.

Member churches:

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania
 Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania
Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
 Baptist Union of Lithuania

Observer member:

Roman Catholic Church

MALTA

Malta Ecumenical Council

Founded in 1995.

Member churches:

Anglican Church
Church of Scotland
Evangelical Church of Germany
Methodist Church
 Roman Catholic Church
 Seventh-day Adventist Church

NETHERLANDS

Population: 16,299,745

Surface area: 41,530 sq.km

Capital: Amsterdam

GNI per capita: 31,700 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Language: Dutch

Religions: Christian 57%; Muslim 5%

Christianity: Catholics 5,202,000; Protestants 3,477,400; Orthodox 9,150;
 Independent 558,180

The Netherlands emerged as an independent nation in the 16th century. The republic was fully recognized in 1648. It was one of the leading maritime, economic and colonial powers in the 17th century. The country became a constitutional monarchy in 1848. It was occupied by Nazi Germany in World War II. In the post-war decolonization period, the Dutch tried in vain to keep the Netherlands East Indies, their largest, and most profitable, colony, and conceded its

independence only in 1949. The country has developed a strong economy, based on agriculture, trade and industry, and a comprehensive well-fare system. It is one of the six founding members of the European Union. The “low lands” were Christianized in the 8th century by missionaries from Ireland. The 16th century republic embraced the Calvinist Reformation. The Netherlands became a bulwark of conservative reformed churches, but also a stronghold of the ecumenical movement. The first WCC Assembly was held in Amsterdam in 1948. Most of the Protestant churches and the Catholic Church are together in the Council of Churches since 1968. The two large Reformed churches and the small Lutheran church formed in 2004 the new Protestant Church in the Netherlands. New and vibrant migrant churches of African, Asian and Latin American origin have come into being. Together with the Moluccan Christians who moved to the Netherlands at the time of Indonesia’s independence, they have formed their own council, SKIN. There is also a strong Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA. Church affiliation and church attendance have declined sharply since the 1960s.

***Council of Churches in the Netherlands**

Founded in 1968 (forerunner: the Ecumenical Council of the Netherlands, founded in 1935).

Basis: The Council of Churches in the Netherlands is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church
Evangelical Brethren (Moravian Church)
Mennonite Church
 Moluccan Evangelical Church
Old-Catholic Church
Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Remonstrant Brotherhood
 Roman Catholic Church
 Salvation Army
 Society of Friends
Syrian Orthodox Church

Candidate Member Churches:

Netherlands Association of Protestants
 Association of Orthodox “H. Nikolaas of Myra”
 Basis Movement Netherlands
 Federation of Free Evangelical Congregations
 Seventh-day Adventist Church

There are nine provincial councils of churches and close to 300 local councils of churches.

Website: www.raadvankerken.nl

SKIN – Together Church in the Netherlands

Founded in 1982 as Platform of Non-Indigenous Churches in the Netherlands, and in 1997 as SKIN.

Basis: Membership of SKIN is only open to Christian faith communities formed by immigrants in the Netherlands, which accept the holy scriptures as the only source and norm for their witness and service, and the Apostles’ Creed as the expression of the faith collectively confessed by the members of their faith com-

munity, and are organized according to written statutes that govern their life and work.

Member churches:

Acts Revival Church, The Hague
African Methodist Episcopal Church, Amsterdam
 Arise for Jesus Ministries, Amsterdam
Armenian Apostolic Church, Almelo
 Assembly of God, Utrecht and Rotterdam
 Basilea Church, Amersfoort
 Christ Vision International Center, Rotterdam
 Christian Arab Community Church NL, Amsterdam
 Christian Baptist Church, Amsterdam
 Christian Church Outreach Mission, The Hague
 Christian Congregation Filadelfia of Apocalipsis, Amsterdam
 Christian Family International, Rotterdam.
 Church of Ephesians, Amsterdam
 Church of the Messengers in Holland, Roosendaal
 COPAN (Chinese Christians), Zutphen
 Ecumenical Ministry of Filipinos Abroad – NL, Amersfoort
 Emmanuel Baptist Church, Amsterdam
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, The Hague
 Evangelical Assembly Mission for Christ, Oegstgeest
 Evangelical Assembly “My Rock” Breda and Tilburg
 Evangelical Assembly Victory of Jesus Christ, Maastricht
Evangelical Brethren Church (Moravian), Zeist/Amsterdam
 Evangelical Church of Amersfoort
 Evangelical Church of the Hague
 Evangelical Molucca Church, GIM
 Evangelistic Fellowship AGAPE, Baarn
 Evangelization and Power Ministry Church, Wormer
 Philadelphia Church The Hague
 Foundation Amazing Grace Chapel International, The Hague
 Foundation Hold Fast, Rotterdam
 Foundation INS, Amsterdam*
 Foundation Messianic Christian Ministries International, Amsterdam
 Friends in Christ Fellowship, Almere
 German Evangelical Congregation, The Hague
 Glorious Chapel International, Rotterdam
 Gospel Revival Outreach Ministries, Amsterdam
 Holland Ceylon Christian Centre Foundation, Espel
 Holland Methodist Church., Zoetermeer
 Japanese Christian Fellowship Church, Montfoort
 Jesus Christ Mission Ministries, Amsterdam.
 Jiewan Jyotie, Rotterdam.
Indonesian Christian Church in the Netherlands, GKIN
 International Church of Utrecht
Kimbanguist Church, Utrecht
 Living Word Outreach Ministries, Amsterdam
 Love Christian Centre, Amsterdam
 Mahber Christian Netherlands, Rotterdam
 Maranatha Englisch Fellowship, Amsterdam
 Missionary Centre Bethesda, Amersfoort
 PACWA. (African Christian Women)
 Pentecost Revival Church, Amsterdam
 Precious-Blood, Amersfoort
 Resurrection Power and Living Bread Ministries, Amsterdam
 Scots International Church, Schiedamse Vest 121, 3012 BH Rotterdam
 The Everlasting Salvation Ministries, Dordrecht

The House of Fellowship, Amsterdam.
 The World Miracle Church, Amsterdam
 True Teachings of Christ Temple, Amsterdam.
 Urdu Speaking Community, Rotterdam
 Victory International Church, The Hague
 Victory Ministry Christian Army, Rotterdam
 World Evangelization Mission, Amersfoort

Website: www.skinkerken.nl

Mennonite Church in the Netherlands

Church Family: Free Church
 Membership: 10,200
 Congregations: 121
 Pastors: 96
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CCN – WMC
 Website: www.doopsgezind.nl

The Anabaptist movement dates back to the early 16th century. It originated in the south of Germany and in Switzerland. From there it spread along the Rhine to the north. The main issue was the rejection of the baptism of children, and – in general – a non-violent way of life. It was Menno Simons (1496-1561), a former priest in Friesland (The Netherlands) who organized much of the movement into what later was to be called the Mennonites. According to Menno, the Reformers over-emphasized justification by faith and neglected the sanctification of life (see United German Mennonite Congregations). Mennonites in the Netherlands, like their German brethren, were more radical than the Reformers in rejecting the institutional church and the doctrine of the two sacraments, and in emphasizing the separation of church and state. They were persecuted because of their withdrawal from society and their strong eschatological expectations. Many fled to the east, and so the Mennonites spread all over northern Europe, and later Russia.

During the period of the Republic of the Netherlands there was greater tolerance, but divisions surfaced in Mennonite ranks. The communities lacked educated pastors. A first seminary for the training of preachers was founded in Amsterdam in 1735. The ADS (General Mennonite Society) was inaugurated in 1811, mainly to organize a college for the training of pastors for all different Mennonite communities in the country. In the process, unification of the divisions occurred. Originally the ADS had little authority, but it developed into a more central organ in the 20th century. Although its core task is still to maintain the Mennonite seminary in the Netherlands, its work has broadened into organizing branches of relief and peace work, and mission. New emphasis is laid on mediation training and service. It is also the ADS, of which all 121 local Mennonite communities are members, that represents the Dutch Mennonites in national and international church bodies. After a long period of decline the Mennonites in the Netherlands are now a slightly growing religious community, strongly involved in ecumenical work, both locally and nationally. The ADS maintains close relations with sister communities in Germany, Great Britain, France, Spain, Switzerland, Brazil, Paraguay, Canada and the United States.

In the 19th and early 20th century, Central Java and New Guinea were chosen as mission fields, and strong ties still link the (now) Indonesian and Dutch communities.

Old-Catholic Church in the Netherlands

Church Family: Old Catholic
 Membership: 10,000
 Dioceses: 2
 Bishops: 2
 Parishes: 29
 Priests: 35
 Deacons: 3
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CCN
 Periodicals: *De Oud-Katholiek* (in Dutch)
Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift (in German)
 Website: www.okkn.nl

From 1580 to 1853 the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands was without territorial bishops, being governed by apostolic vicars or papal legates. From 1583 to 1795 it was subjected by the government to severe penal restrictions. In 1697 Rome launched accusations of Jansenism against the Roman Catholics in the Netherlands, notably against the then vicar-general. He was censured in 1702 and a schism began. His followers upheld the continuity of their communion with the national Catholic Church of the past. The support of the French Jansenists, who refused to accept the bull “Unigenitus” (1713), secured for the Old-Catholics, as they came to be called, the maintenance of the apostolic succession, and the group still survives as a branch of the Old-Catholic Church. The church was liberated from its isolation when it set up the Utrecht Union with other non-Roman Catholic churches which emerged in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, refusing to accept the dogmas of infallibility and universal ordinary jurisdiction of the pope, as defined by the Vatican Council of 1870. Later the Polish National Church in Poland and in North America also joined the union. The Old-Catholics outside the Netherlands received episcopal succession from the Church of Utrecht. The first German bishop was consecrated in 1874, and the first Swiss bishop in 1876. The Old-Catholic communion formally recognized Anglican ordinations in 1925, and since 1932, Old-Catholics have been in full communion with the Church of England. A dialogue was started even earlier with the Orthodox churches.

The doctrinal basis of the church is the Declaration of Utrecht of 1889. Obligatory celibacy was abolished at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1998 the Old-Catholic Church in the Netherlands opened the priesthood to women. The organization of the church is episcopal and synodal, which allows for ample participation and input of the faithful. The laity and the clergy of the two dioceses are represented in the national synod, together with the two bishops. There is an advisory synod composed of representatives from the parishes and the clergy. Communion is frequently given in both kinds. The liturgy is celebrated in the Dutch language; the readers assist the clergy. The church has made valuable contributions to the study of ancient hymnology and sponsored the translation of Gregorian chant in Dutch. It still plays a role as a bridge between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches.

Among current concerns are pastoral care of people in a de-Christianized society, the formulation of answers to various social and moral questions, a more intensive training of lay Christians, renewed reflection on the meaning of ecclesiastical offices, and greater commitment to interchurch aid at home and abroad.

Protestant Church in the Netherlands

Church Family: Uniting and United

Membership: 2,500,000

Congregations: 3,000

Pastors: 3,000

Member of : WCC (1948/1971/2005) – CEC – CCN – WARC – EAC – REC

– LWF – CWM – CPCE – KKR

Periodical: *Kerkinformatie* (monthly, in Dutch)

Website: www.pkn.nl

The Protestant Church in the Netherlands came into being in May 2004, through the merger of two churches of the reformed (Calvinistic) tradition and one Lutheran church: the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and the Evangelical – Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The “established church” in the Netherlands after the Reformation was Calvinistic. It had adopted the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt. When the Netherlands became a monarchy in 1815 the king gave it a church order and it received the name of Netherlands Reformed Church. This action of the state was one of the reasons for two splits in 1834 and 1886. The two groups that separated merged in 1892 to form the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Besides the Calvinistic mainstream there had also been an Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Netherlands since 1556. In the aftermath of World War II there was an increasing awareness in the two large Reformed churches that their continued separation could not but affect the credibility of the gospel. In 1961 a group of 18 young theologians, all working in ministries on the frontiers of church and society, called on the synods to set out on a common journey. Discussions began. In 1986 the two synods declared that they were in a “state of union”. Soon after, the Lutherans joined the “Together on the Way” process. It was decided that a new church order was necessary, based on an ecclesiological vision rather than a collection of pragmatic arrangements. This church order was adopted in 2003. It declares, among other things, that the church shares in the expectation of the people of Israel and therefore, as a Christ-confessing community of faith, seeks dialogue with Israel. It also clearly expresses the place of the church in the “oikoumene”. In addition to the three ecumenical creeds and the above-mentioned confessions the church also accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Catechism.

At the national level there is total union. Locally the congregations have the freedom to unite (several hundreds have done so) or to maintain the specific tradition they belonged to before the union. The church order offers much space for local diversity and invites the local communities to engage in discussions between different traditions and spiritualities, e.g. to discover what the Lutheran identity can offer to the whole of the church, and what the Calvinistic tradition can mean for the Lutherans.

One of the main challenges for the PCN is the far-reaching secularization in the Netherlands. A large part of the population no longer counts itself as believer. An increasing number of believers live their faith outside the framework of the church. At the same time the migrant churches are flourishing in and around the urban centres. They are very active in mission and diakonia. This is yet another challenge to the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, to reflect on how to transmit the gospel message to others in a credible and contemporary manner. It was the main issue on the agenda of the very first synod meeting of the PCN in May

2004. The church order speaks of the calling to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Redeemer of the world in “celebrating, speaking and acting”. Thus the church recognizes also its social and political responsibility, which invites the church to appeal and work for renewal in culture, society and nation. Dutch society cannot exist without an inspiring texture. That determines also the responsibility of the church with regard to migrants and asylum seekers. The growing contacts with the Muslim community are part of it as well. The church is called to make its own voice heard and to make it clear that a common commitment is required in the struggle against poverty and injustice.

The PCN has adopted the presbyterian-synodal model of church governance with a board (moderamen) and a moderator and general secretary. Its national office and service centre are located in Utrecht. The missionary and diaconal work of the PCN is carried out in cooperation with several smaller churches in the Netherlands, under the banner of “Kerkinactie” (Churches acting together). The church maintains international relationships with many partner churches in all parts of the world (e.g. more than thirty in Indonesia).

Remonstrant Brotherhood

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 10,000

Congregations: 46

Pastors : 45

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CCN – WARC – EAC – CPCE

Periodical: *Adrem* (monthly, in Dutch)

Website: www.remonstranten.org

An indigenous type of Protestantism existed in the Netherlands before Calvinism was introduced from France and the Reformed Church was born in 1568. The latter sought to impose a system of doctrines, against which the more liberal people from the older Protestant circles protested, and whose leader was Arminius. They presented a “remonstrance” to the States of Holland in 1610, in which they stated five articles characteristic of a free church. The Synod of Dordrecht (1618-19) expelled the Remonstrants (as they were called) and dismissed 200 ministers, many of whom were banished or imprisoned. These ministers formed themselves into a “brotherhood”, a description later taken over by Remonstrant-Reformed congregations. From 1630, persecution slackened and churches were built. By 1860, the membership of the Brotherhood had fallen to 4,000, but then, as a result of the rise of religious modernism in terms of biblical criticism, modern science and philosophy, response to modern culture, and secularization, the Brotherhood with its evangelical freedom began to appeal to many. Membership increased five-fold. In recent years it has somewhat decreased again. One congregation has been located since 1621 in Friedrichstadt a/d Eider in Schleswig-Holstein, Federal Republic of Germany.

The statement of principle of the church reads: “The Remonstrant Brotherhood is a community of faith which, rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ and faithful to its principle of freedom and tolerance, seeks to worship and serve God”. Most Remonstrants put a lot of emphasis on personal faith, on which they are by no means always in agreement with each other. What binds them together is the statement of principle. Though not directly engaged in mission work on its own, the Brotherhood shares in the work of the Netherlands Missionary Council. Conversations are in progress with the Protestant Church of the Netherlands on

theological understanding and on cooperation between the two churches. The church is actively involved in dealing with the contemporary issues of society, mission and diakonia, and in the reflection on being the church of Jesus Christ in the world today.

NORWAY

Population: 4,565,738

Surface area: 323,800 sq.km

Capital: Oslo

GNI per capita: 52,030 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Language: Norwegian

Religions: Christian 94%; Muslim 2%

Christianity: Protestants 4,102,330; Catholics 65,000; Independent 192,830

Norway, the northernmost country in Europe, has been a monarchy since 900 AD. Over a period of 500 years, it was aligned first with Denmark and then with Sweden. It got its own constitution in 1814, and in 1905, declared its independence from Sweden. Although nominally neutral, Norway was invaded by Nazi Germany in World War II and occupied for five years. It gave up its neutrality after the war and became a member of NATO, strategically important because of its border with the Soviet Union (now the Russian Federation). Norway has a strong tradition of facilitating peace negotiations, e.g. between the Palestinians and the Israelis, in the Horn of Africa and Sudan, and in Sri Lanka. It has a prosperous economy, based on oil, hydropower, and fishing. It is the third largest oil exporting country in the world. The population has twice voted against joining the European Union. The country was Christianized at the end of 10th century and adopted the Lutheran Reformation in the 16th century. Besides the Church of Norway (Lutheran), which is the state church, there are several smaller free churches, as well as Pentecostal and charismatic churches and groups. They form the Council of Free Churches, but, except for the Pentecostals, they have also joined the Christian Council of Norway together with the Church of Norway, the Catholic Church, some of the Orthodox churches, the Salvation Army and the Methodists. The latter are part of the WCC through the United Methodist Church (USA). There is also an Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

***Christian Council of Norway**

Founded in 1992.

Basis: The Christian Council of Norway (CCN) is a fellowship of churches, Christian religious communities, and parishes in Norway, worshipping and confessing one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as Creator, Saviour and Giver of Life, in accordance with the holy scriptures.

Member churches:

Anglican Chaplaincy

Baptist Union

Church of Norway

Evangelical Lutheran Free Church

Finnish Evangelical-Lutheran Church

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation
Greek Orthodox Community in Norway
 International World Ministries
 Karisma Center
 Mission Covenant Church
Orthodox Church
 Oslo Christian Center
 Roman Catholic Church
 Salvation Army
Serbian Orthodox Church
 Swedish Margaretha Church
United Methodist Church

Associate members:

Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Norway
 Norwegian Bible Society
 Norwegian Church Aid
 Quaker Community in Norway

Website www.norgeskristnerad.org

Council of Free Churches in Norway

Founded in 1966 (forerunner: Dissenteringet, founded in 1903).

Mission statement: The Council of Free Churches in Norway is a joint organization to promote the interest of free churches and assemblies.

Member churches:

Baptist Union of Norway
 Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway
 Free Congregation of Vegårshei, Norway
 Independent Evangelical Congregations of Norway
 Mission Covenant Church of Norway
 Oslo Christian Center
 Pentecostal Churches of Norway
 Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
 Salvation Army of Norway
 Seventh-day Adventist Church (Norwegian Union Conference)
United Methodist Church in Norway

Associate member:

Evangelical Lutheran Church Community

Website: www.norgesfrikirkerad.no

Church of Norway

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 3,800,000
 Dioceses: 11
 Parishes: 1,297
 Bishops: 11
 Pastors: 1,200
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CCN – LWF – CPCE
 Periodicals: *Kirkeaktuelt*, *Årbok for Den norske kirke* (in Norwegian)
 Website: www.churchofnorway.no

Christianity came to Norway around 1000 AD, from the British Isles, Germany and Friesland (Netherlands). Agents of mission were bishops accompanying their kings on journeys, monks and individuals. Olaf Haraldsson, known as St Olaf

after his death in 1030, was an outstanding Christian king of the time. By the end of the 12th century the church was firmly established in Norway. King Christian III, ruler of Denmark and Norway, at the time of the Reformation, accepted the Lutheran faith. By the end of the 16th century the Reformation had penetrated most levels of life in Norway. The Church of Norway is a state church. Although secularization has weakened its traditional status, and the system has been under attack for the last century, about 85 percent of Norway's 4.5 million inhabitants are baptized members of the Church of Norway. In 1981 the parliament voted to retain the state church system, with the king as its supreme representative, while granting the church more autonomy. A general synod was established (1984) and the government handed over the right to appoint pastors to the diocesan councils (1989). However, the parliament still decides on the laws and the financial framework for the church and the government appoints the bishops. Thus, the Church of Norway can be defined as a state church with an episcopal and synodal structure. But the discussion continues both inside and outside the church. In 2002 the church report *"The Same Church – A New Church Structure"* concluded that the strong ties between the church and the state must be loosened. In 2005 a state commission will present recommendations to the Norwegian government on future relationships between the church and the state.

The Church of Norway general synod meets annually. Of the 85 delegates, 80 are appointed by the dioceses. Diocesan councils were introduced in 1933, an assembly of diocesan councils in 1963, and a national council of the church in 1969. Central to the church's work is religious education. In 2003 the parliament voted a reform, endorsing religious education in all religious communities. The purpose is to stimulate young people's religious identities and understanding of their cultural heritage and traditions. Improvement of Sunday morning worship is also high on the agenda of the church. Taking into account the number of active Christians, church attendance has been for a long time lower than could be expected. Voluntary organizations which have their origins in the revivals of the 18th century are important agents of evangelism, and have great influence both upon lay people and clergy. It is a distinctive feature of Norwegian church life that these movements for the most part remained within the church. They have had a predominant pietistic influence on the life of the church as a whole. During World War II the church firmly opposed the Nazi regime and played a vigorous part in the civil resistance throughout the country. It spoke out clearly through a confessional document "The Foundation of the Church" (1942). This wartime experience is also a clue to understanding the church's present active involvement in socio-political issues of different kinds.

The influence from the ecumenical movement has made the Church of Norway active in building bridges between churches. The first comprehensive dialogue in which it participated was the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973 (but the Leuenberg protocol was not signed until the general synod's decision in 1999). The church is part of the Porvoo Agreement between the Anglican churches of Great Britain and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran folk churches (signed in 1996) and signed a parallel agreement in 1995 with the Methodist Church in Norway ("Fellowship of Grace"). The 1997 general synod adopted the Joint Declaration on Justification, later signed by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation in Augsburg. The Church of Norway maintains close relations with the other Scandinavian national churches.

POLAND

Population: 38,515,955
 Surface area: 312,700 sq.km
 Capital: Warsaw
 GNI per capita: 6,090 US\$
 Classification: Economy in transition
 Languages: Polish, Russian
 Religion: Christian 92%
 Christianity: Catholics 34,700,000; Orthodox 600,600; Protestants 149,300;
 Old-Catholics 20,000; Independent 168,700

The Polish are a Slavonic people. Poland as a nation emerged in the 10th century and reached its golden age in the 16th century when it formed a union with neighbouring Lithuania which extended into Ukraine. At the end of the 18th century Poland was partitioned between Russia, Prussia, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It regained part of its territory as a republic after World War I, but was invaded by Nazi Germany in 1939 and divided between Germany and the Soviet Union. Poland lost six million people in World War II, half of them Jews, and the country was completely destroyed. It became part of the Soviet bloc after the war. Poland was a stronghold of anti-Communist resistance. From 1980 onwards, the independent trade union Solidarnosc spear-headed reform and its leader, Lech Walesa, became the first president of democratic Poland in 1990. The country has undertaken to restructure its economy, based on agriculture and industry, and joined the European Union in 2004. One of its major problems through 2005 remains high unemployment. Poland is a Catholic country. Its society, culture, and public life are deeply marked by the influence of the majority Catholic Church. But the minority Orthodox and Lutheran churches are also part of Poland's history, as are the Old-Catholic churches. Together with the smaller Methodist, Reformed and Baptist churches they form the Ecumenical Council of Poland. The Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) are present, as well as some Evangelical churches. The Polish Evangelical Alliance is affiliated with the WEA.

*Polish Ecumenical Council

Founded in 1946.

Basis: To be a member a church must confess its faith in the Holy Trinity and accept the authority of the holy scriptures.

Member churches:

Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
 Evangelical Reformed Church
Evangelical Methodist Church
 Baptist Union of Poland
Polish Catholic Church in Poland
Old-Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland

Associate member:

Bible Society in Poland

The Polish Ecumenical Council has fifteen regional sections.

website: www.pre.pl

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 80,000

Dioceses: 6

Congregations: 132

Pastors: 143

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – PEC – LWF – CPCE

Periodical: *Zwiastun* (biweekly, in Polish)

Website: www.luteranie.pl

The Lutheran Reformation made early gains in the region. The point of entry was East Prussia where Germans and Poles lived in friendly co-existence. The Lutheran Church in East Prussia continued to use Polish until well into the 19th century. However, the Counter-Reformation was aggressive and erased most of Lutheranism. The complete partitioning of Poland by Russia, Austria and Prussia in 1795 opened a new phase of religious history. Large Lutheran congregations were formed in the cities. In Prussia's part of Poland, strong congregations developed in an enlarged Silesia. When, in 1918, the new Poland emerged as an independent republic, there were seven Evangelical church bodies, mostly Lutheran, with 500,000 members. During the second world war many pastors were arrested and sent off to concentration camps in Germany. After 1945 membership fell to about 80,000 through emigration to Germany. The ECACP is a minority church, but the largest Protestant church in the country. The highest authority of the church is the synod. The consistory is the highest executive authority. The diaspora character of the church has an impact on the financial situation, which is quite tense. The church is supported by the contributions of its members.

The main priorities of the church are diakonia, and evangelization and mission, with two independent units: Diakonia and the centre for mission and evangelism. Diakonia received its legal identity in 1999. It runs 27 diakonia stations, nine nursing homes, a centre for handicapped people, a centre for alcohol addicts, a family care home and nursery schools. It also coordinates the work of the dioceses and parish diakonias and seeks the funds for its development. Diakonia is responsible for the social policy of the church. Each year it conducts several actions, which have spread widely throughout the church: the European Voluntary Service, the "Shoebbox" action in which children prepare gifts for children in Ukraine, the "Christmas Help for Children", a joint campaign with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, and the "Diaconal savings box" through which money for children's needs is collected during the Lenten period.

The centre for mission and evangelism (CME) was established in 1997 and is responsible for coordination and development of mission work within and outside the Lutheran Church. The centre focuses on stimulating the spiritual life in the congregations, through evangelism meetings and the training of youth leaders, Sunday school teachers etc.; organizing conferences and Christian events; publishing and media activities (newspaper, radio programmes); supporting the establishment of new congregations, and introducing new methods, ways and means to share with others the Good News about Jesus Christ in the local communities. CME coordinates work in the following areas of ministry: children, youth, married couples, women, and the Bible hour. It has a music and a theatre group. It runs also the Bible school, organizes anti-alcohol actions in the schools, and evangelistic campaigns in Dziegiełków and Mragowo. The campaign in Dziegiełków is the biggest in Central and Eastern Europe for people of all ages and creeds and has been organized by the church since 1958.

Currently the big challenge is the enlargement and renovation of the church centre in Warsaw, where the consistory and Diakonia have their offices. The building is used for meetings and other activities, and for the theological academy where the pastors are trained. The academy has students from all non-Roman Catholic churches such as Protestants, Old-Catholics and Orthodox. The church has also its own printing and publishing house, Augustana.

The ECACP maintains contacts with other churches throughout Europe and beyond. It has bi-lateral relations with, among others, Evangelical churches in Germany, Sweden, Lithuania, Austria, USA, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Denmark.

Old-Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland

Church Family: Independent
 Membership: 29,000
 Dioceses: 4
 Parishes: 41
 Places of worship: 59
 Bishops: 4
 Priests: 31
 Member of: WCC (1969) – CEC – PEC
 Periodical: *Mariawita* (monthly, in Polish)
 Website www.mariawita.pl

This community was founded in 1906 in Warsaw by a diocesan priest and a sister of the Third Order of Franciscans. It developed out of the community of sisters founded by the latter in Plock in 1887 and the community of secular priests organized at her instigation in 1893. Both groups adopted the Franciscan rule and aimed at religious, moral and social renewal of clergy and people. They stressed the veneration of the eucharist and the blessed Virgin Mary. Because of their mystical bent they were not approved by the Vatican. The new church recognized the first seven ecumenical councils but rejected papal primacy and infallibility. At a later stage, celibacy of the clergy was made optional, and confession was made voluntary. Negotiations with the members of the Utrecht Union culminated in the reception of the Mariavites into the Old-Catholics at their congress in Vienna in 1909. The first bishop was consecrated in the same year. During the second world war, the church underwent severe persecution and its membership went down. Currently the church is not a member of the Old-Catholic Union of Utrecht.

One of the four dioceses of the Old-Catholic Mariavite Church is in France. It counts 5,000 members, who are served by a bishop and one priest. The highest authority of the church is the synod. Its theological students are educated at a spiritual seminary in Plock and a Christian theological academy in Warsaw. There are currently two sisters. Every year the church makes a pilgrimage on 15 August to Plock.

Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)
 Membership: 600,000
 Dioceses: 7
 Parishes: 240
 Places of worship: 450

Priests: 380

Member of: WCC (1961) – CEC – PEC

Periodicals : *News of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church*

(monthly, in Polish), *Cerkovnyj Vestnik* (Church News, quarterly, in Polish, Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian)

The ancient Slavonic population of the area covered by modern Poland became Christian over a thousand years ago. The first Orthodox diocese was established in the 10th century. The Polish court gradually came under the sway of Rome, and Orthodoxy was increasingly repressed. The 1596 Union of Brest, for which the Jesuits were mainly responsible, provoked determined resistance from the majority of the nobility in the east of what was then Poland, which limited the spread of the Uniate Church of the Eastern Rite. New monasteries arose and Orthodox brotherhoods were established to defend the indigenous faith. When their churches were commandeered by Uniate priests, the faithful often assembled in unconsecrated buildings to share in the celebration of the Orthodox liturgy. When the country was divided in the second part of the 18th century, the eastern half of Poland became part of Russia and consequently the Orthodox population came under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1918 an independent Polish state came into being once more and the metropolitan of the Polish Orthodox Church endeavoured to secure autocephalous status for the church. This was achieved in 1924 through the Ecumenical Patriarchate; autocephaly was proclaimed officially in Poland in 1925 and was recognized by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1948.

The period between the two world wars was accompanied by a number of difficulties for the Orthodox population. With the consent of the Polish state authorities, the Roman Catholic Church seized part of the properties belonging to the Orthodox Church. When the eastern border of the country was altered after the second world war, a large tract of the country with its Orthodox population became Soviet territory and came once again under the Russian Orthodox Church. Consequently the number of the Orthodox in the People's Republic of Poland shrank from 5-6 million to less than half a million. After the democratic changes in the country in 1991 a special law on the relations between the state and the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church was passed. It guarantees equal rights for the church and makes it possible to establish work in the army and to recover church properties. Relations with the Roman Catholic Church in Poland remain tense, despite the new ecumenical climate.

The Holy Sobor (council), consisting of all the bishops (currently eight), under the presidency of the metropolitan, is the highest authority. The metropolitan council is the advisory board made up of representatives of the clergy and the laity, from whom the presidium is elected. Priests are trained at the theological seminary and the Christian theological academy in Warsaw, which has an Orthodox section offering a five-year course. There is also a department of Orthodox theology at the University in Bialystok that does scientific work only. Special Orthodox religious courses are also offered by the school of Orthodox iconography in Bielsk Podlaski and the school of Orthodox singing in Hajnowka. Work with youth and children is conducted by the Fellowship of Orthodox Youth in Poland (founded in 1980) and charity by the charitable centre "Eleos" (Mercy) (founded in 1996).

There are five monasteries and three convents in the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, with a total of about 80 monks and nuns. The best known are: the Annunciation Monastery in Suprasl (founded at the end of 14th century, located in the Bialystok region), the Monastery of St Onufry in Jableczna

(founded in the 15th century, located in the Biala Podaska region) and the Convent of St Martha and Maria in Grabarka (founded in 1947, in the Bialystok region).

Polish Catholic Church in Poland

Church Family: Old-Catholic

Membership: 20,000

Dioceses: 3

Parishes: 80

Bishops: 3

Priests: 82

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – PEC

Periodical: *Rodzina* (Family, monthly, in Polish)

Poslannictwo (Mission, in Polish)

Website: www.polskokatolicki.pl

The Polish Catholic Church in Poland came into being through a missionary campaign launched in Poland after the First World War by the Polish National Catholic Church in the USA. The latter originated in North America as a protest by American Poles who felt abandoned and exposed to Anglo-Saxon Catholicism under Irish bishops and priests. Polish members of the Roman Catholic Church demanded from their English-speaking bishops the right to participate in administrative matters and in the election of priests, and more worship services in the Polish language. This led to a schism, and a separate Polish Catholic community was organized. A Polish liturgy and communion with both elements were introduced; clerical celibacy was abolished. Bishops and priests were consecrated by the Old-Catholic Church of the Netherlands in Utrecht. After the title of the head of the church, Hodur, members of the PCCP were often named Hodurowy (Hodur people).

The PCCP has maintained its close links with European Old-Catholicism. It is a member of the Union of Utrecht of the Old-Catholic Churches. It is also united in faith and practice with the Polish National Catholic Church in the USA and Canada. Since 1998 the church is engaged in an official dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.

The PCCP is organized in three dioceses: Warsaw, Wroclaw and Krakow. A considerable number of the members live in the Lublin area. The highest authority is the general synod composed of clergy and laity, which meets every five years. The synod council is the executive body in between meetings of the synod. Priests are trained at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw. Following the political changes in Poland in the 1990s the church has adopted new regulations for its relationships with the state and with the Roman Catholic Church in Poland.

PORTUGAL

Population: 10,080,174

Surface area: 91,980 sq.km

Capital: Lisbon

GNI per capita: 14,350 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Portuguese

Religions: Christian 92%

Christianity: Catholics 9,100,000; Protestants 124,970; Anglicans 2,800;

Independent 225,270

Portugal emerged as a unified kingdom in the 12th century. It became a major maritime power in the 15th century, opening new seaways to the east and the west, and built a vast colonial empire. The decline came with the destruction of Lisbon by an earthquake and tidal wave in 1755, and Brazil's independence in the 19th century. In 1910 a revolution deposed the monarchy. Political chaos and economic problems led to a long period of dictatorship, which ended with the left-wing military coup in 1974. A year later democracy was firmly installed, and Portugal's colonies in Africa recovered independence. Economically, Portugal has been one of the least advanced countries in Europe. During the economic boom in western Europe in the 1950-70s, many Portuguese emigrated to the richer countries to find work. In 1986 the country joined the European Community (now EU), and during the 1990s it achieved economic growth above the EU average. Portugal is a Catholic country. For a long time, the Catholic Church enjoyed the privilege of concordat between the Vatican and the Portuguese state. The tiny Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican churches grew out of 19th century missionary work, and form together the Council of Christian Churches. The largest independent churches are the controversial Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which has come from Brazil, and the Mana Church from South Africa. The Jehovah's Witnesses form also a sizeable and growing group. The Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) and Evangelical churches like the Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, and Brethren are also present. The Evangelical Alliance of Portugal is affiliated with the WEA.

Portuguese Council of Christian Churches

Founded in 1971.

Basis: The Portuguese Council of Christian Churches is an association of churches and organizations of ecumenical orientation, which confess Jesus Christ as God, Lord and Saviour, and seek to fulfil together their common calling, to the glory of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Evangelical Methodist Church of Portugal

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal

Lusitanian Church of Portugal

The Portuguese Council of Christian Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal*

(Igreja Evangélica Presbiteriana de Portugal, IEPP)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 3,000

Congregations: 25

Pastors: 12

Evangelists: 6

Member of : WCC (1965) – CEC – COPIC – CEPPL – WARC – EAC – CPCE

Periodicals: “*BET*” – Study and Information Bulletin (bi-monthly) and“*Portugal Evangélico*” (quarterly, in cooperation with the Methodist Church, all in Portuguese)Website: www.igreja-presbiteriana.org

Portugal was hardly touched by the 16th century Reformation, and also in subsequent centuries only a few individuals affirmed Reformed insights. The Bible was translated into Portuguese in 1688 by a Portuguese who was an ordained pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church in Java. The Presbyterian Church of Portugal can trace its history back to 1838 when a physician and missionary from Scotland opened a small hospital and a school, and began to preach the gospel on the Portuguese island of Madeira. There, in the town of Funchal, the first Presbyterian community in Portugal was founded in 1845. Soon, persecution began; most members of the community emigrated and found refuge in Brazil, Trinidad and the United States. Some of them returned later to Portugal, and in 1871 the first Presbyterian Church in Lisbon was founded. Slowly the Presbyterian work expanded. Missionaries from both Brazil and the United States played a significant role in strengthening the movement. In 1947 the statutes for an Igreja Evangélica Presbiteriana de Portugal (IEPP) were adopted and in 1952 the first synod was held, on Reformation day.

While it is the oldest Protestant church in the country, the IEPP is one of the smallest in number. Two main reasons explain this reality: Portugal is a Roman Catholic country (more than 90 percent of the population) and the IEPP has always refused to be a proselytizing church. Although small in number the IEPP is well known, particularly for its commitment and involvement in ecumenical dialogue, theological formation and in social projects, e.g., the theological seminary (Carcavelos), St Luke's Clinic (Lisbon), agricultural cooperative (Bebedouro), ecumenical centre (Figueira da Foz), social project and kindergarten (Cova e Gala), old peoples' home (Palmela).

One of the priorities of the IEPP is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the light of and according to the Reformed tradition, and to witness to the unity of the one church through its diversity. The IEPP is not against anyone but wants to affirm its own identity among the others. In doing this it has gained its own credit and respect both among Roman Catholics as well as Evangelicals.

Refusing to be a church in isolation, the IEPP has close contacts at national level with the Methodist and the Lusitanian (Anglican) churches and internationally with the Spanish Evangelical Church, the Reformed Church in France, the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Churches in Angola, Mozambique and East Timor.

Lusitanian Church of Portugal*

(Igreja Lusitana Catolica Apostolica Evangelica)

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 5,000

Parishes: 17

Priests: 12

Member of: WCC (1962) – CEC – COPIC – ACC

Periodical: *O Novo Despertar* (in Portuguese)

After the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Portugal in 1834, there was a measure of religious freedom. A former Spanish priest who had fled to Great Britain and had been received in the Church of England, came to Portugal in 1839 and started a small Christian community, which used the Anglican liturgy in Portuguese. Their chapel was closed in 1870. In 1868, another Spanish priest who had been received in the Episcopal Church in the USA, started a congregation in Lisbon along the lines of the Episcopal Church. This congregation acquired official status under the name of Igreja Evangelica Espanhola. Services were conducted according to the American version of the Book of Common Prayer of 1789. At a synod in 1880, presided by a bishop of the American Episcopal Church, a constitution was approved in accordance with the doctrinal and liturgical traditions of the Anglican communion. In the same year a second non-Roman Catholic community in Gaia, near Oporto, was admitted. In 1951, yet another group of independent Evangelical churches joined the Lusitanian Church. Since 1963 the church has been in full communion with the Church of England on the same basis as the Old-Catholic churches. Since 1980 the metropolitan authority over the church has rested with the archbishop of Canterbury.

As a way of witnessing to the love of Jesus, the Lusitanian Church has been promoting a ministry of service to under-privileged groups through two institutions: the Torne and Prado School's Association, in Vila Nova de Gaia, which provides social services to 150 children in a day nursery, a kindergarten and a spare-time after-school schedule; the social centre of Sagrada Familia, near Lisbon, which has a day-care centre for elderly people from an area with many social problems, and where 100 meals a day are provided plus 20 distributed to sick and lonely people at their homes. The former priest of the parish of Sagrada Familia promoted the building of 40 houses for people who were living in a slum. Since 1999, the church is also involved in a new mission with Angolan expatriates who came to Portugal to escape the war situation in their country. Some families joined the church. The mission of the church is also developed by youth and women. Besides seminars and retreats on pertinent issues, the Lusitanian Church youth department which is very alive and committed, organizes also summer camps for children and young people. The women's department also plays an important role, awakening the women to their responsibilities and presence in the parishes and in the church as a whole and providing support for some poor families.

The Lusitanian Church is one of the three founding churches of the Portuguese Council of Christian Churches and takes part regularly in ecumenical and inter-confessional meetings involving the Roman Catholic Church, the PCCC and the Portuguese Evangelical Alliance. It has signed the Porvoo Agreement.

ROMANIA

Population: 22,227,813
 Surface area: 238,400 sq.km
 Capital: Bucarest
 GNI per capita: 2,920 US\$
 Classification: Economy in transition
 Languages: Romanian
 Religions: Christian 94%; Muslim 0,7%
 Christianity: Orthodox 19,503,400; Catholics 1,900,000; Protestants 1,428,900;
 Independent 303,130 (double affiliation)

The territory of today's Romania was settled by Thracian and Gothic ethnic groups. Several principalities existed in the region when it came under the suzerainty of the Ottoman empire in the 16th century. Romania came into being as a kingdom in 1878. It acquired Transylvania from the Austro-Hungarian empire after World War I, was briefly on the side of Nazi Germany in World War II, and became part of the Soviet bloc in 1948. The Romanians suffered under the communist dictatorship of Ceausescu until they brought it to an end in a popular uprising in 1989. Since then, the country has been in a process of democratization and transformation of its economy. It is due to enter the European Union in 2007. The Romanian territory was Christianized in the first century and has always been a majority Orthodox country. It belongs to the east through its Byzantine and Turkish heritage, and to the west through its linguistic culture, which is latin. A sizeable Hungarian minority lives in Transylvania, and Romania has also a large Roma population (Gypsy). In a 2002 census, 86 percent of the population declared that they belonged to the Romanian Orthodox Church. Besides the Reformed and Lutheran churches among the ethnic Hungarians and Germans, there are Romanian Pentecostal, Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist churches, and an Evangelical church among the Gypsies. The Catholics consist of Uniate (Oriental Rite) and Latin jurisdictions. A council of churches is in formation through the Ecumenical Association AidRom. There is also an Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania – AIDRom

Founded in 1993 (forerunner: Inter-ChurchAid Department Romania, formed in 1991).

Mission statement: The purpose of the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania is to develop ecumenical relations and promote ecumenism, in view of consolidating the ecumenical life and sharing in Romania, and to help the churches fulfil their vocation for common witness, diakonia and unity at various levels.

Member churches:

Armenian Apostolic Church
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania
Reformed Church in Romania
Romanian Orthodox Church

Website: www.aidrom.ro

Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania

(formerly Evangelical Synodal Presbyterian Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 33,000

Congregations: 39

Dioceses: 3

Pastors: 45

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – AIDRom – LWF – CPCE

Periodical: “*Evangelical Bell*” (in Hungarian)

Website www.lutheran.ro

Most congregations of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania have a 450 year old history which goes back to the time of the Reformation. These congregations belonged to the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Transylvania, even though they were Hungarian-speaking, until 1896 when they founded their own diocese. Until World War I the diocese was part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary. When Transylvania became part of Romania after the war the Hungarian-speaking congregations were cut off from the motherland and had to organize a new office with a superintendent. The church was founded in 1921. Later on, the Slovak Lutheran congregations and a Romanian Lutheran congregation in Bucharest joined. Four languages are used in the church: Hungarian, Slovak, German and Romanian. Most communities are far away from each other, which makes the ELCR a diaspora church. There are 122 diaspora centres and 118 preaching places.

Some congregations are growing, and new facilities are developing in their work. Activities of diakonia are expanding in all the congregations. People who lost their connections with the church during communism are coming back. Also those who migrated from villages to the urban centres are joining the congregations in the cities. Young people gather around the church because they want something more than just regular life. They hunger for the gospel. The church has founded the Evangelical Youth Association in Romania (EYAR). There are different kinds of youth camps and youth programmes every year. The youth also organize monthly meetings in different congregations. Women are involved in different administrative and diaconical activities. Every year they organize various kinds of meetings. The ELCR has programmes at various radio stations, which are used for evangelism, introduction of the church and the Lutheran confession, information and news from the church and worldwide for the church members. Another important tool for communication and building the church is the website, which is still being developed. Each congregation will have its place, and all the pastors their email addresses with the domain@lutheran.ro. It will be in the four languages and will also have a section in English.

The ELCR together with the Reformed and the Unitarian churches, and the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church supports the (Hungarian-speaking) Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj, where its pastors are being trained. The pastoral ministry is open to women since 1940. Presently there are nine ordained woman pastors. The church is also very active in the ministry of diakonia. In spite of the present unstable economic situation in Romania, the ELCR is able to cover its ministries. However for big projects and infrastructure it needs external support.

The ELCR has relationships with Lutheran churches and institutions in Hungary, Germany, Denmark, Finland and Norway.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 14,543

Districts: 5

Congregations: 254

Pastors: 44

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – AIDRom – LWF – CPCE

Periodicals: *Landeskirchliche Information* (bi-weekly, in German)

Kirchliche Blätter (monthly, in German)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania is the church of the German Lutheran minority in the country, mostly in Transylvania. Its history goes back to the 12th century, when German-speaking settlers arrived in the area (then Hungary). As a community, they had already, before the Reformation, their own political and ecclesiastical rights. The Reformation arrived in the cities as early as 1520, and was officially introduced in all the towns and villages in 1550, with a direct link to Wittenberg, a confession of its own and the adoption of the Augustana Confession. In the independent principality of Transylvania (until 1687 under Turkish domination, as of 1919 part of the Habsburg empire) the churches (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian) enjoyed religious freedom. The Lutherans maintained strong ties with the universities in western Europe, especially Germany. They developed a good public school system. Major spiritual movements like Pietism, Enlightenment and Liberalism had their impact, while at the same time a conservative and typically Lutheran devotion persisted.

The 20th century was for the church a time marked by deep and sharp crises. After the transfer of Transylvania to Romania (1919) came the worldwide economic collapse and the impact of Nazism, which provoked resistance, also in the church. The end of World War II brought Soviet domination, expropriation, and deportation of the Germans into forced labour. The church school system and the diaconal institutions were dismantled. Yet the church was able to survive in the new situation. International ecumenical contacts were crucial during this period. It was possible to found an institute for higher theological learning in cooperation with other churches. But the political and economic conditions in the country led to an erosion of church life due to the increasing emigration of members of the congregations. It became a massive exodus after the political changes in Romania in 1989 and the opening of the borders. The church, which in spite of huge losses, still had 190,000 members in 1945, only has some 14,000 left now. The church has been able to survive this decline in numbers, and to consolidate and adapt itself in the totally changed diaspora situation. The centres of gravity of its service are today diakonia and pastoral work. Several homes for the elderly have been set up, places for encounter and meetings have been created, religious education and youth work have been re-organized, and an evangelical academy deals in ecumenical cooperation with issues of society.

Together with the Hungarian-speaking Evangelical-Lutheran Church with which the church has strong ties, and with the much larger Reformed Church, it has been possible to re-establish in Romania the Gustav-Adolf Institution. The small Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania is again seen in the ecumenical environment as a reliable and therefore often solicited partner. In the political and social context in which it finds itself, the church endeavours in its own way to preserve and bring to fruition the Lutheran identity and to hand on the witness of the Reformation.

Reformed Church in Romania

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 560,000

Districts: 2

Congregations: 785

Preaching places and diaspora: 961

Bishops: 2

Pastors: 788

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CPCE – AIDRom – WARC – EAC

Periodicals: *Partiumi Közlöny* and *Értesítő* (monthly, in Hungarian)

Website: www.reformatus.ro

www.kiralyhagomellek.ro

The Reformed Church in Romania is concentrated in the region of Transylvania, the western part of the country bordering Hungary. The history of the church is closely connected to that of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The Reformation took root among the Hungarian people as early as 1540. The Synod of Nagyenyed in 1564 is considered the official foundation of the Reformed Church in Transylvania. The Hungarian princes of the region, themselves Reformed, sought to guarantee peaceful co-existence with the Roman Catholic Church of the Habsburg empire and defended freedom of worship. At the beginning of the 17th century, Transylvania was recognized as an autonomous principality and the eastern part of Hungary was annexed to it. This history explains why the Reformed Church in Romania is composed of two autonomous districts, Transylvania with Cluj as the centre and Királyhágómellék (Partium) around Oradea. During the 17th century the Reformed Church in Transylvania flourished. Important institutions were established, such as the theological academy (1622) and the Reformed college. The region was incorporated into the Habsburg empire in the 18th century and the church suffered a severe re-catholicization policy. In 1865 Transylvania became part of Hungary again. A new period began with the end of World War I when the region became part of Romania. The Hungarian-speaking, mostly Reformed population became a minority within the Romanian, Orthodox majority. Despite many difficulties, especially the confiscation of properties and the dismantling of its educational system, the Reformed Church underwent a spiritual renewal.

The communist takeover in Romania in 1948 brought a time of harsh persecution. All the institutions were nationalized and church life was limited to worship. Many pastors were imprisoned and the number of candidates for pastoral training was severely curtailed by the communist authorities, who forced the leadership of the church to collaborate and totally controlled religious life. This came to an end with the Romanian revolution of 1989, in which the Reformed congregation of Timisoara played a significant role.

Since 1989 the Reformed Church in Romania has greatly developed its pastoral ministry, evangelism and religious education. It is facing new challenges and opportunities, such as diaconal activities, women and youth work, and new ways of engaging in missionary and social work. But major obstacles remain. The great majority of the properties of the church have still not been returned or compensated for. As an ethnic and linguistic minority the Hungarian population in Romania must continuously defend its rights. The church has not been allowed to re-establish its large, well-organized educational system of over five hundred schools which it had before 1948. These problems have to do with the delay in passing a law on religious affairs which has been in discussion for more than ten years. In

spite of the difficulties the church continues to work for national and religious reconciliation and consensus.

The Reformed Church in Romania confesses the Apostolic Creed and the Second Helvetic Confession and teaches the Heidelberg Catechism. The two districts have each a bishop at their head who take turns to preside over the synod for a period of one year. Pastors are trained at the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj. There is also a Reformed pedagogical faculty at the State University in Cluj. The church has close relationships with the other historical Hungarian-speaking churches in the country, as well as with the Reformed Church in Hungary and Hungarian Reformed churches in other parts of Europe and in North America. It is ecumenically engaged with the Romanian Orthodox Church and other churches in Romania.

Romanian Orthodox Church

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 18,806,428

Dioceses: 27

Bishops: 48

Parishes: 13,500

Priests: 12,855

Member of: WCC (1961) – CEC – AIDRom

Periodicals: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* (official review of the Patriarchate)

Orthodoxia (theological review), (both quarterly, in Romanian)

Christian teaching in the territory of today's Romania goes back to the apostle St Andrew, the "First-Called" who preached in Scythia Minor, the region between the Danube and the west coast of the Black Sea. Therefore, Romanian Christianity may be considered for good reasons to be "of apostolic origin". Many Christians in Scythia Minor died a martyr's death during the persecutions under the Roman emperor Diocletian. The names of several of them are known and their relics are still kept today in Romanian churches. In the 14th century Wallachia and Moldavia emerged as independent political units south and east of the Carpathians, and the Metropolitan Sees of these states were recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1359 and 1401. Following the independence of Romania in 1877, the Orthodox Church in Romania was granted autocephaly in 1885. The union of Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina with the old Romania, by which the Romanian unitary state was created, brought about a series of changes in the life of the church. After 1918, especially in Transylvania, the state took over many of the attributions of the church (for example, in the field of education), so that its role was limited mainly to spiritual issues. In 1925 the holy synod decided to set up the Romanian Orthodox Church and to raise the metropolitan to the rank of patriarch.

The holy synod is the highest authority of the Romanian Orthodox Church. It is made up of the hierarchs in function (metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, assistant bishops). The standing synod functions between the sessions of the holy synod; it includes the patriarch, the metropolitans in function and the secretary of the holy synod. The representative central body of the Romanian Orthodox Church for all administrative issues as well as for matters that are not dealt with by the holy synod is the church national assembly, formed by the holy synod members and three representatives of each diocese or archdiocese (a clergy and two lay persons), appointed by the respective diocesan assemblies. The supreme administrative body, both of the holy synod and of the church national assembly is the

church national council, composed of three clergy and six lay persons elected by the church national assembly, as well as of the administrative counsellors as permanent members. His Beatitude the Patriarch is the president of these bodies of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Romanian Patriarchate is made up of five metropolitan sees with 10 archdioceses and 14 dioceses in the country, and three metropolitan sees outside Romania (Bessarabia, Central and Northern Europe, Western and Southern Europe), one archdiocese (USA and Canada) and two dioceses (Hungary and Serbia-Montenegro).

Monastic life has always been an important feature of the spiritual life of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The golden epoch of Romanian monasticism was from the 15th to the 18th century. During the communist period thousands of monks and nuns were expelled and their monasteries closed. Today there are 386 monasteries, with 2,886 monks and 5,225 nuns. The church has 38 theological seminaries, 19 schools of religious singers, and 11 faculties of theology. Thousands of students are registered in these institutions. More than 10,000 teachers teach religion in the public schools. The church provides religious assistance in hospitals, in the armed forces, in prisons and social centres. It runs 39 institutions for children, 12 for the elderly, 40 social canteens and bakeries, six centres for families in need and two health centres. The biblical and mission institute of the church and the diocesan publishing houses produce many religious, theological, historical and cultural books. Magazines and other periodicals are published by the dioceses as well as by the Patriarchate.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Population: 141,552,786

Surface area: 17,1 million sq.km

Capital: Moscow

GNI per capita: 3,410 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Russian, other

Religions: Christian 57%; Muslim 8%; Hindu/Buddhist 1%; Jewish 0,5%

Christianity: Orthodox 113,500,000; Catholics 1,400,000;

Protestants 1,344,000; Independent 4,933,980

The first state of Rus was established in the 10th century. The Russian Empire came into being in the 16th century. It played a major role in European history, until the Russian Revolution of 1917. The Communist Party under Lenin seized power and founded the Soviet Union, which rapidly developed a powerful socialist economy. Collectivization of the agriculture and repression under Stalin's dictatorship (1922-53) took millions of lives. The Soviet Union was invaded by Nazi Germany in World War II, in which it lost 20 million people. As one of the victorious nations it imposed communist rule in the countries it had liberated, forming the Soviet bloc. The division of Europe resulted in the cold war between the two super-powers, the USSR and the USA. The Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, after a period of internal reforms. In its place, the Russian Federation was established, along with 14 other independent republics. Since then, Russia has been building a democratic political system and a market economy. All the Christian churches and other religious groups suffered severe persecution under the atheist communist regime, but in particular the Russian Orthodox Church, as the majority church and the locus of Russian religiosity. Among the Protestant and

other churches are Baptists, Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, Lutherans (mostly ethnic Germans and Finns), Methodists (which are part of the United Methodist Church), and several separatist Orthodox churches. An Interconfessional Committee was formed for dialogue between Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants but was not operational through 2005.

Russian Orthodox Church

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)
 Membership: 164,100,000*
 Dioceses: 133
 Parishes: 26,590**
 Bishops: 156
 Priests: 25,000 (approximate figure)
 Member of : WCC (1961) – CEC
 Periodical: *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (monthly, in Russian)
 Website: www.mospat.ru

The Russian Orthodox Church is a multi-ethnic local autocephalous church maintaining communion in prayer, faith, sacraments and canon law with other local Orthodox churches. Her jurisdiction extends to people of Orthodox confession living in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Latvia, Lithuania, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Estonia, as well as those Orthodox people who are her voluntary members living in other countries. The Moscow Patriarchate incorporates autonomous and self-governed churches. At present, self-governed are the Latvian Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church of Moldova and the Estonian Orthodox Church. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is a self-governed church with the right of broad autonomy.

The Japanese and Chinese Autonomous Orthodox churches are independent churches free in their internal affairs and linked with universal Orthodoxy through the Russian Orthodox Church.

Christian missionaries first preached extensively in Russia in the 9th and 10th centuries. About 988 the Emperor Vladimir was baptized, and he established Christianity as the official religion in his dominions. Originally, he brought priests from the Byzantine empire and established a Greek hierarchy under a metropolitan. From the beginning the Slavonic language was used in worship and gradually Russian clergy replaced the Greek. In the beginning of the 14th century the metropolitan see was moved from Kiev to Moscow. The Patriarchate of Moscow was created in 1589 by Jeremias II, Patriarch of Constantinople. Peter the Great (1676-1725) abolished the office of patriarch and replaced it with the holy synod, the members of which were nominated by the emperor and could be dismissed by him at any time. In 1917-18 a large council of bishops, parish clergy and laity met in Moscow and initiated a thorough reorganization of all aspects of church life, in particular restoring the Patriarchate.

The supreme governing bodies of the Russian Orthodox Church are the local council, the bishops' council and the holy synod chaired by the patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. The patriarch is elected for life. The local council consists of the bishops and representatives of the clergy, monks and laity. It interprets the teaching of the Orthodox Church, preserving the doctrinal and canonical unity with the local Orthodox churches. It also deals with internal matters of church life, canonizes saints, elects the patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and

establishes the procedure of such elections. The bishops' council consists of the diocesan bishops and the vicar bishops and meets once every 4 years. The holy synod, chaired by the patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, is the governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church between bishops' councils. Besides the patriarch, the holy synod consists of 12 members – seven permanent (most senior metropolitans) and five temporary, chosen from diocesan bishops.

The church has departments for external church relations, catechism and religious education, charity and social service, mission, youth, armed forces, a publishing board, an education committee and a chancellery. There are five theological academies, 32 seminaries, 43 pre-seminaries, one theological institute, two Orthodox universities, six pastoral training courses, two diocesan theological schools for women, several choir-conducting and icon-painting schools and departments, as well as Sunday schools at most of the parishes.

The Russian Orthodox Church published two important documents in 2000, on the Basic Social Concept of the Church, and on the Basic Principles of the Church's Attitude to the Non-Orthodox.

*Distribution:

- Russian Federation: 113,500,000
- Ukraine : 30,000,000
- Belarus: 8,200,000
- Moldova: 4,100,000
- Kazakhstan: 5,900,000
- Central Asia: 1,000,000
- Baltic states: 1,400,000

**Distribution:

- Russian Federation: 12,638
- Ukraine: 10,377
- Belarus: 1,319
- Moldova: 1,520
- other former USSR: 461
- all other countries: 275

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Population: 10,513,058

Surface area: 102,200 sq.km

Capital: Belgrade & Podgorica

GNI per capita: 2,620 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Serbian

Religions: Christian 68%; Muslim 16%

Christianity: Orthodox 6,075,300; Catholics 416,438; Protestants 101,940;

Independent 218,330

Slavonic people migrated in the early 7th century to south-eastern Europe, where Serbian, Croatian, and other identities developed later. Serbia was under the Ottoman Empire from the battle of Kosovo in 1389 until 1878. After World War I, the kingdom of Yugoslavia was created, which included also Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It became the communist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after World War II. With the end of the cold war, Yugoslavia disintegrated under the pressure of Serbian and Croatian nationalism. A vicious civil war from 1991-95 resulted in the creation of several independent states. Serbia and Montenegro formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which in 2002 became a loose "confederation". In Montenegro, which enjoyed relative autonomy in the Ottoman period, some parts of the population affirm their distinct identity. Significant minorities in Serbia are the Albanians in Kosovo, who are Muslim, and the Hungarians, Slovaks, and Croats in the northern province of Vojvodina. The future of Kosovo was still an unresolved issue through 2005. The Serbian Orthodox Church is the majority church. It is indissolubly bound with the political and

cultural identity and the history of the Serbs. There are also small Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, as well as a Reformed church among the Hungarians, a Slovak Lutheran church, and a Methodist church which is part of the United Methodists. The Catholic Church is mostly made up of Croats and other minority groups. The former Ecumenical Council of Yugoslavia still exists in Serbia. There is a Serbian Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

***Ecumenical Council of Churches in Serbia & Montenegro**

Founded in 1968 as Ecumenical Council of Churches in Yugoslavia, which became the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Serbia & Montenegro after 2002.

Basis: At the time of the foundation of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Yugoslavia, it was decided that the council should be composed of the member churches of the World Council of Churches in Yugoslavia.

Member churches:

Evangelical Methodist Church in Serbia & Montenegro

Reformed Christian Church in Serbia & Montenegro

Serbian Orthodox Church

Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia & Montenegro

The council has continued to exist, but has been inactive since the civil war and the break-up of Yugoslavia into several independent republics.

Reformed Christian Church in Serbia & Montenegro

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 17,000

Congregations: 48

Pastors: 19 (6 women)

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CPCE – ECCSM – WARC – EAC

This church used to be part of the Reformed Church in Hungary, from the time of the Reformation until 1920. By the Treaty of Trianon (1920), which was and still is perceived by the Hungarians as unjust and cruel, Hungary was split up and lost large parts of its territory to the surrounding newly formed states. Some three million Hungarians were forced to live as minorities in Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Austria and the Soviet Union (Ukraine). Like in the other countries, the Reformed Hungarians in Vojvodina, the northern part of Serbia, had no other choice than to organize their own church, the Reformed Christian Church in Yugoslavia. After the wars in the 1990s and the dismantling of Yugoslavia, the name of the church eventually became the Reformed Christian Church in Serbia and Montenegro.

The church has kept the same confessions as the Reformed Church in Hungary, the Second Helvetic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. The church is scattered and the main problem is to organize the pastoral care of the diaspora. The pastors travel continuously to visit several small congregations under their care. Among the priorities of the church are children and mission to young people. In spite of the material and economic difficulties of the members of the church and the pastors, the church takes its mission very seriously. It participates in healing the wounds of the war, of NATO bombing and of the years of dictatorship. The church has good ecumenical relations with the other WCC member churches in the country.

Serbian Orthodox Church

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 8,000,000*

Dioceses: 37

Parishes: 2,974

Bishops: 45

Priests: 3,000

Member of: WCC (1965) – CEC – ECCSM

Periodicals: *Glasnik* (monthly, in Serbian) and *Pravoslavlje* (bimonthly, in Serbian)

Website: www.spc.yu & www.spc.org.yu

The Serbian Orthodox Church is an autocephalous, ecclesiastically independent member of the Orthodox communion, located primarily in Serbia and Montenegro and in the other republics of ex-Yugoslavia. Since many Serbs have migrated, there are numerous Serbian Orthodox communities in the USA, Australia, South Africa and Europe. Soon after their arrival in the Balkans the Serbian tribes were baptized by Christian missionaries and became Orthodox Christians. The consecration of St Sava as first archbishop of Serbia in 1219 strengthened various Serbian principalities even more in their ecclesiastical allegiance to Constantinople and the Christian East. When King Stefan Dusan of Serbia assumed the imperial title of *tsar* (1346), the archbishopric of Pec was correspondingly raised to the rank of a patriarchate.

The greatest flourishing of the Serbian Church occurred during the period before the arrival of the Turks. With the final Turkish conquest in 1459, the greater portion of Serbian lands became a Turkish *pasalik* (province). After the death of Patriarch Arsenije II in 1463 no successor was elected. The patriarchate was thus de facto abolished, and the Serbian Church passed under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Turkish Sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, restored the Serbian patriarchate in 1557, which helped the spiritual unification of all Serbs in the Turkish empire. Because of the leading role of the church in several Serbian uprisings, the Turks abolished the patriarchate again in 1766. Once more the church came under the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople. But this was also a period when numerous Christians converted to Islam to avoid severe taxes imposed by the Turks in retaliation for uprisings and continued resistance. Many Serbs with their hierarchs migrated to southern Hungary where the church was granted autonomy. The seat of the archbishops was moved from Pec to Karlovci.

The Serbian Orthodox Church finally regained its independence and became autocephalous in 1879, the year after the recognition of Serbia as an independent state by the great powers. After the First World War all Serbs were united under one ecclesiastical authority, the patriarchate was re-established in 1920 and the full patriarchal title became *Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and Serbian Patriarch*. During the second world war the Serbian Orthodox Church passed through severe trials in which many bishops, priests and about 1.7 million Orthodox Christians were killed by German, Croatian and other fascists. Hundreds of churches were destroyed or desecrated. After World War II the church experienced new trials under communism. Religious education in schools was prohibited, church property confiscated and by various overt and covert means of persecution the influence of the church in society was diminished.

After 1989 the position of the church became more tolerable, although church properties were not returned. Tragically, the civil war in ex-Yugoslavia brought

again immense sufferings. Approximately 10,000 Serbs were killed and over a million became refugees. More than 700 churches and sacred places were entirely destroyed or damaged. Following the NATO bombing in 1999 the Serbian Orthodox Church faced a new exodus from Kosovo and Metochia, the ancestral spiritual birthplace of the church. From 1999 until 2005 about 250,000 people were expelled from their homes, some thousand have been killed or kidnapped, while about 150 churches, monasteries and sacred places have been destroyed.

The supreme authority of the Serbian Church is the holy assembly of bishops, composed by all bishops, which meets twice a year. A five-member standing synod of bishops administers the day-to-day affairs. The Serbian Orthodox Church maintains three theological faculties and seven theological seminaries, all residential institutions where students live and study together. Under the patronage of the holy assembly of bishops two organizations have been established: *Philanthropy*, the Serbian Church Aid and *Dobrocinstvo*, the pilgrimage organization. The church celebrates its feasts according to the old (Julian) calendar.

*Distribution:

Serbia & Montenegro: 6,500,000

Asia (Australia): 200,000

Europe: 500,000

North America: 800,000

Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia & Montenegro

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 50,000

Congregations: 27

Pastors: 30

Member of: WCC (1963) – CEC – ECCSM – LWF – CPCE

This church is the largest Lutheran church in former Yugoslavia, speaking the Slovak language. Each congregation is governed by a local council, the entire church by a synod. The bishop is the spiritual head. Its largely rural membership is located in the autonomous province of Vojvodina on the plains south of the Hungarian border. It was earlier a part of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, but upon the creation of Yugoslavia, it became an autonomous church, with headquarters in Novi Sad. Its pastors are educated at the Lutheran theological faculty in Bratislava, along with those of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Republic of Slovakia.

In 1967, this Yugoslav church body was joined by the then 7,000-member Evangelical Church in the People's Republic of Serbia, composed of Hungarian Lutherans. Prior to 1918, that small body had also been part of the Lutheran Church in Hungary. Between the world wars, it was part of the German Lutheran Church in Yugoslavia, but after 1945 it became an independent church. As it is located between the Hungarian border and Novi Sad, its merger with the larger Slovak church made sense, although linguistic differences required adjustment. In recent years, the believers and descendants of the Hungarian Lutherans have become independent of the Slovak Evangelical Church of the A.C. and joined their own church, named the Evangelical Christian Church in Serbia/Montenegro with headquarters in Subotica.

A growing challenge for the Slovak Evangelical Church of the A.C. is maintaining the Slovak identity in a majority Serbian environment. A Slovak translation of the Bible, completed in the 1970s in Czechoslovakia, is widely used. Close

links continue to be maintained with the much larger counterpart and namesake of the church in the Republic of Slovakia.

SLOVAKIA

Population: 5,411,393

Surface area: 48,845 sq.km

Capital: Bratislava

GNI per capita: 6,480 US\$

Classification: Economy in transition

Languages: Slovak, Hungarian, Czech

Religions: Christian 86%

Christianity: Catholics 3,960,428; Protestants 505,140; Orthodox 50,500;

Independent 8,380

Today's Republic of Slovakia came into being in 1993, with the peaceful division of former Czechoslovakia in two states. The Slovaks are Slavonic people who settled the area in the 5th century and formed the Moravian kingdom, which later became part of the Hungarian kingdom and eventually of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918 but was broken up in 1938 by Nazi Germany, which kept Slovakia under tight control. After World War II, Czechoslovakia was re-established and came under communist rule, until 1989 when the Soviet bloc collapsed. The country had an industrialized, centrally planned economy, which it has transformed and adjusted to the free market system. High unemployment continued to be one of its problems through 2005. Slovakia joined the European Union in 2004. Due to historic circumstances, an important Hungarian minority of about 10 percent of the population lives in Slovakia, mostly concentrated in the border area with Hungary. The Orthodox missionaries Cyril and Methodius were the first to evangelize the Slovaks. Today the Orthodox are a minority, because the Catholic Church established its influence over the centuries, and became the majority church. The largest Protestant churches are the Lutherans and the Reformed, the latter mostly among the Hungarians. The Ecumenical Council of Churches is broadly representative of the Protestants and the Orthodox, with the Catholic Church as an observer member. The Orthodox form one church for Slovakia and the Czech Republic. There are some smaller Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, and an Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

***Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Slovak Republic**

Founded in 1993 (forerunner: the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Czechoslovakia, founded in 1955).

Basis: The Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Slovak Republic is an association of churches which believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Head of the Church. They perceive their teaching to be rooted in the scriptures and the ecumenical creeds (Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and the Creed of Athanasius). Through their activities, they together or individually strive towards celebrating God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the world.

Member churches:

Baptist Union in the Slovak Republic

Brethren Church in the Slovak Republic

Czechoslovak Hussite Church in Slovakia
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia
Evangelical Methodist Church, Slovak District
Old-Catholic Church in Slovakia
Orthodox Church in Slovakia
Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia

Observer members:

Apostolic Church in Slovakia
 Bishops' Conference of the Slovak Republic
 (Roman-Catholic and Greek-Catholic churches)
 Seventh-day Adventist Church, Slovak Association

Website: www.ekumena.sk

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 372,858
 Bishops : 3
 Parishes: 326
 Pastors: 328
 Member of : WCC (1948) – CEC – ECCSR – LWF – CPCE
 Periodicals: *Cirkevne listy* (monthly, in Slovakian)
Sluzba slova (monthly, in Slovakian)
Evanj. Posol spod Tatier (weekly, in Slovakian)
 Website: www.ecav.sk/intl/english

The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia (ECAV) is one of the churches that emerged from the 16th century Reformation. An independent evangelical religious organization was established in 1610 in Zilina and by 1670 most of the inhabitants of the Hungarian part of the empire were Protestants. The Counter-Reformation struck heavily and caused many losses. Due to serious problems between Catholics and Protestants, the emperor convened an assembly in 1681 on the re-establishment of religious freedom, which opened limited possibilities for the Protestants to organize congregations. The Deed of Tolerance in 1781 ensured freedom of faith for non-Catholic believers and contributed to the development of the church, but equality between confessions had to wait until 1848. The Slovak Lutherans welcomed the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. Until that time they had been part of the Evangelical Church in the kingdom of Hungary. The ECAV was founded and its constitution adopted in 1921-1922. In the period 1918 to 1938 the church developed and was actively involved in the society. During World War II it opposed the ruling regime, and protested against Nazism and the persecution of Jews. After the communist coup d'état in 1948 the church lost its schools and diaconal services. Church periodicals ceased to be published. Many clergy were persecuted. The strict control of the totalitarian regime lasted until 1989. With the return of freedom of faith, the ECAV has gradually resumed its previous activities. A new constitution was adopted in 1993.

The ECAV is the second largest church in Slovakia. It considers the gospel as contained in the Bible to be the source of faith in the triune God and the rule for life. Jesus Christ is the head of the church which functions on the basis of the equality of God's children. The Augsburg Confession is recognized as a correct explanation of central issues of faith. Since 1989 the church has undertaken many

important changes in congregational life. The Evangelical Hymnal was published in 1992 and a new order of worship was adopted in 1995. In 1979 an authorized translation of the Bible was published by Tranoscius publishing house, Liptovsky Mikuláš and the Slovak Bible Society. Since 2000 the youth organization, SEM, has become part of the ministry of the church. Of the 328 active clergy, 142 are women. The church is organized in congregations, seniorats and districts (two). The highest legislative body is the synod assembly which meets annually. The highest administrative authority between synod assemblies is the general presbyterium.

Spiritual revival in the life of the church is reflected in the work of Evangelical Diakonia, which includes homes for the elderly, a children's home and a boarding school for deaf and blind children. Several congregations have their own diaconal activities. In the area of education the ECAV runs 15 evangelical schools (three kindergarten, five primary and seven high schools). Theological formation is provided at the evangelical theological school of the Comenius University in Bratislava, and the Bible school in Martin offers education for non-ordained church co-workers. The missionary activities of the church are fostered by the ECAV Centre for Evangelism Media and the Evangelical Media Programme. The media work of the church (press, radio and TV) is particularly important. Many groups and communities (e.g. youth, women, families, teachers, prayer community, etc.) are working within the church, organizing seminars, conferences, and opportunities for training. The ECAV takes an active part in projects designed for the spiritual and moral renewal of the country. Cooperation with the state has deepened. In 2002 the ECAV, together with ten other registered churches, signed a basic agreement with the state, on the basis of which two partial agreements concerning religious education and ministry in the armed forces were recently signed.

Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 75,000

Dioceses: 4

Parishes: 242 (167 Slovakia, 75 Czech Rep)

Priests: 170

Member of: WCC (1966) – CEC – ECCCCR – ECCSR

Periodicals: *The Voice of Orthodoxy* (in Czech)

The Heritage of St Cyril and Methodius (in Slovak)

Website: www.orthodox.sk

The Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia continues the missionary work of the Slavonic apostles St Cyril and St Methodius, who came to this territory in the 9th century. After the passing away of St Methodius in 885, their mission was consistently reduced by force and eventually replaced by the Roman Catholic Church. Later on the Czech territory came under the Austro-Hungarian empire and Orthodox priests from Austria served the Orthodox believers. In the second half of the 19th century and especially in the 20th century many believers returned to the Orthodox Church and established the Czech Orthodox diocese under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In 1942 the bishop was executed by the fascists and the Czech Orthodox Church was outlawed. After the end of World War II the Czech Orthodox diocese joined the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church in the territory of today's Slovakia was a part of the diocese of Mukacevo (Ukraine) until the end of 17th century. After the forced liquidation of Orthodoxy and the subsequent establishment of the Uniate (Greek-Catholic) Church, the Orthodox believers in Slovakia were ministered to by the priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church from the territory of Hungary. After the end of World War I, the diocese of Mukacevo and Presov, under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was established. After World War II the Orthodox believers who lived in Slovakia requested the Russian Orthodox Church for their own jurisdiction. In 1950 the Orthodox diocese of Presov was established. The Russian Orthodox Church granted the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia autocephaly in 1951. This was not recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate which, however, granted by its Tomos, after resolution of pending canonical questions, autocephaly in 1998 to the Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia.

The church has two dioceses in Slovakia, where about two-thirds of its members live, and two in the Czech Republic with one-third of the members. The highest body of the church is the church council. Due to the fact that the church exists on the territories of two independent republics it has two executive bodies – the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in the Czech Republic in Prague, and the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in the Slovak Republic in Presov. According to the constitution, the archbishop of Prague or of Presov can become the head of the church, with the title “Metropolitan”. The highest canonical authority of the church is the holy synod, which consists of the four bishops from the two republics.

The church has eight monasteries and one secondary school. The candidates for the priesthood, teachers of religion and ethics and social workers, are trained at the Orthodox theological faculty of Presov University (Slovakia) and at its detached study centre in Olomouc (Czech Republic). Aware of its diaconal-philanthropic mission, the church has established the Czech Orthodox Filantropia and the Slovak Orthodox Filantropia, to assist those in need, mainly the sick, old, helpless or poor. It has created an orphanage and a soup-kitchen for poor people. The church has also founded the Orthodox academy in Vilemov (Czech Republic), which is active in environmental and sustainable development programmes, and the Orthodox academy in Michalovce (Slovakia).

The church publishes theological literature and two monthly magazines. The Fellowship of the Orthodox Youth – Syndesmos publishes the magazine *The Truth*. The Orthodox theological faculty publishes the *Orthodox Theological Volume*, which includes the academic works of the faculty teachers.

Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia

Church Family : Reformed

Membership: 109,735

Congregations: 304

Pastors: 207

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CPCE – ECCSR – WARC – EAC

Periodical: *Kálvinista Szemle* (in Hungarian and Slovakian)

Website www.reformata.sk

Until 1918 the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia was part of the Reformed Church in Hungary, which was already firmly established in 1567. The Counter-Reformation of the 17th century, backed by the military might of the

Habsburgs, brought severe measures against the Reformed congregations and lasted until the end of the 18th century. The Edict of Tolerance issued by the emperor in 1781 granted religious freedom. Unlike the rich and powerful Roman Catholic Church, which enjoyed special state privileges, the Reformed Church has always been a minority church. By the Treaty of Trianon (1920) part of the Hungarian territory was allocated to the newly created Czechoslovak Republic. About 245,000 Christians, constituting the Reformed Christian Church of Slovakia, were living in that area, which also included Sub-Carpathia. Following World War II, Sub-Carpathia was assigned to the Soviet Union (Ukraine). As a result of this partition and of the forced expulsion of the Hungarian minority from Slovakia in 1946-1947, the membership of the church decreased to about 115,000. Since then the number has followed the general downward trend of the population due to a declining birth rate.

The Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia is based doctrinally on the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession. From the 16th century onwards, Sunday afternoon services have been devoted to teaching, using the two Confessions. In view of increasing secularization, the synod tries hard to ensure that teaching in new and contemporary forms remains an essential ingredient in the life of congregations. The church is organized into nine classes, seven Hungarian and two Slovakian. More than 87 percent of the members are Hungarian speaking, the others speak Slovak.

SLOVENIA

Council of Christian Churches in Slovenia

Founded in 1995.

Mission statement: The aim of the council is to promote dialogue, ecumenical contacts and collaboration between the Christian churches in Slovenia and their joint appearance in public.

Member churches:

Roman Catholic Church in Slovenia (3 dioceses)
Slovenian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran)
Serbian Orthodox Church in Slovenia

Observer member church:

Pentecostal Church in Slovenia

SPAIN

Population: 41,184,085

Surface area: 506,000 sq.km

Capital: Madrid

GNI per capita: 21,210 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Spanish, Catalan, other

Religions: Christian 92%; Muslim 1%

Christianity: Catholics 38,473,000; Protestants 103,320; Anglicans 11,800;

Independent 301,280

The Visigoths, a German tribe, established themselves in the Iberian peninsula in the 6th century. Muslim Arabs (Moors) settled in the south as of the 7th century. They were driven out by the Spanish monarchs in 1492. Spain was a major maritime, colonial and European power from the 15th through the 17th centuries. It lost all its colonies in the 19th century. From 1936-39 the Civil War made an end to the republic established in 1931, and General Franco imposed his fascist regime until his death in 1975. Since then, Spain has been a constitutional monarchy. It was a backward country until the 1960s, when it began to develop a modern economy and the society began to open up. Spain joined the European Union in 1986. The country has a decentralized administration that grants considerable autonomy to its regions, in recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity. Spain was Christianized as of the 2nd century and was a Catholic stronghold at the time of the Reformation. The Spanish Inquisition persecuted and killed thousands of Protestants, Jews, and Muslims. Under Franco, the Catholic Church was the state church, and other religious groups were discriminated, including the small Protestant and Episcopal churches which had come into being in the 19th century. Besides these two, which have formed a Committee of Co-operation, new churches have emerged in the 20th century. The largest is the Filadelfia Evangelical Church (Pentecostal), among the Roma. Others are the Brethren, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Assemblies of God, and other Pentecostal groups. There is a Spanish Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

Spanish Committee of Cooperation between the Churches

(Comité Español de Cooperación entre las Iglesias)

Founded in the 1950s, officially registered in 1994.

Mission statement: The aims of this religious association, exclusively and only religious, are: the training of pastors and teachers of religion; the promotion, development, and spreading of the Christian Protestant ecumenical movement; the organization of conferences, seminars, and spiritual Bible study retreats.

Member churches:

Spanish Evangelical Church

Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church

Spanish Evangelical Church

(Iglesia Evangélica Española, IEE)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 2,700

Congregations: 40

Pastors: 20

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CECI – CEPPL – WARC – EAC – WMC – CPCE

Periodical: *Cristianismo Protestante* (in Spanish)

Website: www.iee-es.org

The Reformation was prevented from taking root in Spain by the severity of the Counter-Reformation. There were however communities of Spanish Protestants in exile in many European cities. It was for their use that the Spanish Bible was printed in Basel in 1569, and later Spanish translations of Calvin's Institution and of the Heidelberg Catechism. The Spanish Evangelical Church is a united church which is made up of congregations of different origins – Presbyterians,

Methodists, Congregationalists and Lutherans. It was established in 1869 in the wake of the religious tolerance which emerged in Spain following the revolution of 1868. Its first general assembly was held in Seville in 1872, when it adopted the name Spanish Christian Church. In 1874 the title was changed to Spanish Evangelical Church. By virtue of the law of religious liberty of 1980, the church obtained for the first time legal status and has now been recognized officially by the Spanish government.

The IEE is part of the Evangelical Federation of Spain through which the agreements of cooperation with the state have been established in accordance with the constitution. These were approved by the congress in 1992, providing legal recognition and status for the Protestant churches. The IEE maintains good relationships with the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church, with which it forms the Spanish Committee for Interchurch Cooperation, and with other Protestant groups such as the Baptists and the Plymouth Brethren.

Doctrinally, the Spanish Evangelical Church identifies itself with the tradition of the Protestant Reformation. It defines the Christian faith on the basis of four principles which it believes are fundamental and sufficient: God is love; faith in the love of God; the scriptures as only norm of faith and conduct; Jesus Christ, the Word of God, in whose love, forgiveness and grace are found hope and salvation. The church is governed by the general synod, which meets every two years and elects the permanent commission. The congregations are grouped in seven presbyteries. There are several departments, for Sunday school, women, and the training of pastors and laity. As a small minority church, the IEE is especially committed to the religious instruction of its children, and to helping its young people in the often difficult task of witnessing to their faith in a traditionally Roman Catholic, and increasingly secularized society. It gives much attention to the role of the laity. The church is actively involved in the reflection on political and ethical issues which the country and the society are facing.

Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church*

(Iglesia Española Reformada Episcopal, IERE)

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 5,000

Parishes: 22

Bishop: 1

Priests: 21

Deacons: 6

Member of : WCC (1962) – CEC – CECI – ACC

Periodical: *La Luz* (bi-monthly, in Spanish)

Website: www.iere.cjb.net

This church was founded in 1868 when a group of priests from the Roman Catholic Church, refugees in Gibraltar, adopted the model of the early Spanish church. The first bishop was elected at a synod held in Seville in 1880. He was consecrated by bishops of the Church of Ireland in 1894. The church developed quickly, mainly in rural areas, and became very popular in central and north-west Spain, with an important social programme and a large number of schools. During the Civil War of 1936-39 the church suffered greatly. The persecution lasted during most of General Franco's dictatorship. No formal ceremonies other than those of the Roman Catholic Church were permitted. Only after the Second Vatican Council and the law on religious liberty in 1967 did the church have true free-

dom of worship. The church is a full member of the Anglican Communion under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Canterbury.

The church is organized in three areas or deaneries, each under the direction of an archdeacon. The national synod is made up of ministers and lay people in equal numbers. Each minister in charge of a congregation has a vote. Lay people participate in the work of the church as readers, catechists, etc. The Book of Common Prayer contains the divine services of the church. The order of worship is the old liturgy of Spain called Mozarabic, the one used in the Iberian peninsula before the Roman rite was imposed.

The life of the church today is full of opportunities; it has departments for youth, women, ecumenism, Christian education, mission and evangelization. The church has also a very important social programme with immigrants, which is active in many parishes. Through this programme over 10,000 people a year are helped with clothing and food.

The church has an agreement of full communion with the Old-Catholic Union of Utrecht and has signed the Porvoo Agreement, establishing full communion with the Lutheran churches in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

SWEDEN

Population: 8,894,851

Surface area: 450,000 sq.km

Capital: Stockholm

GNI per capita: 35,770 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: Swedish

Religions: Christian 91%; Muslim 4%

Christianity: Protestants 7,805,800; Orthodox 143,900; Catholics 102,000;

Independent 62,420

Sweden, the largest of the Nordic countries, established itself as a monarchy in the 16th century and became a major European power, extending deep into Russia and Ukraine. It lost these territories and also Finland in the following centuries, and its present boundaries date from 1905 when Norway detached itself from the Swedish kingdom. Politically, Sweden was neutral during the two World Wars and was not part of military alliances during the cold war period. It has not been involved in a war for 200 years. During the 19th century it was a poor, agricultural country from where many migrated to North America. Industrial development came in the 20th century and Sweden has become a prosperous nation with one of the most advanced welfare systems in the world. It joined the European Union in 1995. Sweden was Christianized in the 12th century and embraced the Lutheran Reformation in the 16th century. The Lutheran Church is the majority church. Revival movements in the 19th and 20th centuries have brought into being a number of Protestant, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, of which the Mission Covenant Church and the Pentecostal churches are the largest. There is a Methodist community which belongs to the United Methodist Church. These churches are together in the Swedish Free Church Council. Through immigration, several Orthodox churches have established themselves in Sweden, e.g. the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Syrian Orthodox Church. The Christian Council of Sweden is the ecumenical body and is very

broadly representative of the Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox and Free church families.

***Christian Council of Sweden**

Founded in 1993 (forerunner: the Swedish Ecumenical Council, founded in 1932).

Mission statement: The aim of the Christian Council of Sweden is to be an expression of and work for Christian unity; to foster common Christian witness in word and deed; to be a place of encounter for the Christian churches and denominations in worship, dialogue, consultation and cooperation; to be the uniting and coordinating ecumenical body on the Swedish national level.

Member churches:

Lutheran family:

Church of Sweden

Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Hungarian Protestant Church

Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Roman Catholic family:

Catholic Diocese of Stockholm

Orthodox family (Eastern and Oriental):

Armenian Apostolic Church

Assyrian Church of the East

Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Coptic Orthodox Church

Estonian Orthodox Church in Sweden

Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Finnish Orthodox Parish in Sweden

Macedonian Orthodox Church

Romanian Orthodox Church

Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)

Serbian Orthodox Church

Syrian Orthodox Church

West European Russian Orthodox Exarchate

Free Church family:

Baptist Union of Sweden

French Reformed Church

Mission Covenant Church

Methodist Church

Salvation Army

Seventh-day Adventist (observer)

Swedish Alliance Mission

Swedish Salvation Army

Observer member:

Seventh-day Adventist

Interact

Pentecostal Movement

Website: www.skr.org

Swedish Free Church Council

Founded in 1993 (forerunner: the Conference of Free Churches in Sweden, founded in 1918).

Basis: The Free Church Council of Sweden is a fellowship of churches which confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Member churches:

Baptist Union of Sweden
 French Reformed Church
 Interact
Mission Covenant Church
Methodist Church
 Pentecostal Movement
 Salvation Army
 Seventh-day Adventist Church
 Swedish Alliance Mission
 Swedish Salvation Army

Church of Sweden

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 7,200,000
 Dioceses: 13
 Parishes: 2,215
 Bishops: 14
 Pastors: 3,426
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CCS – LWF
 Periodical: *Kyrkans Tidning* (independent, in Swedish)
 Website: www.svenskakyrkan.se

Christianity in Sweden traces its beginnings to the missionary endeavours of St Ansgar (801-865), the first archbishop of Hamburg and the “Apostle of Scandinavia”. Pagan traditions were finally overcome in the 11th century by German and English missionaries. The archdiocese of Uppsala, an influential order founded by St Bridget (at Vadstena) and the University of Uppsala (1477) were signs of the church’s growing strength during the centuries before 1500. The Reformation was introduced in 1527 under King Gustavas Vasa, and the first Lutheran archbishop of Uppsala was appointed in 1531. In 1593, the convocation of clergy in Uppsala affirmed the position of the Church of Sweden as Lutheran. The unaltered Augsburg Confession was adopted as the doctrinal norm and the historic episcopacy was kept.

The Church of Sweden has been an established church. Until the 19th century it was the only church recognized by the state and its affairs were regulated by the parliament. It was only in the second half of the 19th century that a church assembly was established. Much further debate took place during the 20th century and various adjustments were made, loosening the close connection with the state. The present situation is controlled by a radical set of laws, which came into force on 1 January, 2000. The Church of Sweden was disestablished and declared a “faith-community”.

The description national church (folk church) became popular in the 20th century as an alternative to state church. It denotes a church which embraces the whole country so that every part is in a parish with a local parish church; the Church of Sweden is not therefore a gathered church, ministering only to those who actively belong. Every fourth year elections are held for all the decision-making bodies at parish, diocesan and national level. Every member of the Church of Sweden over the age of 16 is entitled to vote. To be a candidate for office one has to be a member, baptized and at least 18. Alongside this democratic element

is the episcopal structure which the Church of Sweden has inherited from the past. The bishops supervise the parishes and the ordained deacons and clergy. This ensures that deacons and clergy, although employed by the parish, are bound by their ordination vows to the church's faith, confession and teaching and have a special ministerial relationship to their diocese and bishop.

Some 70 percent of the population are brought for baptism by their parents and about 50 percent go forward for confirmation in their early teens. About the same percentage are married by the church and some 90 percent are buried with a Church of Sweden service. In 2000 a new translation of the Holy Bible was adopted. There are some 40 Church of Sweden churches in 25 countries in the world. These minister to students, tourists, seamen and Swedes living abroad. The Church of Sweden is engaged in international diaconal work, such as long-term development, advocacy and emergency relief, in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches and Action by Churches Together. It is also engaged in international missionary work in relationship with churches and ecumenical organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In Sweden some 10,000 volunteers are engaged in giving information, collecting money and shaping opinion for the international church work. Roughly USD 30 million are contributed every year in Sweden for this work.

The Church of Sweden has signed the Porvoo Agreement. It participates in the theological work of the CPCE but has not signed the Leuenberg Agreement.

Mission Covenant Church of Sweden

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 63,000

Regions: 7

Congregations: 790

Pastors: 600

Deacons: 75

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CCS – WARC – EAC – CPCE

Periodicals: *Sändaren* (together with the Baptist Union)

Tro och Liv (theological review, bimonthly), (both in Swedish)

Website: www.missionskyrkan.se

The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden was born in the spiritual revival in the 19th century. The first congregation was founded in 1855, the denomination in 1878. These events marked a protest against the state church system in which the bishops and priests were appointed by the state and the law obliged all Swedes to baptism, membership and communion in the Church of Sweden. The MCCS adopted therefore a congregational character. It was a vital force in the democratization of Swedish society. In 2000 the church adopted a new constitution which is highly inspired by ecumenical documents (e.g. BEM and Confessing the One Faith). A biblical-theological introduction gives the main lines in theology but it is not regarded as a binding confessional document. It reflects both the Lutheran context and the ecclesiological influence from the Reformed world. In 2003 a new church handbook was adopted as a liturgical fulfilling of the constitution. Infant baptism is the regular practice of the church, but out of a desire to unite different traditions in reconciled diversity, parents are also offered the possibility of blessing of children. When an infant is baptized the personal response will be offered at a later moment of life. The blessing of a child is done with expectation of a later baptism connected to a personal confession of faith. The communion, where the

real presence of Christ is underlined, is celebrated by the pastor, but lay people distribute the elements.

Ministers are trained at the church's own seminary or at the theological faculties. The Stockholm school of theology was created in 1993 by the MCCS together with the Baptist Union. The ordained ministry is two-fold with pastors and deacons, while the president and regional presidents have the ministry of oversight. The church ordains women. The church conference is the highest decision-making body. It elects the president, the executive board, the seven regional presidents, and takes decisions about ordination. The MCCS is today, in spite of its history, more a middle class church with a rather established position in the Swedish society. It is strongly involved in political, social and international questions.

With its high ecumenical profile it has, together with the Church of Sweden (Lutheran), a leading position within the Christian Council of Sweden and is also involved in several bilateral dialogues, ranging from Pentecostals to the Roman Catholic diocese. The church maintains especially good relations with the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church and the Church of Sweden. An agreement about church fellowship with the Church of Sweden was proposed in 2004 for final decision in 2006.

The Mission Covenant Youth is one of the strongest youth movements in Sweden. The vigorous youth work has broad contacts in Swedish society and is an effective form of evangelism and diaconal work.

Mutual cooperation overseas, based on former mission work, is carried out in the two Congos, in Ecuador, India, Japan and Nicaragua. The church maintains contact with several Reformed churches and with churches in the Nordic-Baltic countries or through CEC with other Christian denominations.

SWITZERLAND

Population: 7,156,665

Surface area: 41,290 sq.km

Capital: Bern

GNI per capita: 48,230 US\$

Classification: Developed economy

Languages: German, French, Italian, Romansch

Religions: Christian 88%; Muslim 3%; Jewish 0,24%

Christianity: Catholics 3,138,000; Protestants 2,470,390; Orthodox 102,500;

Anglicans 13,200; Independent 158,290

The Covenant sealed by four small territories in the central Alps in 1291, committing themselves to mutual protection, laid the foundation for the formation of Switzerland as a confederation of autonomous cantons, a process that took until the 19th century. While European armies liked to hire Swiss soldiers for their military skills, Switzerland as a country opted for neutrality at the Vienna Congress (1815) and has preserved itself from war throughout modern history. It only became a full member of the United Nations in 2002 and, although surrounded by European Union countries, has continued to stay outside the EU through 2005. Its democratic system leaves ultimate decision to the Swiss people, as the "sovereign", which pronounces itself through referendum or initiative if it wishes. Switzerland has built a prosperous economy, based on highly specialized indus-

try, hydropower, banking and tourism. It has been criticized because of its laws which allow for secret bank accounts. The Christian churches in Switzerland are split more or less evenly between the Catholic Church, which is the largest single church, and the Protestant Federation, which groups the Reformed churches of the cantons, and a few other churches. The Methodists are part of the United Methodist Church. Through immigration, Orthodox churches have come into being, e.g. the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and others. The Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox and the Old-Catholics come together in a Council of Christian Churches. There are various lively Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, and the Evangelical Alliance of Switzerland is affiliated with the WEA.

***Council of Christian Churches in Switzerland**

(Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in der Schweiz, AGCK)

(Communauté de travail des Eglises chrétiennes en Suisse, CTEC)

Founded in 1971.

Basis: In faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, Saviour of humanity, Head of the Church and Lord of the world, there exists a Council of Christian Churches in Switzerland. Its purpose is to witness to the unity of the churches which is founded and alive in Jesus Christ, to serve its achievement, and to promote the co-operation of the Christians.

Member churches:

Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches

Roman Catholic Church in Switzerland

Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland

Evangelical Methodist Church in Switzerland

Union of Baptist Churches in Switzerland

Salvation Army in Switzerland

Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and in the Kingdom of Liechtenstein

Greek Orthodox Church

Serbian Orthodox Church in Switzerland

Anglican Church in Switzerland

The council is related to eighteen cantonal councils of Christian churches.

Website: www.agck.ch

Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches

(Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, SEK)

(Fédération des Eglises protestantes de Suisse, FEPS)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 2,416,973

Congregations: 982

Pastors: 1,556

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – AGCK – WARC – EAC – CPCE – KKR

Periodical: *Bulletin* (in German and French)

Website: www.sek-feps.ch

The Protestant churches in Switzerland are products of the 16th century Reformation. They are cantonal churches, distinct and independent from one another, mainly Zwinglian in the German-speaking part of the country, and Calvinist in

the francophone areas. Besides Jean Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, other Reformers like Heinrich Bullinger, Theodore Beza and Pierre Viret also influenced Christianity in Switzerland. The Helvetic Confession of 1566, drawn up by Bullinger and adopted by most of the cantonal churches, has formed the main link in their spiritual unity. The Evangelical Diet, set up in the mid-16th century, brought together delegates from the Reformed cantons to act on common concerns and to assist fellow Protestants in other countries. In 1858, a conference of Swiss churches established relations between the cantonal churches and paved the way for the foundation of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Switzerland in 1920. This at first consisted only of national churches, but it soon admitted the Free Evangelical Churches, the Methodist Church and the Evangelische Gemeinschaft. The constitution of the Federation was revised in 1950. Currently membership is made up of 24 cantonal churches, the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva and the Evangelical Methodist Church of Switzerland.

The cantonal churches vary in legal status. Some are still state churches, some are quite independent, and others have a concordat relationship with the state. Diverse in their constitutions, liturgies and manuals of religious instruction, they nevertheless have many points in common. The congregational council constitutes the basic unit. In most cantonal churches the legislative body is the synod and the executive organ the synodical council. The Federation tries to integrate the cantonal and cultural differences. Activities such as education of adults, theological education, and communication through the mass media are pursued on a national basis.

The Federation works in connection with various organizations like: Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz (HEKS), which started its work after the second world war, and works in close cooperation with the WCC and Action of Churches Together (ACT). "Action Bread for All" is a fundraising organization and serves as an agency of information and awareness building in the area of development and economic justice. Missionary societies were founded in the 19th century on a private basis. They are now coordinated through "Mission 21" in Basel, in the German-speaking part, and in the Département missionnaire romand (DMR) in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Other departments of the Federation are responsible for theological research, problems of migration, diakonia, tourism, church law, finance and administration. Also internal church questions, like ministry, baptism, eucharist and theological education receive regular attention. On the international scene, the Federation is greatly concerned about human rights, religious liberty, peace and disarmament, social justice and development in the third world. The Federation maintains many relations with churches in East and West Europe as well as in South Africa and the Far East.

The member churches of the Federation are:

Evangelical Free Church of Geneva
Evangelical Methodist Church in Switzerland
Evangelical Reformed Cantonal Church Schwyz
Evangelical Reformed Church in Canton Solothurn
Evangelical Reformed Church of Appenzell
Evangelical Reformed Church of Basel City
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Basel Land
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Fribourg
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Glarus
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Luzern
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Neuchâtel
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton St Gallen
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Schaffhausen

Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Thurgau
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Vaud
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Zürich
Evangelical Reformed Church of Canton Zug
Evangelical Reformed Church of Valais
Evangelical Reformed Church of Graubünden
Evangelical Reformed Church of Nidwalden
Evangelical Reformed Church of Tessin
Evangelical Reformed Church Uri
Protestant Church of Geneva
Reformed Church of Aargau
Reformed Church of Bern-Jura-Solothurn
Union of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Canton Obwalden

Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland

(Christkatholische Kirche der Schweiz)

(Eglise catholique-chrétienne de Suisse)

Church Family: Old-Catholic

Membership: 13,000

Parishes: 38

Priests: 40

Deacons: 8

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – AGCK

Periodicals: *Christkatholisches Kirchenblatt* (in German)

Présence catholique chrétienne (in French)

Website: www.christkath.ch

The Vatican council of 1870 was followed by a revolt in Switzerland. Whereas the revolt in Germany was led by theological professors, the Swiss revolt was led by laymen. It resulted in 1871-1876 in the organization of a Catholic Church outside the jurisdiction of the pope. Important moments were the first session of the national synod of the Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland at Olten in 1875 which declared the constitution drawn up in 1874 to be in force, as well as the second session again at Olten in 1876 which elected the first bishop, who was consecrated three months later by the German Old-Catholic bishop at Rheinfelden. The second session also adopted a policy statement obliging the church to follow the ancient undivided church in matters of faith and order. The church formed the Union of Utrecht together with the Old-Catholic churches in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria.

In several Swiss cantons the OCCS is officially recognized by the state authorities. The Old-Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Bern (since 2001 department for Old-Catholic Theology) also serves foreign students from other Old-Catholic churches and from Orthodox churches. Women have been admitted to holy orders since 1985 (diaconate) and 1999 (priesthood). Present concerns of the OCCS are: renewal of spiritual life, a more intensive training of lay people, the improvement of the church press service, the coordination of youth work throughout the whole bishopric, and the amelioration of pastoral service to the parishes and to the diaspora.

TURKEY

Population: 73,301,553
 Surface area: 774,800 sq.km
 Capital: Ankara
 GNI per capita: 3,750 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages : Turkish, Kurdish
 Religions: Muslim 97%; Christian 0,3%
 Christianity: Orthodox 147,080; Catholics 31,595; Protestants 29,618;
 Independent 35,120

Turkey consists of a small territory in south-east Europe (Eastern Thrace), with the larger part of the country in the Middle East (Asia Minor). The Turks, who were Muslims, arrived in the area in the 11th century and gradually conquered the Byzantine empire, until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Turkish Ottoman empire at its height covered the Middle East, south-east Europe and North Africa. It lost most of its territories in the 19th century. Its end was marked by the 1915 genocide of the Armenians, who had been living in Asia Minor for centuries. The empire was dismantled after World War I. The nationalist leader Kemal Atatürk founded in 1923 the Republic of Turkey within its present boundaries. Turkey is a secular state, with Islam as the majority religion. It has applied for membership with the European Union. Negotiations began in 2005. The Christians, mainly Orthodox, who were several million at the beginning of the 20th century, are today only a small minority. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, the primary spiritual leader of the Eastern Orthodox churches, has its see in Istanbul. The Armenians and the Syrian Orthodox, who used to live in the east and south-east of Turkey, are now mostly concentrated in Istanbul, or have emigrated. Most of the Protestants are expatriates. There are some Turkish Evangelical churches, and Koreans are doing mission in Antakya, the former Antioch. Although religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution, the churches experience restrictions. The theological faculty of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, on the island of Halki, has been closed by the authorities since 1971.

Ecumenical Patriarchate

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)
 Membership: 5,255,000*
 Parishes: i.n.a.
 Bishops: 133
 Priests: 5,935
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC
 Periodicals : *Episkepsis* (Chambesy), *Kleronomia* (Thessaloniki)
Gregorios Palamas (Thessaloniki), *Church and Theology* (London)
Stachys (Vienna), *Enhmerosis* (Geneva), *Orthodox Observer* (New York)
Greek Orthodox Theological Review (Brooklyn)
 Website: www.ecupatria-geneva.org

The history of Constantinople as a patriarchate began in 330, when the Emperor Constantine I decided to move the seat of his government from Rome to the small town of Byzantium along the Bosphorus, in the eastern region of his empire. Connected with this is the tradition of St Andrew who in the first cen-

tury came to the area and established the church. The Church of Byzantium appears in history first as a bishopric of the diocese of Heraclea, Thrace. It grew to become a great ecclesiastical centre, after the establishment of New Rome or Constantinople. The Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) conferred upon the bishop of the city the second rank after the bishop of Rome. The fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) gave a definite shape to the organization of the Church of Constantinople. From 520 onwards the head of the church became known as the ecumenical patriarch. After the great schism between Rome and Constantinople in the 11th century, the patriarch became the *primus inter pares* among all the patriarchs of the Orthodox churches.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople is governed on the basis of the decisions of the ecumenical councils, the holy canons, and the long history, tradition and praxis of the church. The patriarch is elected by an assembly of the "endemousa", a synod consisting of all metropolitans who are Turkish citizens, residing in Turkey. The synod is the official organ of authority of the patriarchate, managing spiritual affairs such as the nomination of the metropolitan members of the synod, the election of new bishops, overseeing monasteries, etc. By the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) the Turkish Republic is bound to protect the Greek Christians in Constantinople. The patriarchate holds jurisdiction over the faithful in Europe (Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, the autonomous Church of Finland, and the Russian Exarchy of Western Europe) and the archbishoprics of Australia and New Zealand. The archbishop of America (based in New York) governs the Greek Orthodox Church of North America also under the general jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarch. The dioceses of Latin America belong also to the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate was among the first to participate in the formation and development of the ecumenical movement, and is particularly known for its Encyclical to "All the Churches of Christ", issued in 1920. It has been involved in the WCC from its beginning. It has had a permanent representative at the headquarters of the WCC in Geneva since 1955. The patriarchate is involved in the coordination of inter-orthodox relations, and particularly the preparations for the holy and great synod of the Orthodox churches. It is also engaged in bilateral theological dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, the Ancient Oriental churches, the Old-Catholic churches, the LWF, the WARC; in bilateral conversations with the WMC; and in theological conversations on a national level in different parts of the world (EKD and others). The ecumenical patriarchate participates also in the Conference of Secretaries of the Christian World Communions which meets annually.

*Distribution:

- Turkey: 5,000
- Europe: 1,500,000
- Asia: 800,000
- Latin America: 150,000
- North America: 2,800,000

UNITED KINGDOM

Population: 59,598,039

Surface area: 242,900 sq.km

Capital: London

GNI per capita: 33,940 US\$

Classification: Major industrialized economy

Languages: English; also Irish, Scottish, Welsh

Religions: Christian 72%; Muslim 2,7%; Hindu/Buddist 1,8%; Jewish 0,5%

Christianity: Anglicans 25,336,000; Catholics 5,712,000;

Protestants 4,005,390; Orthodox 376,220; Independent 2,983,770

The United Kingdom consists of three constituent countries – England, Scotland, and Wales – on the island of Great Britain, and the province of Northern Ireland. It was formed through successive Acts of Union, of Wales, Scotland and Ireland with England. The Irish Republic separated in 1922. The UK has been a major colonial and world power, and the cradle of the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. Its empire gave place to the British Commonwealth in the 20th century. British society has become multi-cultural because of immigration from the former colonies. The UK joined the European Community (now EU) in 1973. The British isles were Christianized as early as the second century. Since the Reformation, the Anglicans form the established church in England, and the Presbyterians the national church in Scotland. Along with the Methodists, Reformed and Baptists, many Free churches exist, and in the 20th century many other Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical churches and groups have emerged. The independent African and Afro-Caribbean churches are very lively and strong. Among the Orthodox churches the Ecumenical Patriarchate is the largest. There are also sizeable Russian, Bulgarian, Armenian and other Orthodox churches. There are national councils of churches in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and an overarching one for Britain and Ireland. All have the Catholic Church as member, except for Ireland. The Free churches have their own groupings. There is also an Evangelical Alliance, affiliated with the WEA.

*Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Founded in 1990 as Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland, renamed Churches Together in Britain and Ireland in 1999 (forerunner: the British Council of Churches, founded in 1947).

Basis: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is a fellowship of churches in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Baptist Union of Great Britain

Cherubim and Seraphim Council of Churches

Church in Wales

Church of England

Church of God of Prophecy

Church of Ireland

Church of Scotland

Congregational Federation

Coptic Orthodox Church
 Council of African and Caribbean Churches UK
Council of Oriental Orthodox Churches
 Evangelische Synode Deutscher Sprache in Grossbritannien
 Free Churches Group
 Independent Methodist Churches
 International Ministerial Council of Great Britain
 Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches
 Lutheran Council of Great Britain
Methodist Church
Methodist Church in Ireland
Moravian Church
 New Testament Assembly
Ecumenical Patriarchate (Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain)
Presbyterian Church of Wales
 Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales
 Roman Catholic Church in Scotland
 Religious Society of Friends
Russian Orthodox Church
 Salvation Army
Scottish Episcopal Church
Serbian Orthodox Church
Union of Welsh Independents
United Free Church of Scotland
United Reformed Church
 Wesleyan Holiness Church

Associate member churches:

Roman Catholic Church in Ireland
 Seventh-day Adventist Church

Member "Bodies in Association"

Association of Centres of Adult Theological Education
 Action by Christians Against Torture
 Association of Interchurch Families
 Bible Society
 CAFE c/o Lincoln Theological Institute
 Council on Christian Approaches to Defence and Disarmament
 Churches' East-West European Relations Network
 Christian Council on Ageing
 Christian Education
 Christians Aware
 Church Action on Poverty
 College of Preachers
 Community of Aidan and Hilda
 Corrymeela Community
 Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility
 Feed the Minds
 Fellowship of Reconciliation
 Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius
 Focolare Movement
 International Ecumenical Fellowship
 Industrial Mission Association
 Iona Community
 Irish School of Ecumenics
 L'arche
 Living Stones
 MODEM
 Retreat Association
 Student Christian Movement

William Temple Foundation
YMCA

Related agencies

Christian Aid
CAFOD
Christian Enquiry Agency
Christians Abroad
Churches' Agency for Safeguarding
Churches' Media Council
One World Week
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

Website: www.ctbi.org.uk

***Churches Together in England**

Founded in 1990.

Basis: Churches Together in England unites in pilgrimage those churches in England which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Antiochene Orthodox Church
Baptist Union of Great Britain
Cherubim and Seraphim Council of Churches
Church of England
Church of God of Prophecy
Church of Scotland
Congregational Federation
Coptic Orthodox Church
Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches
Council of Oriental Orthodox Christian Churches
Greek Orthodox Church
Ichthus Christian Fellowship
International Ministerial Council of Great Britain
Independent Methodist Churches
Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches
Lutheran Council of Great Britain
Methodist Church
Moravian Church
New Testament Assembly
Religious Society of Friends
Roman Catholic Church
Russian Orthodox Church
Salvation Army
United Reformed Church
Wesleyan Holiness Church

Associate member:

Seventh-day Adventist Church

Website: www.churches-together.org.uk

Free Churches Group

Founded in 2001 (forerunner: the Free Church Federal Council, which was formed in 1940 as the result of the merger of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, founded in 1896, and the Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches of England, founded in 1917).

Basis: The Evangelical Free Churches of England claim and cherish their place as inheritors, along with others, of the historic faith of Christendom, which found expression in the ecumenical creeds of the early and undivided church. There is One Living and True God, who is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Him alone we worship and adore. We believe that the Son of God, for us and for our salvation, became man in Jesus Christ; and that the Holy Spirit, who witnesses to us of Christ, makes the salvation which is in him to be effective in our hearts and lives. We receive, as given by the Lord to his church on earth, the holy scriptures, the sacraments of the gospel, and the Christian ministry. (Excerpts from the Doctrinal Statement.)

Member churches:

Assemblies of God
Baptist Union of Great Britain
 Baptist Union of Wales
 Churches in Communities International
 Church of the Nazarene
 Congregational Federation
 Council of African and Caribbean Churches UK
 Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion
 Fellowship of Churches of Christ
 Free Church of England
 Independent Methodist Churches
Methodist Church
Moravian Church
 New Testament Assembly
 New Testament Church of God
 Old Baptist Union
Presbyterian Church of Wales
 Salvation Army
Union of Welsh Independents
United Reformed Church
 Wesleyan Reform Union

www.churches-together.org.uk/whoweare_fcg

Baptist Union of Great Britain

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 140,918
 Local churches: 2,092
 Pastors: 1,969
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – CTE – FCG – BWA – EBF
 Periodicals: *Baptist Times*, *Baptist Union Directory Transform*
 Website: www.baptist.org.uk

Organized Baptist life in England had two distinct beginnings: the General Baptists which emerged from a group that returned in 1611 from the Netherlands where it had sought religious freedom, and the Particular Baptists who broke away in 1633 from a Calvinistic church in London. Both groups practised believers' baptism; the first one was Arminian in theology with a Presbyterian church order,

the second was Calvinistic of an independent type. A “New Connexion” of the more evangelical General Baptists was formed in 1770 under the influence of the Methodist revival. During the 19th century this section of General Baptists gradually came closer to the Particular Baptists. The influence of the Baptist Missionary Society, founded in 1792, led to the formation in 1812-13 of the first Baptist Union amongst Particular Baptist churches. The Union had an uncertain early history, but after its re-formation in 1831-32, Particular Baptists and General Baptists of the New Connexion began to draw more closely together. This process culminated in 1891, when the General Baptists of the New Connexion amalgamated with the Baptist Union.

The Baptist Union consists of its member churches, associations and colleges. Its national resource, Baptist House, exists to resource its members in their fulfilment of Christ’s commission, to coordinate the care of the churches, to strengthen the work where it is most needed, and to give expression to Baptist convictions in interchurch dialogue and in representing gospel concerns in the world at large.

The work at Baptist House takes place within five main departments: the ministry department oversees and supports all aspects of accreditation for the ordained ministry and other specialist ministries; research and training in mission offers training and supplies resources to help the local churches in their mission-related work, including evangelism, youth work, racial justice and community work; faith and unity resources Baptists working in formal and informal ecumenical partnerships, and looks after the doctrine and social justice work of the Union; the communications department is the Union’s press office, and communicates the work of the Union and local churches; the finance and administration department looks after the ministers’ pension fund and the allocation of home mission grants to churches, as well as including the Baptist Union corporation, which deals with legal issues on behalf of churches. The annual assembly is an inspirational event, shared with BMS World Mission, and it is the highest point of accountability for the work of the Union. The council meets twice a year in between assemblies, and manages the work of the national resource. A general secretary is appointed to help guide and lead the Baptist Union, and to serve as representative of its members to both the wider church and society.

The Baptist Union has a close partnership with the BMS World Mission, giving clear expression to the theological affirmation that there is only one mission for Christ, in whatever country it is to be found.

British Province of the Moravian Church

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 1,700

Congregations: 34

Pastors: 24

Member of : WCC (1949) – CTBI – CTE – MUB

Periodicals: *Moravian Messenger* (monthly), *Daily Watchwords* (annual)

Website: www.moravian.org.uk

The Moravian Church came to Britain in the early 18th century and was recognized by act of parliament (*Actum Fratrum Unitatis in Anglia*, 1749) as an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church, descended from *Unitas Fratrum*. The *Unitas Fratrum* itself came into being in the 15th century in Bohemia as a result of the Hussite Reformation. The church in Britain took an active part in the evangelical revival in the 18th century. Overseas missionary work was started from

Germany in 1732 and led to the establishment of the Moravian Church as a world-wide unity. The Moravian Church is one of the few churches to have an international legislative synod. The 19 individual provinces are autonomous as long as their church order does not run counter to the overarching Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (COUF). This is determined by the Unity Synod which meets every seven years. The Moravian Church has an ordained ministry in which the traditional orders of bishop, presbyter and deacon are preserved. The bishop ordains and gives spiritual leadership but, as bishop, does not hold administrative office. The general oversight of the province is the responsibility of the provincial elders' conference, elected by the synod which, at present, meets every two years. Since 1970 the British province has ordained women into the ministry. Lay involvement is encouraged at every level of church life.

Moravians in Britain (as in Europe generally) did not feel called to set up a church in opposition to already existing churches as guardian of some special doctrine, but to work with existing churches. Moravian congregations were established only where there was evident need, and so the Moravian Church in this country has remained small. It is organized in five regional areas. A few of the congregations are in country villages but most are in urban areas. In recent years, the church has been strengthened by the coming of West Indian Moravians to England.

Up to the mid-20th century, the main emphasis of the church was on overseas missionary work. Even today, though the former mission fields have now become independent provinces of the world Moravian Church, the relationship with them and cooperation in mission remains an important concern. The Moravian Church in Britain maintains particular relations with Moravian churches in Tanzania, India and Jamaica. The Moravian Church is ecumenical in outlook and involved in a number of local ecumenical projects including shared congregations. Currently four of the congregations are joint units with the United Reformed Church. In 1998 a formal agreement was established between the Moravian Church of the British Province and the Church of England: the Fetter Lane Agreement, recognizing each other's church and ministry although stopping short of accepting interchangeability of ministry.

Since 2005 the British Province of the Moravian Church and the European Continental Province of the Moravian Church hold joint membership in the World Council of Churches, under the name Moravian Church British Province and EFBU (EFBU is the abbreviation of the name in German of the European Continental Province).

Church of England

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 25,000,000

Dioceses: 44

Parishes: 12,875

Congregations: 16,196

Clergy: 12,897

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – CTE – ACC

Publication: Church of England Year Book

Website: www.cofe.anglican.org

The Christian faith came to England early in the Christian era. Celtic forms of Christianity preceded the Roman mission of Augustine who became the first archbishop of Canterbury in 597. Since early medieval times the English church has

consisted of the provinces of Canterbury and York, each with its primate. In the 1530s the English church rejected the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome and came under Lutheran and then Calvinist theological influences. A vernacular Bible and reformed liturgy, communion in both kinds, a married clergy and increased influence of the sovereign and parliament over the church were the results of the Reformation. The threefold ministry, ordination by bishops, the diocesan-parochial structure, cathedrals, church courts and much medieval canon law were retained. The attempt to establish a comprehensive national church continued for over a century, but was ultimately unsuccessful. The mid-17th century saw the abolition and subsequent restoration, in 1662, of "Anglicanism".

The English Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, the Christian Year, the parochial context and loyalty to the sovereign gave the Church of England a distinct identity. The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion express a credal and reformed doctrinal position, but are restrained and inclusive. The 18th century was marked by the evangelical revival and the creation of voluntary missionary societies. The 19th century saw the rise of the Oxford Movement, with its emphasis on the recovery of the catholic tradition, and the growth of the Free churches. In the 20th century the Church of England was shaped by biblical theology and by the liturgical and ecumenical movements. It gradually acquired extensive powers of self-government, while remaining the established church and continuing to value partnership with the state. It is governed by a general synod of bishops, clergy and laity. The synod controls its doctrine, liturgy and discipline and nominates diocesan bishops to the crown. The first modern liturgy was the *Alternative Service Book* 1980, but this has been superseded by *Common Worship*.

The Church of England has sometimes been identified with the wealthier and more influential elements of society. However, it has retained a presence in inner cities and remote rural areas, from which some other churches have withdrawn. It is deeply involved in education at all levels (there are many church schools) and in various forms of chaplaincy. England escaped the atheistic anti-clericalism which affected some other European countries. All the political parties have Anglicans in their membership. The church makes known its views on ethical and social issues through debates in its general synod, statements of the archbishops, the presence of bishops in the House of Lords, and direct approaches to government.

Among the current primary concerns of the church are (1) re-energizing mission, especially in rural areas and in inner cities (where other religions are a significant presence); (2) promoting lay education and lay participation in mission and ministry; (3) increasing awareness of Christian stewardship; (4) assimilating women priests and considering the possibility of women bishops.

The Church of England is committed to the goal of the full visible unity of Christ's church. In recent years, it has entered into communion with Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches through the Porvoo Agreement, and into relationships of mutual acknowledgement and commitment with the Evangelical Church in Germany (Meissen Agreement), the Moravian Church (Fetter Lane Agreement), the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches (Reuilly Agreement) and the Methodist Church in Great Britain (the Covenant). Progress on theological agreement has been made with the Roman Catholic Church through the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, English ARC being the national bilateral instrument for Anglican-Roman Catholic relations.

Methodist Church

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 293,661

Congregations: 5,900

Pastors: 3,600

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – CTE – WMC – CPCE

Website: www.methodist.org.uk

The Methodist Church began through the work of John Wesley (1703-1791) whose itinerant evangelistic work in the British Isles aroused an enthusiastic response among many, both within and outside the Church of England. His preaching emphasized salvation for all, the effect of faith on character, and the possibility of perfection in love during this life. He organized the new converts locally and in a “connexion” across the whole of Britain. He set standards for doctrines in his “Notes on the New Testament” and “44 Sermons”, and enabled his people to sing their theology, mainly through the hymns of his brother Charles (1707-88). During the 19th century, the church experienced various divisions, but this was also the period of great missionary expansion throughout the world. The main streams of Methodism came together as “The Methodist Church” in 1932.

The Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian church in Britain, after the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches and the Church of Scotland and the largest of the so-called Free churches. There are Methodist churches in most cities and towns, and in many villages of England and Wales – fewer in Scotland – and so Methodism has a strong local presence. As a national body the church shares responsibility with other churches to bring Christian insights to the life of the nation at all levels. A connexional team both serves the church as a whole and represents it.

The Methodist Church is involved in nearly 900 local ecumenical partnerships in England (less in Scotland and Wales). In 2003 it entered into a covenant with the Church of England. In mutual affirmations each church is affirmed as a true Christian church, carrying out the work of God. In a number of commitments each church is pledged to work more closely with the other towards full unity. The Methodist Church is also committed to a shared pastoral strategy with the United Reformed Church. Those relationships are particular expressions of the Methodist Church’s goal to work with a wide range of partners (the other denominations, Christian agencies, Methodist churches in other parts of the world and secular organizations) to pursue its mission. The Methodist Church summarizes its purpose in “Our Calling”, adopted by the Methodist Conference, the governing body of the church, in the year 2000:

“The Church exists to:

- Increase awareness of God’s presence and celebrate God’s love [Worship];
- Help people to learn and grow as Christians, through mutual support and care [Learning and Caring];
- Be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice [Service];
- Make more followers of Jesus Christ [Evangelism].”

This was further developed in “Priorities for the Methodist Church”, adopted in 2004:

“In partnership with others wherever possible, the Methodist Church will concentrate its prayers, resources, imagination and commitments on this priority:

- To proclaim and affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world; and renew confidence in God's presence and action in the world and in the Church;

As ways towards realizing this priority, the Methodist Church will give particular attention to the following:

- Underpinning everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer;
- Supporting community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor – in Britain and worldwide;
- Developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved;
- Encouraging fresh ways of being Church;
- Nurturing a culture in the Church which is people-centred and flexible.”

United Reformed Church

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 85,000

Congregations: 1,700

Pastors: 700

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – CTE – WARC – EAC – DECC – CWM

Periodical: *Reform* (monthly)

Website: www.urc.org.uk

Congregational and Presbyterian churches were established in Britain in the 16th and 17th centuries, and they maintained their separate identities until recent years. The union between the Congregational Church in England and Wales, and the Presbyterian Church of England took place in 1972. In 1981 the Reformed Association of Churches of Christ was united with the United Reformed Church and in 2000 the Congregational Union of Scotland united with the United Reformed Church. The majority of URC congregations have come out of the liberal, middle-class, professional groupings in society, and their major strength is in the suburban areas around the cities. Older, Victorian centres of non-conformity in the city centres have found it a hard struggle to reform their life; the village witness is usually with small congregations who maintain close involvement with the community. Because of this bias in the membership, the URC has been partially sheltered from the great upheavals in British society.

New social realities, however, are pressing: (a) the multi-cultural mix is beginning to change experience and attitudes; (b) economic recessions in the late 20th century and their associated large-scale unemployment led to a more radical concern for national life; (c) the greater freedom of women and young people to find their own styles of life and work challenges inherited patterns; (d) the international struggle for justice and peace meets a growth of local and national loyalty; (e) while the communications media exert great influence, churches are slow to use them creatively.

As Christians listen to text and context those are among the factors which shape the priorities of the church. Major current concerns include: (a) Christian education among the church community, with various programmes for children and young people, related to the worship of the church; (b) revision of the programme of ministerial training by taking full account of third world experience, and linking theory and practice more fully at every stage of training; (c) encour-

aging and supporting the development of multi-cultural ministry within the church; (d) the international element in church life: membership in the Council of World Mission has meant that discussions of mission overseas and mission at home always go together, so that the church is as eager to receive from others as to give; (e) Christian unity: there has been widespread growth of local unity; about 20 percent of the local churches of the URC are now sharing buildings and ministry with other denominations in local ecumenical partnerships; f) working for justice and peace in the world through the church's *Belonging to the World Church and Commitment for Life* programmes. All of which is summed up in the United Reformed Church's current mission strategy, *Catching the Vision*: "Seeking to be Christ's people transformed by the gospel, committed to making a difference to the world."

The growth of non-stipendiary ministry (120 non-stipendiary ministers) and lay leadership is a significant step for the URC since it enables a team approach to ministry. This engages many varied talents. The church is conscious of its poor record in holding the enthusiasm of children and young people and has extended its staff of youth workers. There is freedom and development in liturgical matters, with continued strength in hymnody.

***Cytun, Churches Together in Wales**

Founded in 1956.

Basis: CYTUN, Churches Together in Wales unites in pilgrimage those churches in Wales which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the church, which is his body; and to fulfill their mission to proclaim the gospel by common witness and service in the world, to the glory of the one God, Father and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

- Baptist Union of Wales
- Church in Wales*
- Congregational Federation
- Covenanted Baptists
- German Speaking Synod
- Methodist Church*
- Presbyterian Church of Wales*
- Religious Society of Friends
- Roman Catholic Church
- Salvation Army
- Union of Welsh Independents*
- United Reformed Church*

Observer member churches:

- Black Majority Churches in Wales
- CTBI (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)
- Free Church Council of Wales
- Lutheran Council of Great Britain
- Orthodox Churches*
- Seventh-day Adventist Church

Website: www.cytun.org.uk

Covenanted Churches within Cytun

Founded in 1975.

Basis: Affiliation to the Covenanted Churches within Cytun is open to all churches or church bodies in Wales which formally accept the terms of the Covenant, and whose affiliation is approved by the Commission of the Covenanted Churches within Cytun.

Concluding sentence of the Covenant signed in 1975: "Accordingly we enter now into this solemn Covenant before God and with one another, to work and pray in common obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that by the Holy Spirit we may be brought into one visible church to serve together in mission to the glory of God the Father."

Member churches:

Church in Wales
Committee of the Covenanted Baptist Churches in Wales
(within the *Baptist Union of Great Britain*)
Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church of Wales
United Reformed Church

Observer member churches:

Baptist Union of Great Britain
Baptist Union of Wales
Roman Catholic Church
Union of Welsh Independents

Website: www.enfys.org

Church in Wales

Church Family: Anglican
Membership: 78,000
Dioceses: 6
Parishes: 625
Priests: 650
Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – CYTUN – ACC
Periodical: *Theology Wales* (occasional)
Website: www.churchinwales.org.uk

Christianity in Wales probably dates from the 2nd century, the faith becoming established particularly during the 5th and 6th centuries. By the end of the 12th century the four ancient dioceses had become part of the Province of Canterbury. The Province of Wales was created in 1920 after the disestablishment of the four Welsh dioceses of the Church of England, and the partial disendowment of the Church in Wales by the Welsh Church Acts of 1914 and 1919. Two new dioceses were created in 1921 and 1923, so there are now six dioceses and two assistant bishops. One of the diocesan bishops is elected archbishop of Wales and he remains bishop of his diocese. The Church in Wales ordains women to the diaconate and the priesthood. Since 1920, the Church in Wales has evolved its own bi-lingual identity, bringing together Welsh and English-speaking traditions. The church is governed synodically and led episcopally: its legislative and synodal authority is the governing body.

Wales is a country of 8,000 sq. miles with a population in excess of 2,900,000, more than half of whom live within 60 km of Cardiff, the capital city. Although

there is no established Christian denomination in Wales, the Church in Wales has an even spread throughout the country. The church is active in liturgical revision, social concern and action at all levels, communication with the media, ministry and discipleship and education (170 church schools). The church plays a full part in the National Coalition for the Evangelization of Wales which brings together all the older denominations with the newer “network” churches.

The Church in Wales is part of the Porvoo Communion which brings together all the European Anglican provinces with the Nordic and Baltic Evangelical Lutheran churches. It is a signatory to the Covenant for Union in Wales (1975) which commits the Church in Wales nationally and locally to principles and practical objectives in the search for unity with the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and a number of individually covenanted Baptist congregations. In 2005, the churches of Wales celebrated the 30th anniversary of the signing of the covenant and the 15th anniversary of Cytun (Together), the Council of Churches for Wales.

Presbyterian Church of Wales

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 36,251

Congregations: 775

Pastors: 70

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – CYTUN – WARC – EAC – CWM
– CPCE

Periodicals: *Y Goleuad* (in Welsh), *The Treasury*

Website: www.ebpcw.org.uk

The church had its beginnings in the evangelical revival of the 18th century. Its founders (both clergy and lay) were members of the Church of England. Soon after 1735 they established religious societies, similar to the Methodist societies founded in England by John Wesley. Societies in all parts of Wales were set up during the years 1735-52, under the charge of lay exhorters, and lay and clerical superintendents supervised the work. In 1811 a number of exhorters were ordained. Thus the movement became separated from the Church of England. In 1832 the Calvinist Methodist Connexion (as it was then called) formulated its confession of faith, rules and discipline, constitution and church government. In general the new Connexion was Presbyterian in polity. The first general assembly of the church was held in 1864. In the 20th century the name was changed to the Calvinist Methodist Church of Wales, or the Presbyterian Church of Wales. In 1933 the amended constitution was adopted and received the assent of parliament. The church has strong ties with the Presbyterian churches in North India.

Among the primary concerns of the Presbyterian Church of Wales are: a) the challenge of sharing the Christian gospel and ministering at the beginning of a new century in a country where only 5 percent of the population now holds official church membership; b) working within the new devolved political structure in Wales with the setting up of the Welsh National Assembly; c) peace and justice and poverty relief issues; d) the decline in membership, the dearth of ministerial candidates, and the need to strengthen the ministry of all God's people. Programmes related to these issues are: a) restructuring the ministerial pattern and the lay ministry; b) new ministerial projects and a connexial training programme held under the mission programme sponsored by the Council for World Mission; c) involvement in interdenominational projects; d) mission to young people; e) the restructuring of the church's administration.

Union of Welsh Independents

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 31,000

Associations: 16

Congregations: 490

Pastors: 107

Member of: WCC (1967) – CTBI – CYTUN – CWM – ICF – CPCE

Periodicals: *Y TYST* (weekly), *Cristion* (bi-monthly, interdenominational, in Welsh)

Website: www.annibynwyr.org

The first congregational church in Wales was founded at Llanfaches in 1639. The early founders were largely the inheritors of the Puritan tradition. Over the centuries the Welsh Independents have developed into a diverse denomination which embraces a wide range of theological positions and holds a radical view on matters of Welsh and international social and political policy. An example is the pacifist emphasis. The churches of the Union are congregationalist because authority in all matters relating to the church is vested in the congregation which consists of the fully accredited members. They are called “Independent” because each congregation claims to be under the direct authority of Jesus Christ and is not controlled by any outside body. Individual churches cooperate with one another through associations, and through the Union, founded in 1872. The Union works through six departments: finance, mission and world church, churches and ministry, education and communication, youth, Christian citizenship. The Union’s council and the assembly meet once a year. “The Union is a free and voluntary body. Its aim is to help, as far as possible, to make churches fellowships that are free to serve Jesus Christ.”

The Union uses mainly the Welsh language, as do most churches, for worship and business. The churches have much in common with the other Free Church Welsh denominations. Ministers and preachers move freely between them, as does the membership. Different churches provide a rich variety of ethos. And yet, the denomination retains its own distinctive flavour. It can still be identified as “Dry Dissenters”, valuing learning and understanding of the faith.

Currently the Union’s work is focused on the AGAPE mission programme (2005-2007). It encourages the churches to ask basic questions of themselves. How can they develop worship which is exciting and deals with today’s issues? What does it mean to be faithful to the Lord here and now? The churches of the Union uphold the great Protestant principle that the church must always be prepared to be reformed. They appreciate the growing opportunities to bear common witness with others, and to make significant contributions to united efforts both within Wales and beyond. It is also their privilege to receive what fellow Christians of differing traditions have to give, and to be enriched by their experiences. The greatest need surely is the humility to receive.

*Action by Churches Together in Scotland

Founded in 1990 (forerunner: the Scottish Churches’ Council, founded in 1964).

Basis: Action of Churches Together in Scotland unites in pilgrimage those churches in Scotland which, acknowledging God’s revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and, in obedience to God’s will and in the power of the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the

Church which is His Body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the gospel by common witness and service in the world, to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Church of Scotland
 Congregational Federation
Methodist Church
 Religious Society of Friends
 Roman Catholic Church
 Salvation Army
Scottish Episcopal Church
United Free Church of Scotland
United Reformed Church

Website: www.acts-scotland.org

Church of Scotland

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 1,149,000

Congregations: 1,526

Pastors: 1,042

Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CPCE – CTBI – ACTS – WARC – EAC

Periodical: *Life and Work* (monthly)

Website www.churchofscotland.org.uk

The Church of Scotland has its roots in the missionary labours of St Ninian and St Columba, and in the early Celtic church. It was reformed in the 16th century after the Genevan and Calvinistic pattern. A century and a half of ecclesiastical struggles followed, until in 1690 the Church of Scotland was established in its Presbyterian polity. Various secessions occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries, but since 1929 the Church of Scotland has been largely reunited. In the declaratory articles which the parliament of the United Kingdom approved as a correct statement of the historic position of the Church of Scotland in matters spiritual, the church is described as a “national church representative of the Christian faith of the Scottish people”. The church is committed to the modern ecumenical movement and to fostering church union where possible. Its Ecumenical Relations Committee is in conversation with several other denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church.

The church has approximately 553,000 adult communicant members. Its final authority in all matters is the general assembly. It has its own publishing house, the Saint Andrew Press. Its overseas work includes around 45 people working with partner churches in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean areas. Ministers serve in over thirty Scots kirks abroad; various others work in Israel and Palestine.

In June 2005 the Church of Scotland was reorganized at national level. A Council of Assembly brings together the conveners of six new councils of the church covering church and society, ministries, mission and discipleship, social care, world mission, and support and services. Through a report to the general assembly of 2001, entitled *A Church Without Walls*, the Church of Scotland identified as its core calling the hearing of the invitation of Jesus “Follow me”, a calling that is personal, local, relational, sacrificial, radical and global. Within this framework the Church of Scotland continues to engage with the issues of churches and society. In recent years issues of trade justice and HIV/AIDS have received continuing attention. It recognizes the need to give priority to interfaith relations in 21st century.

In the field of education, the Church of Scotland continues to devote much attention to the training of ministers and other full-time workers, the instruction of children, youth and adults in the Christian faith and life, and its involvement in schools, colleges and universities.

Scottish Episcopal Church

Church Family: Anglican
 Membership: 44,280
 Dioceses: 7
 Parishes: 310
 Bishops: 7
 Priests: 184
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CEC – CTBI – ACTS – ACC
 Periodical: *inspires* (monthly)
 Website www.scottishepiscopal.com

The roots of Christianity in Scotland go back to St Ninian in the 4th century and St Columba in the 6th. The Scottish Episcopal Church was formerly the Established Church of Scotland. It was disestablished and disendowed in 1689 by King William III who, almost entirely on political grounds, set up the Presbyterian Church in its place. The disestablished Scottish Episcopal Church continued strongly until 1746 when, again for political reasons after the Jacobite rebellion, severe penal statutes were imposed upon all Episcopalians. These laws made it illegal for them to possess any churches or chapels; all public services were forbidden and Episcopalian clergy were not allowed to minister to more than five persons at a time, under penalty of imprisonment or banishment.

The Synod of Laurencekirk in 1804 saw a reverse in this trend as the church agreed to accept the prayer book and an oath of allegiance and this started the move towards the repeal of the penal laws. The church then grew rapidly during the 19th century. The Scottish Episcopal Church is part of the Anglican communion. Indeed, the action of the Scottish bishops in consecrating the bishop of Connecticut in 1784 is seen as the moment when the Anglican communion was founded.

Being part of the Anglican communion means that the distinctive beliefs of the Scottish Episcopal Church are based on the historic creeds and are expressed in its liturgy. The church retains the three-fold orders of bishop, priest and deacon. Besides the 184 stipendiary priests there are 311 non-stipendiary priests. The Scottish Episcopal Church has seven dioceses, each with its own diocesan bishop. The bishops are elected by the clergy and laity within each diocese. The chair of the college of bishops is the primus who is also one of the diocesan bishops. The church is governed by a general synod made up of the college of bishops, a house of clergy and a house of laity. These houses are elected by the respective diocesan synods to represent the various dioceses.

The Scottish Episcopal Church has a number of authorized liturgies for worship. The traditional services of morning, evening and evening prayer are followed but there is increasing emphasis on the eucharist as the central Sunday service.

United Free Church of Scotland

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 4,400

Presbyteries: 3

Congregations: 65

Pastors: 27

Member of: WCC (1948) – CTBI – ACTS – WARC – EAC

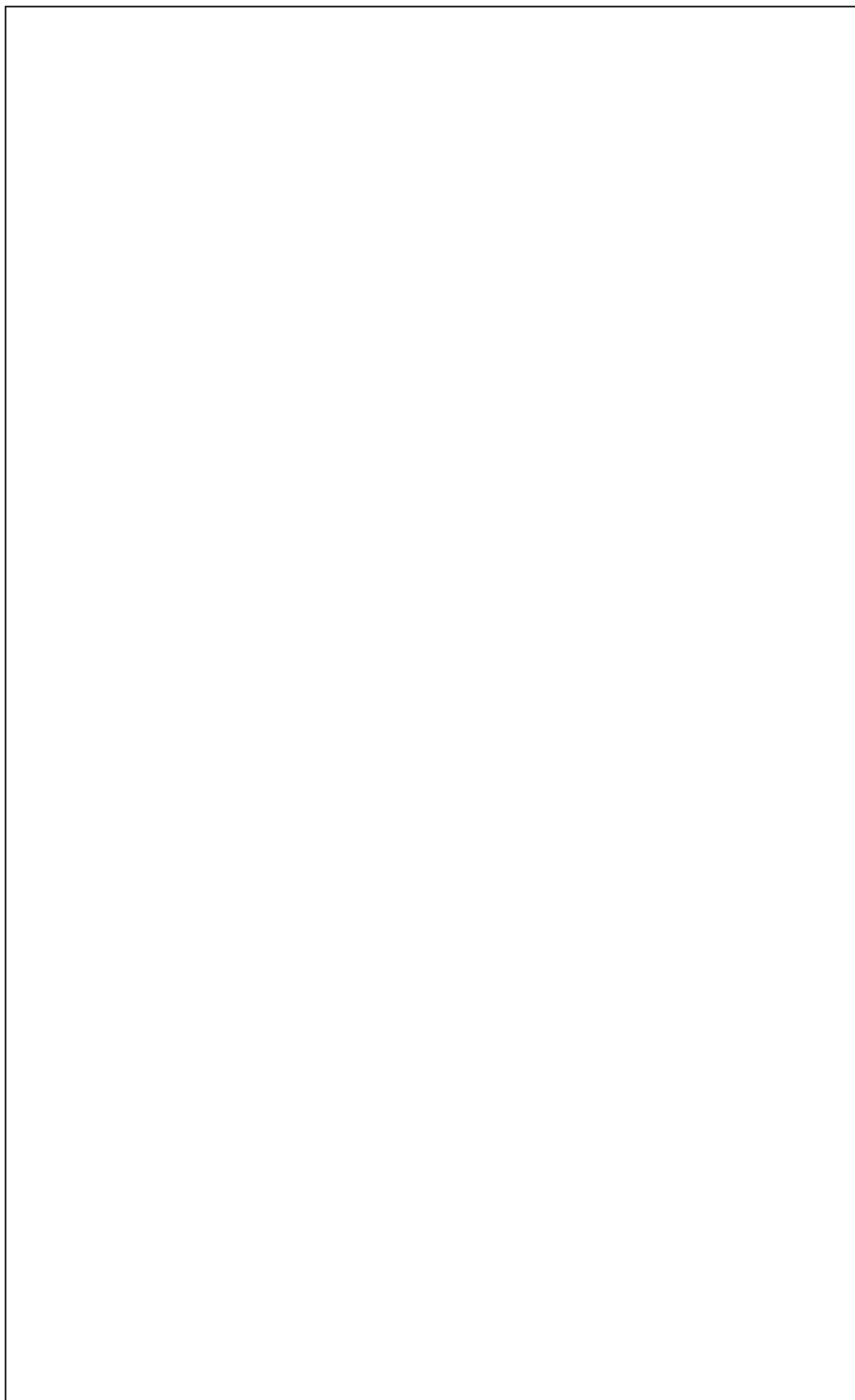
Periodical: *Steadfast* (bi-monthly)

Website: www.ufcos.org.uk

The denomination is a branch of the Presbyterian churches in Scotland. There were, in the 18th and 19th centuries, small groups of the Presbyterian order, each independent until some of them formed groupings to become a larger Presbyterian denomination. In 1843, the year of the Disruption, many congregations of the Church of Scotland seceded and became known as the Free Church of Scotland. It existed alongside other Presbyterian denominations, some of which became known later as the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In 1900 the Free Church of Scotland united with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to become the United Free Church of Scotland. This church united in 1929 with the Church of Scotland. A small minority continued as the United Free Church of Scotland, emphasizing the principles of voluntary support by its members, freedom from state control and religious equality. Since 1929 women have served the church as ministers and elders.

In recent years the United Free Church has been exploring closer cooperation with the Church of Scotland both nationally, through boards and committees, and locally through congregations sharing resources and working together in various ways. The purpose of this cooperation is that the church may more effectively engage in mission to the people of Scotland (and beyond) and make the best use of limited resources. A covenant is being prepared by the two denominations which will be brought for approval by the general assemblies of 2006. The United Free Church also takes an active interest in the various ecumenical bodies to which it belongs, particularly through Action of Churches Together in Scotland. Various initiatives are taking place to help the members of the church develop ways of moving forward more effectively in the service of Christ.

Latin America



LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

(Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias, CLAI)

The Latin American Council of Churches is an organization composed of Christian churches and movements which was set up in order to promote the unity of the Christians of the continent. CLAI, as it is commonly known, was founded in 1982, in Huampaní, Peru. The idea of creating a regional ecumenical body and what should be its shape took form at a large meeting of Protestant churches four years earlier, in 1978, at Oaxtepec, Mexico. The emphasis was on a council that would not run programmes and projects on behalf of its members but accompany the churches and provide space for participation and solidarity. It was also decided that the new council would not deal with project funding. From the beginning a decentralized model was adopted with secretariats in five sub-regions, in order to be closer to the churches in their daily life and context. The churches and movements which compose CLAI confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the holy scriptures and seek to fulfil their common calling and mission in unity, to the glory of God.

CLAI is a consultative and coordinating body that has no authority over its members in matters of doctrine, governance, practice or worship. The main objectives of CLAI are to promote the unity of the people of God, to encourage and support its members in their task of announcing the gospel, and to promote the theological and pastoral reflection and dialogue on the Christian mission and witness in the continent. Over a quarter of a century, the churches and groups that form CLAI have journeyed together in obedience to the gospel, with the intention to restore, in ways that are visible, and through concrete acts of witness and service, the unity that has been given to them in Jesus Christ. Highlights of the common journey have been the assemblies:

Huampaní (Peru)	1982	<i>Jesus Christ, a calling committed to the kingdom</i>
Indaiatuba (Brazil)	1988	<i>Church: towards hope in solidarity</i>
Concepción (Chile)	1995	<i>Being born anew for a living hope</i>
Barranquilla (Colombia)	2001	<i>Free to build peace</i>

The fifth assembly will be held in Buenos Aires (Argentina), in 2007, under the theme *The Grace of God Justifies Us, the Spirit Makes Us Free*.

In the context of Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, the churches and CLAI were very much inspired and motivated by the theme of hope and the building of a just and participatory society. CLAI has also focused on promoting peace in some of the conflict areas in the region, e.g. in Colombia and Guatemala. The changes that came with the end of the cold war have prompted CLAI to reorganize and strengthen its institutional viability, to bring the organization closer to the member churches, and to widen its approach to churches that hitherto did not participate in the established ecumenical movement, in particular the Pentecostals.

In order to achieve its objectives, CLAI maintains several programmes dealing with the issues of women and gender justice, youth, health, faith, economy and society, global environmental citizenship, liturgy, and communications. The five sub-regional secretariats are Andino (Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru); Brazil; Caribbean and Greater Colombia (Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto

Rico, Venezuela); Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua); and River Plate (Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay). In recent years, CLAI has given much attention to the Pentecostal churches in Latin America (several of which are among its member churches) and to the involvement of Evangelicals and Pentecostals in the society and in politics. Exchanges have been organized between Pentecostal churches and other churches from different countries, e.g. between Brazil and Chile. Another priority of CLAI has been the dialogue with confessional families present in the continent, and with its partner churches and organizations in North America and Europe. CLAI has 139 member churches and organizations in 19 countries, representing some two million Christians. The head office of the organization is in Quito, Ecuador.

Website: www.clai.org.ec

Periodicals: *Nuevo Siglo* (monthly, in Spanish and Portuguese);

LAEN (3 x per year, in English),

Signos (quarterly, in Spanish, focusing on faith and culture).

Member churches of the Latin American Council of Churches

Anglican Diocese of Argentina

Anglican Diocese of North Argentina

Association The Church of God (Argentina)

Christian Biblical Church of Argentina

Christian Church Disciples of Christ (Argentina)

Congregational Evangelical Church (Argentina)

Evangelical Church of the River Plate (Argentina)

Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina

Evangelical Pentecostal Church Argentina

Reformed Church in Argentina

United Evangelical Church (Argentina)

United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Argentina)

Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia

German-speaking Lutheran Church (Bolivia)

Pentecostal Methodist Church of Bolivia

Christian Reformed Church of Brazil

Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil

Evangelical Arab Church (Brazil)

Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil

Evangelical Congregational Church of Brazil

Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil

Methodist Church in Brazil

United Presbyterian Church of Brazil

Brethren Communion Church (Chile)

Brethren in Christ Church (Chile)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile

Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Chile)

Free Pentecostal Missions Church (Chile)

Methodist Church of Chile

Missionary Pentecostal Church (Chile)

National Wesleyan Mission of Chile

Pentecost Church Eben-Ezer (Chile)

Pentecostal Church of Chile

Pentecostal Mission Church (Chile)

Temple Church La Hermosa (Chile)

Union Christian Mission Corporation (Chile)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia
Presbyterian Church of Colombia, Presbytery of the Coast
 Episcopal Church of Costa Rica
 Evangelical Methodist Church (Costa Rica)
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Costa Rica
 Pentecostal Church Faith and Holiness (Costa Rica)
 Christian Pentecostal Church (Cuba)
 Christian Reformed Church of Cuba
 Church of God (Cuba)
Church of the Friends (Quakers)
 Church of the Nazarene (Cuba)
 Episcopal Church (Cuba)
 Evangelical Church Los Pinos Nuevos (Cuba)
 Global Mission Church (Cuba)
Methodist Church of Cuba
Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba
 Salvation Army (Cuba)
Episcopal Church (Anglican) Dominican Republic
 Evangelical Church Dominican Republic
 Evangelical Temples Church (Dom. Rep.)
 Free Methodist Church (Dom. Rep.)
 Association of Evangelical Indigenous People of the Province of Ibambura (Ecuador)
Episcopal Church of Ecuador
 Evangelical Indigenous Church of Tolontag (Ecuador)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church (Ecuador)
 United Evangelical Methodist Church of Ecuador
Baptist Association of El Salvador
 Emmanuel Baptist Church (El Salvador)
 Episcopal Church of El Salvador
 First Baptist Church (El Salvador)
Salvadorian Lutheran Synod (El Salvador)
 Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala
 Episcopal Church of Guatemala
 Primitive National Evangelical Methodist Church of Guatemala
 Christian Reformed Church of Honduras
Episcopal Church of Honduras
 Evangelical Lutheran Church (Honduras)
 Evangelical Mennonite Church of Honduras
 German-speaking Lutheran Church (Mexico)
Methodist Church of Mexico
Baptist Convention of Nicaragua
 Church of the Nazarene of Nicaragua
 Convention of Churches of the Great Commission (Nicaragua)
 Lutheran Church of Nicaragua Faith and Hope
Moravian Church in Nicaragua
 National Convention of Christian Mission Churches (Nicaragua)
 Episcopal Church Diocese of Panama
 Evangelical Methodist Church of Panama
 Lutheran Church (Panama)
Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (Panama)
 Christian Church Disciples of Christ (Paraguay)
 Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico
 Church of the Brethren (Puerto Rico)
Episcopal Church of Puerto Rico
Methodist Church of Puerto Rico
 Presbyterian Synod Boriquen in Puerto Rico
 United Evangelical Church (Puerto Rico)
 German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church (Peru)

Methodist Church of Peru
Episcopal Anglican Church in Venezuela (Episcopal Church USA)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Venezuela
 Evangelical Pentecostal Union of Venezuela
 Presbyterian Church of Venezuela
Anglican Church of Uruguay
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church Naciente (Uruguay)
Evangelical Waldensian Church of the River Plate (Uruguay)
Methodist Church of Uruguay

WCC member churches: 28 directly, 8 indirectly.

Fraternal members (churches):

Independent Presbyterian Church in Bolivia
 Universal Apostolic Mission Church (Chile)
 Wesleyan Methodist Church of Costa Rica
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Peru

Fraternal members (councils of churches):

National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil
 Council of Churches of Cuba

Fraternal members (organizations):

Ecumenical Christian Centre of Cordova (Argentina)
 Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights MEDH (Argentina)
 Higher Evangelical Institute of Theological Studies ISEDET (Argentina)
 United Council for Christian Education (Argentina)
 United Missions Board (Argentina)
 Association of Evangelical Theological Seminaries (Brazil)
 Ecumenical Centre of Pastoral Experiences CEBEP (Brazil)
 Ecumenical Centre of Service to Popular Evangelization CESEP (Brazil)
 Ecumenical Coordination of Services CESE (Brazil)
 Evangelical Missionary Group (Brazil)
 Koinonia - Ecumenical Presence and Service (Brazil)
 Methodist University (Brazil)
 World Day of Prayer (Brazil Chapter)
 Study Commission of the History of the Church in Latin America (Colombia)
 Ecumenical Centre "CEMURI" (Chile)
 Peace and Development Service SEPADE (Chile)
 Social Assistance Foundation of the Christian Churches (Chile)
 Ecumenical Research Department DEI (Costa Rica)
 Evangelical Theological Seminary (Cuba)
 Christian Development Commission (Honduras)
 Evangelical Council for Social Advancement and Renewal CEPRES (Nicaragua)
 Inter-Church Centre for Theological and Social Studies CIEETS (Nicaragua)
 Emergency Relief Committee of the Churches CIPADE (Paraguay)
 National Ecumenical Movement of Puerto Rico
 Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico
 Christian Centre of Advancement and Services (Peru)
 Ecumenical Action (Venezuela)
 Open Training Programme (Venezuela)
 Ecumenical Service for Human Dignity SEDHU (Uruguay)

Associate members:

Latin American Evangelical Commission for Christian Education CELADEC (Argentina)
 Latin American Evangelical Centre for Pastoral Studies CELEP (Venezuela)
 Latin American Biblical University (Costa Rica)
 Latin American Evangelical Social Action ASEL (Cuba)
 Universal Federation of Student Christian Movements FUMEC (Argentina)
 ALFALIT (El Salvador)

LATIN AMERICAN EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL COMMISSION

(Comisión Evangélica Pentecostal Latinoamericana, CEPLA)

The process of Pentecostal unity and cooperation in Latin America goes back to the 1960s in Chile when, after the earthquake, some Chilean Pentecostal churches began working with other churches in caring for the victims. A first Latin American Pentecostal encounter with Pentecostal leaders from various countries took place in 1971 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 1978, on the occasion of the assembly of Protestant churches from Latin America in Oaxtapec, Mexico, where the idea of setting up a Latin American Council of Churches took shape, Pentecostal participants continued the conversation and took part in the formation of CLAI. A decade later, in 1988, a Latin American Pentecostal consultation convened by the WCC was held in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, which led to another encounter in Buenos Aires in 1989. This event was followed by an encounter in Santiago, Chile, in 1990, where it was decided to constitute a Latin American Evangelical Pentecostal Commission (CEPLA), with the purpose to carry on the dialogue, cooperation, reflection and solidarity among the Pentecostals of the continent. From its inception, CEPLA has focused its work on fundamental challenges facing the Pentecostal movement in Latin America, e.g. the study of the historical roots of the Pentecostal faith, the response to the increasing demand for Christian and ministerial formation, exploring the experience of the unity of the Spirit (or ecumenism of the Spirit), the creation of spaces for exchange and communication, the analysis of the impact of mass TV and radio evangelism which affect the rich communal experience of Pentecostalism, the systemization of research and study of Latin American Pentecostalism, and the continuation of the process of unity and cooperation through Pentecostal encounters.

Since 1990, CEPLA has organized or facilitated Pentecostal meetings at the national level (e.g. in Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico etc.) and regionally. Some of the regional consultations were held in cooperation with CLAI and the WCC, in 1992 in Sao Paulo (Brazil), in 1994 in Lima (Peru), and in 1998 in Cuba. Of particular importance have been the meetings of Pentecostal women, such as the one in Costa Rica in 1992, in 1995 in Lima (Peru) and in 2002 in Chile. CEPLA has also participated together with CLAI in the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue in Latin America, and in the process of the international dialogue between the WCC and Pentecostals.

In 2001, CEPLA convened a meeting of Pentecostal bishops and presidents from Latin America and the Caribbean, in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. This event brought together delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela. The group issued a statement calling for the creation of a Council of Pentecostal Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean. The main objective of this council should be the critical and constructive reflection of the Latin American and Caribbean Pentecostal experience, in order to contribute to the enrichment of the Pentecostal identity and its contribution to the ecumenical movement and the mission of the world-wide church, by providing space for discussing the problems and challenges of Pentecostalism and the particular context in which the Pentecostal churches in Latin America and the Caribbean carry out their pastoral, healing and prophetic ministry.

The process of formation of the proposed council will take time. Meanwhile, CEPLA continues to be actively engaged in activities of training and accompaniment of the local churches. It has launched a proposal to set up a Pentecostal training and study centre. Two areas in which CEPLA wishes to extend its activities

are the role and involvement of women in the church and society, and liturgical development and renewal.

Member churches of the Evangelical Pentecostal Commission of Latin America

Association The Church of God (Argentina)
Christian Biblical Church (Argentina)
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church Argentina
 National Pentecostal Church (Bolivia)
 Pentecostal Christ Church "Ark of Noah" (Bolivia)
 Pentecostal Methodist Church of Bolivia
 Assemblies of God Church (Brazil)
 Community of Grace Church (Brazil)
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church "Brazil for Christ"
 Foursquare Gospel Church (Brazil)
 Japanese-Brazilian Assemblies of God (Brazil)
 Brethren Communion Church (Chile)
 Brethren in Christ Evangelical Church (Chile)
 Christian Union Corporation (Chile)
 Evangelical Church Old Paths (Chile)
Free Pentecostal Missions Church (Chile)
 Independent Wesleyan Church (Chile)
 National Evangelical Wesleyan Mission Church (Chile)
 Pentecostal Church Eben Ezer (Chile)
Pentecostal Church of Chile
Pentecostal Mission Church (Chile)
 Pentecostal Missionary Church (Chile)
 Temple Church La Hermosa (Chile)
 Universal Apostolic Mission Church (Chile)
 Universal Pentecostal Methodist Church (Chile)
 Assemblies of God Christian Centre (Colombia)
 Christian Church Followers of Christ (Colombia)
 Christian Evangelical Crusade (Colombia)
 Christian Mission The Vineyard (Colombia)
 Christian Missionary Church (Colombia)
 Church of God (Colombia)
 Assemblies of God Church (Costa Rica)
 Christian Centre Christ Is Coming (Costa Rica)
 Evangelical Community The Covenant (Costa Rica)
 Full Gospel Church of God (Costa Rica)
 Pentecostal Church Faith and Holiness (Costa Rica)
 Apostolic Church (Cuba)
 Christian Pentecostal Church of Cuba
 Church of God (Cuba)
 Evangelical Gethsemane Church (Cuba)
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church Bethel (Cuba)
 Free Evangelical Church (Cuba)
 Holy Pentecost Church (Cuba)
 Open Bible Church (Cuba)
 Assemblies of God Church (Ecuador)
 Prince of Peace Church (El Salvador)
 Full Gospel Church of God (Guatemala)
 Prince of Peace Church (Guatemala)
 Christian Pentecostal Mission Council (Honduras)
 Apostolic Church of the Faith in Jesus Christ (Mexico)

Apostolic Church of the Faith in Jesus Christ (Nicaragua)
 Assemblies of God of Nicaragua
 Christian Mission Convention (Nicaragua)
 Church of God of Nicaragua
 Great Commission Church (Nicaragua)
 Assemblies of God (Panama)
 Assemblies of God of Peru
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church of Peru
 Evangelical Revival Church of Peru
 House of Prayer Church (Peru)
 Pentecostal Missionary Church (Peru)
 Pentecostal Church of God (Puerto Rico)
 Pentecostal Church Naciente (Uruguay)
 Apostolic Church (Venezuela)
 Association of Churches Peniel (Venezuela)
 Born Again Pentecostal Church (Venezuela)
 Christian Pentecostal Church (Venezuela)
 Evangelical Pentecostal Union (Venezuela)
 Pentecostal Church Bethania (Venezuela)
 Pentecostal Church Christ Is Coming (Venezuela)

ARGENTINA

Population: 39,305,574
 Surface area: 2,8 million sq.km
 Capital: Buenos Aires
 GNI per capita: 3,810 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Language: Spanish
 Religions: Christian 93%; Muslim 2%; Jewish 3%
 Christianity: Catholics 35,000,000; Protestants 2,897,760;
 Orthodox 117,200; Independent 2,906,280 (double affiliation)

Argentina is a federal state which became independent from Spain in 1816. The population is of European origin. The Indians who lived in the area were almost entirely wiped out by the Spanish conquistadors. After the dark period of military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983, the country has again a democratic system. Human rights violations during the dictatorship era gave birth to a strong human rights movement which was still active through 2005 to overcome impunity. An economic reform and structural adjustment programme, started at the end of the '80s, has brought back high growth but sharply accentuated the gap between rich and poor and has not solved the debt problem. It led to a severe financial, economic and social crisis in 2002, when the poverty rate jumped to 57 percent (it was 8 percent in 1980). Historically Argentina is a Catholic country. Small Protestant churches developed in the 19th century because of German and Scandinavian immigration and mission work from North America. Migrants from Eastern Europe and the Middle East brought Orthodoxy to Argentina. In the 20th century Pentecostalism began to flourish, and a Charismatic movement emerged in the Catholic Church. Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Charismatics numbered 7.4 percent of the Christian population in 2000. The churches work together in several national bodies: the Federation of Evangelical Churches, the Argentine Alliance of Evangelical Churches which is affiliated with the WEA, the Evangelical Pentecostal Federation and the Ecumenical Commission of Christian Churches (which includes the Catholics and Orthodox).

Argentine Federation of Evangelical Churches

(Federación Argentina de Iglesias Evangélicas, FAIE)

Founded in 1938 as the Confederation of Evangelical Churches of the River Plate, covering Argentina and Uruguay, which was divided in two national federations in 1958 (forerunner: the Committee of Cooperation for Latin America formed in 1913, which gave birth to a District of the River Plate in 1925).

Vision: The vision of the Argentine Federation of Evangelical Churches is to be an organization rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which promotes the unity of the Christian in the diversity of practices and positions of faith. Its values are justice, coherence, responsibility, team work, faith and love.

Member churches:

Association Pentecostal Church of God "Calvary"
Association The Church of God
Christian Biblical Church
Christian Church Disciples of Christ
 Christian Community of the City of Buenos Aires
 Christian Community Northern Zone
 Christian Congregation of Goya
 Evangelical Christian Congregation
Evangelical Church of the River Plate
 Evangelical Congregational Church
 Evangelical Mennonite Alliance Church
 Evangelical Mennonite Church Argentina
Evangelical Methodist Church Argentina
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church Argentina
 Missionary Evangelical Pentecostal Church
 Pentecostal Church of Christ
 Presbyterian Church of Taiwan in Argentina
 Presbyterian Church St Andrew
 Reformed Evangelical Church Argentina
 Salvation Army
 United Evangelical Church
United Evangelical Lutheran Church
Waldensian Evangelical Church

The Argentine Federation of Evangelical Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Website: www.faie.org.ar

Ecumenical Commission of Christian Churches in Argentina

(Comisión Ecuménica de Iglesias Cristianas en la Argentina, CEICA)

Founded in 1988.

Basis: Member churches of the Ecumenical Commission of Christian Churches in Argentina practise baptism with water in the name of the Holy Trinity: one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and recognize the validity of each other's baptism.

Member churches:

Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America
Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Etchmiadzin)
Christian Church Disciples of Christ
Evangelical Church of the River Plate
Evangelical Methodist Church Argentina
Orthodox Church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Antioch
Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Moscow

Reformed Church of Argentina
 Roman Catholic Church
 Saint Andrew Presbyterian Church
Syrian Orthodox Church
United Evangelical Lutheran Church
Waldensian Evangelical Church

Observer member:
 Danish Church

Pentecostal Evangelical Confederation

(Confederación Evangélica Pentecostal, CEP)

Founded in 1977.

Basis of membership: The basic doctrines of the Pentecostal Evangelical Confederation are the Bible as the inspired and infallible word of God; the Holy Trinity; Jesus Christ true God and true man; baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other languages; divine health through the redeeming work of Christ on the cross; the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit; the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead; the church as the Body of Christ.

Member churches:

Ambassadors of Christ Church
 Argentine Association Evangelical Work Light of the World
 Argentine Christian Mission Shield of the Faith
 Argentine Evangelical Pentecostal Church Dove of Peace
 Association Assembly of God
 Association Evangelical Christian Church God Is With Us
 Association Evangelical Ministry Shekinah
 Association Missionary Assembly of God
 Association of The Church of God in Argentina
 Association of the Churches of the Evangelical Faith Christians
Association The Church of God
Association Pentecostal Mission Church
 Christian and Missionary Movement
 Christian Assembly
 Christian Association Church of Jesus Christ
 Christian Biblical Church
 Christian Community Agapè Northern Zone
 Christian Community Church
 Christian Church "Suriel"
 Christian Evangelical Church Jesus Saves
 Christian Evangelical Church Message of Salvation
 Christian Foundation Harvest of Evangelism
 Christian Sanctuary Church
 Daybreak Christian Center
 Evangelical Association Assembly of God – Flores
 Evangelical Association Assembly of God – New People Ministry
 Evangelical Association the Calvary Pentecostal Church of God
 Evangelical Christian Church "Jesus the Good Shepherd"
 Evangelical Church A New Hope
 Evangelical Church Assembly of God of Viedma
 Evangelical Church the Living Christ
 Evangelical Missionary Church Argentina
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church God is Here
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church in Mission
 Evangelical Pentecostal Church It is God's Time

Evangelical Pentecostal Church Jesus Christ the Saviour
 Evangelical Pentecostal Rainbow Church
 God is Love Church
 God's Time
 House of the Lord of the Legions
 Inn of Jesus Church
 International Church of the Foursquare Gospel
 Jesus is Coming Soon Church
 Jesus is the Salvation Church
 Jesus Saves Church
 Light and Salt of the World Church
 Messianic Jewish Congregation House of the Peace of the Messiah
 Pentecostal and Missionary Church
 Pentecostal Assembly of Jesus Christ
 Pentecostal Holiness Church
 Primitive Church Jesus Christ is Love Church
 Union of the Assemblies of God
 Vision of the Future Church

Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America

(Iglesia Anglicana del Cono Sur de America)

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 22,500

Dioceses: 7

Parishes: 258

Priests: 224

Member of: WCC (1995) – CLAI – ACC – CEICA

The church began as a mission to groups untouched by evangelization in Patagonia, in the 1840s. British immigrants to the area increased the need for chaplaincies. Support from England came through the South American Missionary Society, which now supports diocesan activities. It covers six countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. At the beginning of 1991, the seven Anglican dioceses (including North Argentina) in these countries constituted an autonomous province within the Anglican communion. The Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America is well-respected in the area by other churches, including the Roman Catholic hierarchy and by the governmental authorities. It holds together the differences of culture, charismatic experience and missionary purpose, thus embracing both concern for issues of evangelism and social issues such as land rights and development. Spanish-speaking outreach is more recent and constitutes the key urban ministries of the church.

Association The Church of God*

(Asociación "Iglesia de Dios", ALIDD)

Church Family: Pentecostal

Membership: 8,000

Congregations: 70

Pastors: 100

Member of: WCC (1980) – CLAI – CEPLA – FAIE – CEP

Periodical: *Vida Abundante* (monthly, in Spanish)

The Association "The Church of God" is a national Pentecostal church founded in 1952. From the beginning the church has understood itself as a charismatic,

ecumenical and prophetic church. The association began with only three congregations but grew rapidly to its present size. The congregations are spread over the whole country, from the north to the extreme southern Tierra del Fuego. The church has stood out in evangelization, the practice of integral mission, in the manifestations of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in the defence of human rights, denouncing all situations that denigrate the human being as God's creature. Although it has limited resources, the association believes that its identity, vision and mission are relevant for Argentina, because the church is able to contribute to the building of a more humane, just and responsible society.

ALIDD has always recognized the vital importance of the formation of its members and leaders. The Sunday school and Bible studies are permanent features in the life of the congregations. The association has paid much attention to theological training for the various ministries, through its Emmanuel Seminary.

In the area of diakonia, the church has set up childrens' homes, service projects such as soup kitchens, clothes banks, health, literacy and assistance with school work. It is present in ecumenical organizations for social action and service. It is ecumenical by conviction and through its history, seeking from the beginning cooperation with other Pentecostal churches, and participating in ecumenical dialogue. A co-founder of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), of the ecumenical movement for human rights (an organization in Argentina) and other groups, it takes part in several pastoral councils.

Christian Biblical Church*

(Iglesia Cristiana Biblica, ICB)

Church Family: Pentecostal

Membership: 30,000

Congregations: 66

Pastors: 66

Member of : WCC (1997) – CLAI – FAIE – CEPLA – CEP

Periodical: *Boletín de la Iglesia* (in Spanish)

The origins of the Christian Biblical Church are in the Italian immigration to Argentina in the early 20th century. Missionaries from the Italian Christian Assembly (a Pentecostal church) in Chicago (USA) came to Buenos Aires in 1916 and founded Pentecostal communities among the Italian immigrants, which became known as Italian Pentecostal churches; out of their midst grew the Christian Biblical Church, which was officially established in 1970. The Christian Biblical Church is a Pentecostal church which accepts the divine authority of the scriptures, believes in the Holy Trinity and confesses Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour. It identifies itself with the moderate and Bible-centred line of Pentecostalism. The church practices believers' baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Holy communion is celebrated twice a month. Historically the ICB has been marked by speaking in tongues (sign of the baptism by the Holy Spirit), and the practice of sanctification. It has a strong tradition of defending family values and traditional views of sexuality, the role of women, and the place of the family as the basic unit in society.

The ICB reaches out to a wide community of over 30,000 people. It understands its mission as evangelism, spiritual growth of its members and social outreach. The church has three centres for drug addicts, a social centre for sports people, soup kitchens for small children, a secondary school by correspondence and activities among elderly people. It has a school for Christian education which organizes

seminars for church members, basic biblical teaching and study groups for those preparing to be a pastor; 40 percent of the latter are women.

Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ in Argentina*

(Iglesia Evangélica Discipulos de Cristo en Argentina)

Church Family: Disciples

Membership: 700

Congregations: 7

Pastors: 8

Member of: WCC (1975) – CLAI – FAIE – DECC – CEICA

The Church of the Disciples of Christ in Argentina was established by missionaries from the USA who arrived in 1906 and subsequent years. The church became autonomous in 1959. Throughout its history, it has had a strong sense of being called to remain faithful to what is the essence of the denomination: the search for the unity of the churches and a strong emphasis on Christian service. Today, the Disciples of Christ exercise their ministry in two provinces very far apart from each other: Buenos Aires and Chaco (north of the country). In Buenos Aires there are four congregations, two of which are joint congregations with the Methodist Church. In the Chaco area the “Hope” ecumenical congregation is also part of a unity experience with the Methodist Church, the Reformed Church and the Evangelical Church of the River Plate. This congregation is in charge of a common mission project. In the national context the congregations are small and consequently the Church of the Disciples is one of the smallest churches on the ecumenical scene. However, the membership figure does not reflect the number of persons and families with whom the church is intimately related through the various activities in which the congregations are engaged. The Disciples of Christ assume also their commitments of witness and service through various ecumenical organizations, which it has helped to found together with other churches (e.g. the United Mission working with indigenous people in the Chaco area, the Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights, the United Council of Christian Education, the Higher Institute of Theological Studies, and the Commission for Assistance to Migrants and Refugees).

The economy of Argentina has been in crisis for a long time. The church has at all times accompanied those who seek to alleviate the needs in their communities, through soup kitchens, day centres, medical assistance, etc., and the creation of micro-enterprises. All the emphasis of service and ecumenical action is founded on, and sustained by a profound Christian experience and a strong commitment to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the Lord of life and as an expression of the saving and redeeming love of God the Father. The risen Christ proclaimed by the church continues to be the answer for all persons and for the country, in the midst of the serious and sad problems humanity faces.

Evangelical Church of the River Plate

(Iglesia Evangélica del Rio de la Plata, IERP)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 25,150

Congregations: 42

Pastors: 76

Deacons: 8

Member of: WCC (1956) – CLAI – FAIE – CEICA – LWF – WARC – AIPRAL

Website: www.iglesiaevangelica.org

The history of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate goes back to 1840 with the arrival of German immigrants in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Later they were joined by others from Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Brazil and Romania. They had in common the German language. In 1899 they created the German Evangelical Synod of the River Plate, as part of the German church, with which they became officially affiliated in 1934.

In 1965 the synod approved a new constitution and, under the name of Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP), the church became independent from the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). About 70 percent of the members live in Argentina, the others in Uruguay and Paraguay. A new constitution was approved in 1998, transferring more decision power to the districts. The ratio of two lay people (at least) for each pastor is now obligatory at all the decision-making levels of the church. Furthermore, synods are held every two years (instead of three) and gather only half of the number of participants, also with the perspective of fostering the district assemblies.

The IERP is experiencing severe financial difficulties due to the socio-economic situation in the three countries. Part of the constituency of the church has fallen into poverty and exclusion, in the rural areas, but also among the middle class in the urban centres. This raises new questions for the ministry of the IERP. The majority of the congregations are unable to assume the whole cost of their activities (pastors' salaries, outreach and diaconal initiatives). The EKD helps with eight percent of the church's general budget, covering 50 percent of the administrative budget of the central headquarters. The impact of the financial difficulties has been increased by the loss of external support from partner churches and agencies in the 1990s, when the macro-economic figures seemed so bright. The church was strongly involved in the Jubilee 2000 campaign in Argentina, as one of the problems of the economy is the high expenditure of the government to serve the external debt.

The church gives special attention to children's education in its 17 kindergartens run by congregations in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. It has five homes for the elderly and seven hospitals and health-care centres. There are also centres to assist single mothers, and housing cooperatives. The board of the IERP has developed a new concept of mission where diakonia is connected with the building of new faith communities in the midst of excluded people. Diakonia goes hand in hand with mission, as a way of empowering people by giving them the chance of hearing the good news of a liberating God who stands against the evils of exclusion. In 2000 the IERP created the plan "Sharing the Good News of the Gospel with the Poor", which coordinates programmes in three suburbs of Buenos Aires with the people of the surrounding neighbourhoods: a centre for mothers and children, urban mission in Florencio Varela, and mission in the west (San Pablo House). All suburbs belong to the "second belt" around the city, which has the highest rates of poverty and problems such as unemployment, school absenteeism, malnutrition, social and family violence, alcoholism, crime, marginalization and exclusion. Most activities are run with, and by, women, youth and children.

The IERP is involved in several ecumenical bodies such as the Ecumenical Human Rights Movement, Uprooted People and Refugee Ecumenical Service and ISEDET (Ecumenical Theological University) in Argentina, emergency aid in Paraguay, human rights in Uruguay.

The signing of the Leuenberg Agreement has helped the IERP to improve its relations with other churches, e.g. the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU), the Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate and the Reformed Churches in Argentina. The IERP has mutual recognition of ministries with the Methodist Church, the Disciples of Christ and the Presbyterian Church.

Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina

(Iglesia Evangelica Metodista Argentina, IEMA)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 8,940

Congregations: 123

Pastors: 60

Member of: WCC (1971) - CLAI - FAIE - CEICA - WMC - CIEMAL

Periodical: *El Estandarte Evangelico* (in Spanish)Website: www.iglesiametodista.org.ar

In 1825 the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York proposed the establishment of a mission in South America. In 1836 the general conference recommended that work be started in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. The mission in Buenos Aires flourished and soon a church building was put up. Until 1867 it was forbidden by local regulations to preach the gospel in Spanish. Once the prohibition was withdrawn, the work of the Methodist Church, followed in course of time by other denominations, spread throughout the country. The missionary thrust went beyond the borders, and centres were opened in Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Southern Brazil. All these were later organized into the South American annual conference. In 1884 the first secondary school was established in cooperation with the Waldensian Church. It became the nucleus of the first seminary which developed into the evangelical faculty of theology; by merger with the Lutheran seminary it became the Evangelical Institute for Higher Theological Studies (ISEDET). Social work in various forms was undertaken.

The work in Uruguay was organized separately from the River Plate annual conference. The work in Argentina continued with two conferences: one took the name of Argentina annual conference; the other, created a few years later, became the provisional annual conference of Patagonia. Both became a part of the Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina in 1969.

This small church is recognized for its ecumenical spirit and social awareness. It has several educational centres and shares with seven other churches one of the best theological institutions of the continent. High on its agenda are evangelization and church growth, and the struggle for social justice and human rights. For these the development of a qualified leadership of lay persons has become a prerequisite. Social and missionary work is undertaken among the indigenous population – in the north with the Tobas and in the south with the Mapuches. Nursery services in Christian communities in various regions of the country are also built up. The church maintains strong relationships with Methodist churches throughout Latin America, in Europe and North America.

More recent challenges have been: to care for a population that is getting poorer; to review the ministerial model, giving a more important role to the laity; to search for new models at the institutional level which give visibility to the movement; the new spirituality and the role of the impoverished social classes.

United Evangelical Lutheran Church*

(Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida, IELU)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 11,000

Congregations: 30

Pastors: 30 (5 women)

Member of: WCC (1969) – CLAI – FAIE – LWF – CEICA
 Website: www.ielu.org

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is present in Argentina and Uruguay, is the outcome of mission work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the USA which began in 1919, after an initial visit in 1908. Lutheran immigrant churches in the area had been in existence since the second half of the 19th century. The aim of the American mission was to announce the gospel in Spanish, the local language. Subsequently the objectives of the church were to promote lay leadership training, to support the production of Lutheran literature in Spanish and the establishment of parish schools in connection with the Argentinian public school system. In 1948 the United Evangelical Lutheran Church became an autonomous church. In the 1950s, Hungarian, Latvian and Estonian refugees settled in the country and established congregations, some of which were incorporated into the IELU.

The church is organized in five districts and has a synodal structure. The highest authority is the assembly which elects an executive council. Besides the existing congregations there are eight new missions. The severe economic and social problems of Argentina have had a strong impact on the life of the church. On the one hand the church was affected and experienced financial constraints. On the other, part of the constituency of the church has been falling into poverty and exclusion, raising new questions for the ministry of the IELU. Social work, in the perspective of diakonia, has become a high priority. The congregations and missions are developing among the poor and destitute, and several actions aiming at strengthening their capacity to claim and promote their human rights have brought to light the consequences of more than a decade of neo-liberalism in Argentinian society. Traditionally the IELU served the middle classes of Argentina and Uruguay. Now it is reaching out to poor and marginalized communities. In the area of development, an important number of community projects are carried out by the Joint Project office with the Evangelical Church of the River Plate. Work with women and youth is done through ad hoc secretariats. Special emphasis has been given to the improvement of social projects. Good experiences are being developed with the indigenous population (Mapuchos) in the south of Argentina, and with Bolivian immigrants in Buenos Aires. The church runs six schools, a home for people living with HIV/AIDS, a home for women, one for men, and four student hostels.

BOLIVIA

Population: 9,138,490
 Surface area: 1,1 million sq.km
 Capital: La Paz
 GNI per capita: 900 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara
 Religions: Christian 94%; Baha'i 3%; other 1%
 Christianity: Catholics 7,917,000; Protestant 933,280; Orthodox 4,400;
 Independent 310,750 (double affiliation)

Advanced societies which had existed for centuries around Lake Titicaca disappeared in the 13th century. The area was part of the Inca empire when it was

conquered by Spain in the early 16th century. The Spanish exploited the silver mines, using the Indians as the work force. Bolivia achieved independence in 1825. It lost its sea-coast to Chile in the Pacific War (1879-83). Bolivia is the only country in the world with a majority of indigenous people, but the political and economic power has been for a long time in the hands of a small elite of European descent. From 1952-64, a progressive regime carried out land reform, nationalized the mines, and extended suffrage to the indigenous people and to women. In recent years, the Bolivian people have forcefully claimed their democratic rights, and demanded that the rich natural resources of the country (e.g. gas, oil) be used for their benefit. Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. The majority of the population depend on subsistence farming and the production of coca. The Catholic Church was established at the time of Spanish colonization, and is the majority church. Protestant missions arrived in the late 19th and in the 20th century. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Christian Evangelical Union are the largest Evangelical churches. Pentecostals and Holiness churches form over 30 percent of the Evangelical Christians. There is a National Evangelical Association, affiliated with the WEA. The joint programme of CLAI and WCC for indigenous peoples is based in Bolivia's capital La Paz.

Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church*

(Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Boliviana, IELB)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 20,000

Congregations: 95

Preaching points: 35

Pastors : 5

Evangelists (lay) : 90

Member of: WCC (1991) – CLAI – LWF

Periodical: *Nina* (quarterly, in Spanish)

The Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church grew out of the work of the World Mission Prayer League from the USA, among Aymara Indians. By using vernacular languages in its evangelism programmes the church grew rapidly, especially in the early years, as the Aymara and Quechua were able to share the gospel in their own language. In 1972, the American missionaries left the country, as the local people claimed greater participation in the decision-making bodies of the church. The Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church was constituted that same year. The church is composed entirely of indigenous people. It is the largest Amerindian Lutheran church on the continent. Its members are scattered mostly in the highlands and in La Paz, and belong to the poor sectors of society. In Bolivia, more than in any other Latin American country, the indigenous peoples have been marginalized and are suffering from exclusion. It is only in recent years that they have become better organized and are able to claim their rights and participation in society. The socio-economic and political situation of the country is burdening particularly the ministry of the church.

The IELB's main priority is to promote a holistic approach to evangelism and service. The church is involved in a variety of projects: alternative agriculture, animal husbandry, provision of drinking water, educational campaigns to prevent cholera, formal education (elementary school), vocational training, and communication. All these projects are planned with the communities and respond to their needs; at the same time, they provide good opportunities to introduce the gospel in a natural way to the communities involved. At the same time, the church

is aiming to strengthen its institutional presence within the Bolivian context. Important contacts and even agreements in the field of education have been achieved in the past years with the Bolivian government.

The highest decision-making authority of the church is the assembly. It elects the twelve members of the board which, through its chairpersons, exercises legislative, executive and judicial authority. The work is organized in three departments: evangelism, communication, education, health and social development.

Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia*

(Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en Bolivia. IEMB)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 9,053

Congregations: 188

Pastors: 32

Deacons: 10

Member of : WCC (1971) – CLAI – WMC – CIEMAL

Periodical: *Avance* (in Spanish)

The first Methodist Sunday school was founded in Bolivia in 1891 by a lay preacher. Methodist mission work from the USA began in 1906 when the Bolivian constitution was changed to permit freedom of worship. In 1969 the Evangelical Methodist Church became autonomous and elected its first national bishop. In 1975 a popular movement of the Aymara, representing the majority of church membership, initiated a historical process of change. At an extraordinary session of the fourth general assembly in 1976, three national executive secretaries were elected, responsible for national and international ecumenical relations, for life and mission (including education and promotion of the interests of women), and social services (including rural ministry and health services). The IEMB seeks to deepen the faith of its members and create a commitment to love and justice. It is also committed to the re-evaluation of indigenous cultures.

The EMCB maintains two hospitals and administers five health centres. Its main emphasis today is on promoting public health. Through a formal agreement with the Bolivian government, the church sustains and directs 16 educational centres, with an emphasis on primary, secondary, vocational and adult education. It carries out broad programmes of rural and community development. It supports various ecumenical programmes such as a centre of educational research and a centre of social studies and documentation. The church is part of several human rights organizations. Through seminaries, workshops and encounters with church and community leaders it shares its social commitment for justice.

BRAZIL

Population: 182,797,708

Surface area: 8,5 million sq.km

Capital: Brasilia

GNI per capita: 2,720 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Portuguese

Religions: Christian 91%; Afro-Brazilian 5%; Buddhist, Muslim, other 1%
 Christianity*: Catholics 125,517,222; Protestants 8,070,280;
 Pentecostals 24,364,700; Anglicans 136,000; Orthodox 121,100;
 Independent 9,305,944

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world and the largest in South America. It was a Portuguese colony from 1549 to 1822. The Portuguese brought 3.5 million slaves from Africa to Brazil who, together with the indigenous people were forced to work in the plantations. The present federal republic of Brazil was established in 1889. Until 1986, the military were the de facto rulers. From 1900 to 1957, the indigenous population of Brazil dropped from more than a million to less than 200,000. In 2005, they were 750,000, and the black population 75 million. The last military dictatorship, from 1964-1986, was marked by disappearances, torture, political assassinations and attacks on the organizations of the poor. Since the restoration of democracy, Brazil has become one of the leaders of the developing countries, economically and politically. It is the country of the World Social Forum and is part of the G20. Differences between rich and poor remain stark. The Catholic Church is the majority church and has a strong charismatic movement. Evangelical and Pentecostal churches have expanded dramatically in the past decades and are still growing. Pentecostals alone number close to 15 percent of the total number of Christians, and about 25 percent of the Christians are non-Catholics. Brazil has an Evangelical Association which is affiliated with the WEA. The national ecumenical body, CONIC, includes the Catholic Church and the Protestant WCC member churches. The ecumenical movement in Brazil has a long-standing record of solidarity with the poor, e.g. supporting the movement of landless peasants.

*Brazilian census 2000.

***National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil**

(Conselho Nacional de Igrejas Cristãs do Brasil, CONIC)

Founded in 1982.

Mission statement: To serve Christian churches in Brazil, through the strengthening of ecumenism and dialogue, and living the fellowship in Christ, for the defence of the integrity of creation and the promotion of justice and peace, for the glory of God.

Member churches:

Christian Reformed Church
Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil
Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil
Methodist Church
 Roman Catholic Church
Syrian Orthodox Church
United Presbyterian Church

Fraternal members:

Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture ACAT
 Belarussian Orthodox Church
 Centre of Biblical Studies CEBI
 Ecumenical Centre of Service to Popular Evangelization CESEP
 Ecumenical Coordination of Services CESE
 Koinonia - Ecumenical Presence and Service
 National Commission to Combat Racism CENACORA
 World Day of Prayer (Brazil Chapter)

The CONIC is related to fourteen regional councils in Brazil.

Website: www.conic.org.br

Christian Reformed Church of Brazil

(Igreja Cristã Reformada do Brasil)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 19,000

Congregations: 11

Pastors: 11

Member of: WCC (1972) – CONIC – WARC – AIPRAL

This church began in 1932 as the result of mission work of the Reformed Church in Hungary among Hungarian immigrants in Brazil. It was originally known as the Latin American Reformed Church. Congregations were gradually organized in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and in the vast hinterland of Brazil. Communities were also established in Argentina and Uruguay. The church used the Magyar language. Continuing its special care for immigrants, it has enlarged its sphere to become a national church, with services in Portuguese. During the second world war it became an autonomous, self-supporting body, which in 1945, received its official name of Christian Reformed Church of Brazil.

The church accepts the second Helvetic confession, the Heidelberg catechism and – as a special and historic confession – the profession of faith of the first “Igreja Reformada” organized in Brazil in 1557 by ministers sent by John Calvin. It follows the Presbyterian system. The church’s ministers are usually educated in Brazilian theological faculties, though candidates for the ministry are also sent to take post-graduate courses abroad.

Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil

(Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil, IEAB)

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 120,000

Dioceses : 8

Parishes: 84

Missions: 60

Priests: 200

Member of: WCC (1966) - CLAI – CONIC – ACC

Periodicals: *Estandarte Cristão*, *Sementes*, *Agenda Anglicana*
(all in Portuguese)

Expatriate Anglican chaplaincies were established in Brazil in 1810, with missionary work beginning in 1889, after the separation of church and state. The province, which is one of the few Portuguese-speaking churches in the Anglican communion, became autonomous in 1965. Today the Episcopal Church has established communities and educational and social institutions in the main urban centres of Brazil. Besides the eight dioceses, the church has two missionary districts, Amazon and West. The ministry is open to women; there are currently 30 female priests. In the present situation of the country, which is facing serious economic and social problems, the church has an important contribution to make to the spiritual life of the Brazilian people, and it works with other ecumenical organizations and Christian groups in seeking to fulfill the gospel’s commandments.

The church synod meets every three years, and is composed of clergy and lay people from all the dioceses. In the intervals between synods, decisions are taken

by the executive council of the synod, composed of two bishops, two clergy and two lay elected by the synod; it is chaired by the primate, assisted by the general secretary and national treasurer. The council meets generally twice a year. The councils of each diocese elect their own representatives (three clergy and three lay) to attend the national synod together with the bishop of the diocese.

The National Commission on Theological Education (JUNET) supervises theological education in the seminary in Porto Alegre, Recife and in various theological centres scattered throughout the dioceses. In 1998 JUNET founded the Centre for Anglican Studies to promote study and research of Anglican theological and pastoral thought in Brazil. It provides assistance to the diocesan centres and the seminaries of IEAB for theological education.

Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil

(Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, IECLB)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 715,959

Synods: 18

Parishes: 471

Congregations: 1,812

Preaching points: 1,160

Pastors and catechists: 1,041

Member of: WCC (1950) – CLAI – CONIC – LWF

Periodicals: *Boletim Informativo da IECLB*, *Jornal Evangélico Luterano Novo Olhar*, *Anuário Evangélico* (all in Portuguese)

The first German immigrants arrived in Brazil in 1824, bringing with them their Evangelical faith. The settlement in Sao Leopoldo became the German Protestant stronghold and the base for progressive expansion. Later, similar colonization projects attracted German immigrants to the neighbouring states in the north, up to Espirito Santo, giving rise to many Protestant congregations as well as hundreds of parish schools. The first permanent general church body was the synod of Rio Grande do Sul in 1886. Other states followed. The present church was inaugurated as a federation of synods in 1949. At first restricted to the ethnic and cultural German community, IECLB members integrated themselves in Brazilian society more quickly after World War II. At its general council meeting at Sao Paulo in 1968 the four synods of partly Lutheran, partly United and Reformed traditions merged into a nationwide church with a central administration, with various regions. In 1998 the IECLB approved a new structure based on 18 synods. In 2000, six advisory groups to the presidency were set up, for theology and confessionality, mission, ecumenism, public responsibility, gender and ethnicity.

Among the three schools of theology, the Escola Superior de Teologia (EST) in Sao Leopoldo has been a privileged space for ecumenical reflection, practice and exchange, both on national and international levels, especially through the Ecumenical Institute for Graduate Studies. The school always has teachers and students from other churches. It has chairs on ecumenism, and feminist theology. Women of the IECLB – 1,346 organized groups – have played a leading role in congregational life, and presently they are also more and more committed to themes related to the Decade to Overcome Violence against Women. About one third of the pastors are women. The WCC Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation programme has been the background of several annual themes of the IECLB that have dealt with social responsibility, justice and peace, agrarian reform, indigenous

people, mission in urban and rural contexts. The diaconal activities, coordinated by the department for diakonia and the Lutheran Foundation for Diakonia, are developed on all levels within the WCC spirit of diakonia and solidarity. In recent years (since 2000) the IECLB has been developing an encompassing plan of missionary action, which is partially related to texts and programmes of mission and evangelism of the WCC. The church runs 57 parochial schools, 21 hospitals, 48 social centres, 21 retreat centres and four publishing houses.

The IECLB has bilateral dialogues with the Catholic Church, the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil. The theme of koinonia (and communion) has had significant repercussions in the dialogue with the Catholic Church and other churches that have an ecumenical spirit.

Priorities and challenges include: confessional unity in the context of religious pluralism; the public responsibility of the IECLB within Brazilian society; dialogue with internal evangelical, charismatic movements, as well as with the PPL-Pastoral Popular Luterana (representing mainly liberation theology); themes related to faith and money, grace and gratitude, stewardship, proportional contributing, financial autonomy on all levels; human sexuality and ministry; HIV/AIDS.

Methodist Church in Brazil

(Igreja Metodista em Brasil, IMB)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 162,424

Annual Conferences: 6

Congregations: 1,101

Bishops: 8

Pastors: 1,266 (1020 men and 246 women)

Member of: WCC (1948) – CLAI – CONIC – WMC – CIEMAL

Periodicals: *Expositor Cristão*, *Voz Missionária*, *Bem-Te-Vi*, *Flâmula Juvenil*, *Em Marcha*, *Cruz de Malta*, *No Cenáculo* (all in Portuguese)

Website: www.metodista.org.br

A first attempt by American missionaries to begin a Methodist mission in Brazil in 1835 was unsuccessful. As of 1867 several congregations were established and the church began to grow steadily. In 1930 the Methodist Church in Brazil declared its autonomy. It is governed by a general conference which meets every five years and elects the bishop and approves mission guidelines, church discipline, etc. The board of bishops is responsible for the church and its doctrine, another body composed of equal numbers of clergy and laity looks after the administration and the programmes. From its very beginning the Methodist Church has placed great emphasis on education. As a result it runs 37 schools, from nursery level to higher education, including two Methodist universities. Students total around 70,000. Ministers (men and women) are prepared in the theological seminary in Sao Paulo, as well as in two other seminaries and six regional centres for theological formation. The church ordained its first woman elder in 1974, the first denomination in Brazil to recognize women's rights to serve in the ministry.

Affirming unequivocally the social dimension of the gospel, the church was a pioneer in establishing day-care centres, orphanages, homes for the aged, social and community centres, and medical clinics. It also pioneered in proclaiming its social creed affirming human rights and civic responsibilities, and denouncing the shortcomings of the Brazilian social body. During the twenty years of political oppression many Methodists were persecuted for their social stance. Since 1982

two documents approved by the general conference, the “Plan for the Life and Mission of the Church” and the “Guidelines for Education in the Methodist Church”, have been set as goals to be reached by all Methodist congregations and institutions. Much controversy has arisen out of these official positions, which push the church into an active witness and struggle to transform Brazilian society along lines of justice and freedom, with equal opportunities for the oppressed and poor. From this moment on, the church has spread out in all Brazilian states, and doubled the number of members and churches in the last 12 years.

The church maintains close relationships with the United Methodist Church (USA), the United Church of Canada and the Evangelical Methodist Church of Germany, with which it shares personnel and financial resources to promote special projects in the country and abroad.

United Presbyterian Church of Brazil*

(Igreja Presbiteriana Unida do Brasil, IPU)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 4,762

Presbyteries: 8

Congregations: 51

Pastors: 85

Member of: WCC (1984) – CLAI – CONIC – WARC – AIPRAL

Website: www.ipu.org.br

The formation of the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil goes back to the period of military dictatorship (1964-1984) in Brazil, when some pastors, churches and even presbyteries, were pursued for being critical of the regime and for participating in ecumenical groups and movements devoted to the search for social justice. Expelled by the denomination they belonged to, these communities and pastors had a painful period of isolation and dispersion until 1978, when they founded the National Federation of Presbyterian Churches which, from 1983 on was named the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPU).

The IPU is a communion of communities and presbyteries which profess the faith in Jesus Christ their Lord and share a Reformed heritage, engaged in the ecumenical march and the struggle for social change. Practically all the congregations of the IPU hold together the preaching and teaching of God's word and the promotion of social programmes. Nurseries, sewing workshops, health centres, psychological services, literacy courses, support to rural workers, are some examples of integrated activities developed by IPU communities. Partnerships with ecumenical services and sister churches have been important instruments for the viability of these projects. For example, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the main partner of the IPU, has helped to maintain a joinery school for young people in the Amazon region, a nursery for low income families in Bahia, and missionary expansion in Minas Gerais.

With the understanding that the calling of Jesus Christ does not make any discrimination of gender, the IPU was the first Presbyterian church in Brazil to ordain women to the diaconship, presbyterate and pastoral leadership. The church faces the challenge of providing the theological basis and formation which will sustain the continuation of its initial proposal and the renovation of its leadership. In this regard, the creation of the Richard Schaul Theological College has been an important step. At the same time, the IPU is searching for methods of evangelization that do not proselytize and favour the expansion of the church of Jesus Christ, without losing the characteristics of its message and the purpose of

its community life. The IPU brings an expression of the Christian faith which was born in a context of political and social oppression. It intends to set forth the "abundant life" in Jesus Christ for the peoples of the South. The church believes that God has given it the company of the Holy Spirit as it marches on towards a "new way of being church" in its Brazilian home.

CHILE

Population: 16,185,450
 Surface area: 756,600 sq.km
 Capital: Santiago
 GNI per capita: 4,360 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Language: Spanish
 Religions: Christian 89%
 Christianity*: Catholics 11,321,722; Pentecostals and Protestants 2,913,381;
 Orthodox 9,711

When Spain conquered the territory in the 16th century the area was inhabited by the Mapuche, who still live in the central-southern part of the country. Chile became independent in 1810. In the War of the Pacific (1879-84), it defeated Peru and Bolivia and won its present northern lands. The country had a relatively stable political history until the military coup of General Pinochet against President Allende in 1973, which was followed by a long period of dictatorship, oppression, torture and disappearances. Sectors of the Christian churches defended human rights and assisted the victims in those dark years, with the active support of the WCC and the ecumenical movement. However, the leadership of important Pentecostal and Protestant churches were, especially during the early years, on the side of the military. Chile has reverted to democracy. It has developed a strong liberal economy which, however, has accentuated inequalities in society. Chile is one of the countries where the Pentecostal movement emerged in the early 20th century (1909), and the first Pentecostal member churches of the WCC were Chilean (1961). Pentecostal missions in Chile from outside the country came much later. The vast majority of non-Catholic Christians are Pentecostals. It is estimated that Pentecostals make up 15-17 percent of Chilean Christians. A new religious law was promulgated in Chile in 1999, guaranteeing equal status to all churches and religious groups. Various inter-church organizations exist. The Christian Fellowship of Churches is an ecumenical body, the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches is affiliated with the WEA.

*statistics from Chile

Christian Fellowship of Churches in Chile

(Confraternidad Christiana de Iglesias - Chile, CCI)

Founded in 1981.

Basis: The Christian Fellowship of Churches is an organization of Christian churches in Chile which share their faith, in a framework of fraternity, solidarity and unity within the national territory (...). The member churches of the Christian Fellowship of Churches recognize Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the teaching of the holy scriptures, are committed to his mission and glorify the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Brethren Communion Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
 Evangelical Reformed Church
Free Pentecostal Missions Church
 National Wesleyan Church
 Pentecostal Church Eben Ezer
Pentecostal Mission Church
 Universal Apostolic Mission Church

Ecumenical Fellowship of Chile

(Fraternidad Ecu mica de Chile, FRAECH)

Established in 1973 (the Fellowship is not a body with legal status).

Basis: The Ecumenical Fellowship of Chile is an association of Christian churches and institutions of different traditions, which aim to contribute to the promotion of Christian unity. Its purpose is to witness to the unity expressed in the gospel of Jesus Christ: "That they may all be one, even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21), to the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church
 Baptist Union
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
Methodist Church of Chile
Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Antioch
 (through which are also represented the Russian Orthodox Church
 and the Greek Orthodox Church)
Pentecostal Mission Church
 Reformed Church
 Roman Catholic Church
 Universal Apostolic Mission Church
 Wesleyan Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile

(Iglesia Evang lica Luterana en Chile, IELCH)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 3,000

Congregations: 13

Pastors: 13 (4 women)

Member of: WCC (1963) – CLAI – CCI – FRAECH – LWF

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile traces its origins back to the 1860s, when German Lutheran immigrants colonized the southern part of the country. The formation of non-Roman Catholic churches was not allowed prior to 1925, when the separation of church and state was included in the constitution. The Lutheran churches formed an association, which resulted in the late 1930s in the creation of the Evangelical German Church in Chile. The name was changed to Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1959. During the 1960s, in a process of "chileanization" and the formation of new congregations, the IELCH began to work in Spanish, and invited the Lutheran Church in America to cooperate in this task by sending missionaries. The church committed itself to working among the marginalized and economically oppressed in society. After the coup d' tat in 1973 the leadership of the church, its pastors and lay members engaged themselves on

behalf of those persecuted and executed by the military government. As a result the large German-speaking congregations withdrew from the IELCH (with the exception of one), to form the Lutheran Church in Chile. Today there is dialogue and cooperation between the two churches.

The IELCH continues to minister among the poor and oppressed sectors of the population. In 1981 it created an institution called Popular Education in Health, to work on health issues among the poor. Due to the general economic situation in the country, the church is facing financial constraints which have an impact especially on its social ministry. The IELCH is currently engaged in a 10-year period dedicated to growth in mission, through the strengthening of congregations, the training of leadership and the development of new worshipping communities. Its diaconal work continues, with a strong emphasis on popular health education, community centres, day-care ministries, domestic violence outreach and pastoral accompaniment of those living with HIV/AIDS. The church is also actively involved in inter-religious dialogue in Chile.

Free Pentecostal Missions Church of Chile

(Iglesia de Misiones Pentecostales Libres de Chile)

Church Family: Pentecostal

Membership: 13,600

Congregations: 45

Pastors: 39

Lay preachers: 17

Member of: WCC (1991) – CLAI – CEPLA – CCI

In 1974, Bishop Victor Labbe Dias had the vision to found the Free Pentecostal Missions. The constitution of the church was officially approved in 1977, and thereafter registration was granted. From 1983 onwards, the mission grew, and by 1989 there were congregations in the north and the south of the country. In 2005, most of the congregations were in rural areas in the 8th, 9th and 10th regions, where the church is working with the indigenous Mapucho and Chilote peoples. Activities of the church include: regular pastoral meetings, evangelism and health campaigns, prayer meetings, Sunday schools, Bible studies, women's groups, and youth groups. The church is also involved in social work in the community. The Free Pentecostal Missions Church is a church of the poor. The local congregations are situated in areas of extreme poverty.

Methodist Church of Chile*

(Iglesia Metodista de Chile, IMC)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 9,882

Congregations : 90

Preaching points: 70

Pastors: 80

Member of: WCC (1971) – CLAI – FRAECH – WMC – CIEMAL

Periodical: *Vida y Misión* (in Spanish)

Website: www.metodista.cl

Methodism arrived in Chile through the efforts of a self-supporting missionary, and was followed by the arrival of other missionaries from the USA, the estab-

lishment of schools, and eventually evangelization in the Spanish language. The mission came under the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1893, when the South American Conference was organized with Chile as one of its districts. In 1901 the Chile district became an annual conference, and as of 1924 it was part of the Latin America central conference. The latter was allowed in 1932 to elect its own bishop. In 1969 the Methodist Church of Chile became autonomous, electing a bishop and adopting its own statutes and regulations. The church maintains relationships with the United Methodist Church (in the USA and in Switzerland), with the Methodist Church, UK, and with the United Church of Canada.

It was in the Methodist Church that the revival of 1909 occurred, which led to a split and the formation of the Methodist Pentecostal Church, and later on, other Pentecostal churches. The conflict was not only theological. The emergence of Chilean Pentecostalism was also an affirmation of an authentic, Chilean expression of non-Catholic Christianity, over against a foreign missionary model. The Methodist Church lost a large number of members but continued to evangelize and grow, albeit at a slower pace. Evangelization and the promotion of human dignity among the poor peasants and workers continue to be fundamental objectives. Today the church extends throughout the whole country. It is organized in seven districts. Educational, social and health ministries coordinate the extensive work that is being done in these areas, through 55 institutions run by the church.

Pentecostal Church of Chile

(Iglesia Pentecostal de Chile)

Church Family: Pentecostal

Membership: 125,000

Congregations: 340

Pastors: 195

Member of : WCC (1961) – CLAI – CEPLA

Website: www.pentecostaldechile.cl

The Pentecostal Church of Chile was founded in 1945 by Bishop Chavez, who came out of the Methodist Pentecostal Church. Its headquarters are in Curico, about 200 kms south of Santiago. The growth of the church has been the result of an intensive evangelistic campaign, especially among the working class and marginal groups, and the poorest sectors of society. Labourers who flocked from the countryside to the cities responded to the church's transforming message. The church proclaims and lives by the power of the Holy Spirit whose presence is felt among the faithful in different ways. The church is also open to cooperation and communication with other churches and religious organizations. The Pentecostal Church of Chile is governed by the general assembly which elects an executive committee of twelve members (Directorio). Pastors are nominated by an executive committee and installed by the bishop and the president.

The church faces many challenges. The education of children, youth and adults is a priority. The younger generation in Chile is poorly educated. Adults need a clear vision of society in order to search creatively for solutions to the problems faced by the nation. The Christian community needs to be strengthened by a sense of solidarity. Different congregations and organizations of the church have participated actively in developing and maintaining ongoing social and educational projects amongst the most needy of the community. Local projects include, for example: a home to care for the elderly, lunch rooms for the children of poorer families, practical workshops to instruct women in health, nutrition, and home-based industries, and programmes to empower youth in developing their leader-

ship skills and gifts. Most recently, the Pentecostal Church of Chile created the Shalom Centre as a holistic programme integrating environmental education, conflict transformation and peace education, and spiritual development strategies.

The church is also committed to Christian unity. It is convinced that only a united church can tackle the social, economic and spiritual problems of the nation. In Chile, churches are finding new ways of working together not only to evangelize but also to shine with the light of hope, joy, and peace, bringing the gospel to life in many practical ways among those in greatest need.

Pentecostal Mission Church

(Misión Iglesia Pentecostal, MIP)

Church Family: Pentecostal

Membership : 9,000

Congregations: 19 in Chile

Preaching points: 25

Pastors: 20

Member of: WCC (1961) – CLAI – CEPLA – CCI – FRAECH

In 1952 a group of 120 believers left the Evangelical Pentecostal Church, one of the two largest Pentecostal churches which have their origins in the revival of 1909, in solidarity with four lay leaders who had been unjustly expelled from the church. After a year of unsuccessful negotiations to solve the problem, the group decided to form a new church, which was officially recognized in 1954, under the name Pentecostal Mission Church. Constituted in Santiago, the MIP extended through the missionary efforts of its members to the south-central part of the country and to Argentina, mainly among Chilean immigrants. Today the Pentecostal Mission Church in Argentina is an autonomous church, in full communion with the mother church in Chile.

Preserving its identification with the Pentecostal movement, the MIP defined itself as a “church of open doors”, and became a pioneer of Pentecostal openness towards cooperation and communion with other Christian churches. It was a founding member of several inter-church organizations, such as the Evangelical Theological Community of Chile (1964) and the Christian Fellowship of Churches (1982). As is characteristic of the Chilean Pentecostal movement the MIP established itself among the poor sectors of the society. The increasing concern for the quality of life of these social groups led the church towards the end of the 1970s to found the “Evangelical Service for Development” (SEPADE, in Spanish), which is now an autonomous ecumenical institution (www.sepade.cl).

The MIP maintained its ecumenical and prophetic stance publicly during the difficult years of the military regime (1973-1990), when the official propaganda equalled ecumenism with communism. The result was that many members who were afraid of reprisals took their distance from the church. While other Pentecostal churches experienced growth, the MIP had to face a crisis of decline. Currently the church is searching for ways that would allow it to expand, maintaining a creative tension between its Pentecostal identity and its ecumenical vocation. The MIP understands itself as part of the one church of Christ, and as such shares the Trinitarian faith as expressed in the Apostle’s Creed. Similarly, it shares the fundamental principles of the Protestant Reformation (only grace and only faith, only Christ, and only the scriptures), the Pentecostal emphasis on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in the life of human beings (John 3:5-8) and the permanent presence of the Spirit in the faith community, enabling it to witness to the gospel “until the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

COLOMBIA

Population: 45,600,214

Surface area: 1,1 million sq.km

Capital: Bogotá

GNI per capita: 1,810 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Spanish

Religions: Christian 97%

Christianity: Catholics 42,200,000; Protestants 1,270,980;

Independent 703,860

Indigenous people lived in Colombia long before it was colonized by the Spanish in the 16th century. It became an independent country in 1819. Since then, two political parties, the conservatives and the liberals, have dominated the political scene. Socially, Colombia has been divided between the ruling elite and the poor masses. In the 20th century, several revolutionary movements have fought guerilla wars. Two of these are still active, but have lost much of the popular support. To counter the guerillas, the government has favoured the development of paramilitary groups. The rural population has been caught in between, and has suffered massive oppression, destruction and killings. Violence is also rampant in the cities, partly criminal, partly political. Production and trade of drugs, kidnapping, etc., have corrupted the social texture of the country. In this context, the Catholic Church which is the majority church, has sought to mediate in often dangerous conflict situations. Several churches and organizations have formed an ecumenical network, to accompany communities who are victims of social and political violence. Protestant missions started in the 19th century, and the Protestant churches, although in a minority, are actively involved in promoting peace and defending human rights. They are organized in the Evangelical Council of Colombia. In the 20th century Pentecostal and independent churches have established themselves in Colombia. About 50 percent of the Protestants are Pentecostal. The Evangelical Confederation of Colombia is affiliated with the WEA.

Ecumenical Network of Colombia

(Red Ecu mica de Colombia)

Founded in 2001.

The Ecumenical Network of Colombia is made up of Christian churches and organizations which are developing accompaniment programmes with communities and groups who are victims of the country's social and political violence.

Member churches:

Archdiocese of Cartagena (Roman Catholic Church)

Baptist Church of Colombia

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia

Inter-American Church of Laureles of Medellin

Methodist Church of Colombia

Presbyterian Church of Colombia

Member organizations:

Baptist University of Cali

Inter-ecclesiastical Commission of Justice and Peace

Ministerial Programme of Theological Studies PROMESA

Popular Pastoral of the Dominican Brothers

Website: www.redecumenica.org

Presbyterian Church of Colombia* (Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia, IPC)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 12,000

Congregations: 45

Pastors: 47

Member of: WCC (2005) – CLAI – REC – WARC – AIPRAL

Website: www.ipcol.org

The first Presbyterian missionary came to Colombia in 1856, sent by the board of foreign missions of what is now the Presbyterian Church (USA). Over the years congregations were established in the main cities and in rural areas, so that the church spread over a large part of the country.

In 1937 the synod of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia was reorganized, with three presbyteries, in the north, the centre and the south. This was the beginning of the process by which the church became autonomous and independent of any foreign entity. In accordance with the law on religious liberty the IPC is officially recognized by the state of Colombia.

In a statement and confession of faith approved in 1998, the church declares that its mission is based on faithfulness to the Bible and the contextual and historical interpretation of the Word. It believes that announcing the gospel in a context of violence, death and destruction of life, means proclaiming the transforming hope in the person of Jesus and the invitation to repentance and true life. The church, together with the community, is called to promote forms of individual and community life which proclaim and affirm the faith, hope and love which reconcile and heal human relations, transcendently and with the creation, and nurture, reconstruct and give direction to the creativity and potential of the human being to the honour and glory of God. It must be a community of faith which restores life, encourages fellowship and gives praise to God. The community of faith must reflect the unity of the Trinity: making it possible to know God as creator, sustainer and liberator, Jesus Christ as Saviour who transforms the old and meaningless into new life, and the Holy Spirit, the presence of the risen Christ gives power and strength to the church to carry out its calling and ministry.

The IPC has a mission plan which directs all its projects and activities at the level of the presbyteries and the synod. It includes evangelism, education, diakonia, building the life of the church, and stewardship. Since 1982 the church has its own theological seminary, which is now part of the newly-created Reformed University, the first Protestant institute of higher education in Colombia. Those who prepare for the ministry study at the university, while the church continues a decentralized programme of theological formation for lay people, coordinated in each of the three regions by a pastor specialized in theological education.

EL SALVADOR

Population: 6,709,333

Surface area: 21,040 sq.km

Capital: San Salvador

GNI per capita: 2,340 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Spanish, English

Religion: Christian 97%

Christianity: Catholics 6,031,000; Protestants 806,730;

Independent 932,700 (double affiliation)

El Salvador is part of the Central American region, where indigenous societies existed long before the area was conquered by Spain in the 16th century. Colonization disrupted these communities and killed hundreds of thousands of people. When the population was almost exterminated, the Spanish brought in slaves from Africa. Today El Salvador has a very mixed population. It achieved independence from Spain in 1821. Throughout its history, El Salvador was ruled by a small oligarchy that oppressed the poor. The growing disparity, and the call for land reform, led to the guerilla war of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), from 1980-1992. The population suffered massive killings and human rights abuses, mostly at the hands of government and paramilitary forces, supported by the USA. The UN brokered an end to the armed conflict, and since then the FMNL acts as a political party. Within the Catholic Church in El Salvador and the Protestant churches, Christians have stood up for justice and solidarity with the poor. Many have paid with their lives, among them Archbishop Romero who was shot dead while celebrating the mass, in 1980. The people of El Salvador continue to struggle with poverty. The country's economy is agricultural, with some processing industry. About 25 percent of the population belong to non-Catholic churches, of which at least 50 percent are Pentecostal. There is an Evangelical Fellowship, affiliated with the WEA.

Baptist Association of El Salvador*

(Asociación Bautista de El Salvador, ABES)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 5,927

Local churches: 57

Preaching points: 155

Member of: WCC (1991) – CLAI – BWA – UBLA

Periodical: *Bautista en Acción* (in Spanish)

The first Protestant mission in El Salvador was the Bible Society Mission to Central America, which arrived in the country in 1896. They preached the gospel and distributed literature, but did not establish churches. In 1910, the local leaders related to the mission called on the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (now the American Baptist Churches in the USA) to send missionaries. This is how the Baptist Mission was inaugurated in San Salvador in 1911. In the two decades following the arrival of the first Baptist missionaries, churches were set up in various cities, regional associations were formed, and two Baptist colleges were founded. In 1928 there were 19 churches, 14 church buildings and 10 ordained pastors. In this context the Baptist Association of El Salvador officially came into being in 1934. The first generation of Baptist Christians in El Salvador had to endure hardships on the part of the Catholic Church and rejection by the society at large, to the point of denying them the basic necessities of life.

The Baptist Association of El Salvador understands its mission as preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, promoting the distribution and study of the Bible, and advancing the values of the kingdom of God on earth. The main objectives it pursues are 1) coordinating the efforts of its members in evangelization, education and cooperation, on the basis of Baptist principles, 2) promoting actions of Christian solidarity which make it possible to live the gospel in daily life, and 3) enhanc-

ing solidarity with sister churches at the international level, to extend Christian support to all the poor, the afflicted and the distressed. Currently the association is involved in the organization of evangelization campaigns to win new souls for Christ and initiate new missionary activities; in the development of theological seminars for the training of pastors, lay people and missionaries; in working with young people and the formation of young leaders; and in diaconal work, especially homes for the elderly and persons without relatives who need the compassion and love of Christ offered to them through these efforts.

Salvadorian Lutheran Synod*

(Sínodo Luterano Salvadoreña, SLS)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 15,000

Congregations: 68

Pastors: 17

Evangelists: 11

Deacons: 19

Member of: WCC (1991) – CLAI – LWF

Publication: column in *El Heraldo Luterano* (weekly, in Spanish)

In 1954 the Missouri Synod (USA) began missionary work in El Salvador; Already in 1965 the first three national pastors were ordained. In 1985 the Salvadorian Lutheran Synod became an autonomous church. The relationship with the Missouri Synod was disrupted in 1986 because of differing views on liberation theology and solidarity with the oppressed, ecumenical commitment, ordination of women, etc. During the war in El Salvador the SLS played an outstanding role, advocating for justice and assisting the displaced and the poor. The church had to pay a high price for its clear prophetic stance: one of its pastors was murdered. Many church workers, including the bishop, received threats and had to go into hiding or flee the country.

The SLS currently has 204 “Communities of Faith and Life”, small, well-organized groups in which holistic mission is lived and carried out, and which are connected to the congregations. Each congregation has a pastoral team. After an evaluation in 1998 the church strengthened its executive body and structured the work in four departments: diakonia and development, communication, pastoral work and education. A further review was done in 2004. The SLS implements its work in a holistic way, holding together proclamation and service. It was strongly involved in relief operations following hurricane Mitch and the earthquake of 2001. The church has a strong public profile of advocating for social justice.

MEXICO

Population: 106,384,786

Surface area: 2 million sq.km

Capital: Mexico City

GNI per capita: 6,770 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Spanish, Nahuatl, Maya, other

Religions: Christian 96%

Christianity: Catholics 99,200,000; Protestants 4,434,030; Orthodox 103,100;

Anglicans 25,400; Independent 3,791,720 (double affiliation)

Indigenous civilizations (e.g. Maya, Aztec) existed in Mexico before the Spanish colonized it in 1539 and eliminated much of the Indian population. Mexico achieved independence in 1821. It lost half of its territory in the war with the US in 1846. The Mexican revolution of 1910-17, under Emiliano Zapata, brought dictatorship to an end. A new constitution was adopted, but the ideals, including land reform, were not carried through during the increasingly corrupt reign of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, from 1929 to 2000. Another uprising occurred in 1994, among the indigenous population of Chiapas, in opposition to Mexico's signing of the North America Free Trade Area. The Zapatistas, as they call themselves, initiated an alternative popular movement and became a focal group for the struggle against neo-liberalism and globalization. Mexico has developed a strong economy, based on oil production and modern industry. The relatively high per capita income hides however a highly unequal distribution of wealth between a small elite and the majority of urban and rural poor, mostly Indians. Many Mexicans try to migrate to the USA. Mexico was Christianized by the Catholic Church from the beginning of colonization. Protestant missions came in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Presbyterian Church is the largest Protestant church, followed by the Seventh-day Adventists, the Union of Evangelical Indigenous Churches, the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal), the Baptists, Methodists, and others. Pentecostals represent about 25 percent of all the non-Catholic Christians. The Evangelical Fellowship of Mexico is affiliated with the WEA.

Methodist Church of Mexico

(Iglesia Metodista de México, IMM)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 50,000

Congregations: 400

Pastors: 400

Member of : WCC (1948) – CLAI – WMC – CIEMAL

Methodist work in Mexico began in 1871 when a young Mexican was converted to Methodism in the USA and returned to his country to share his new faith. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church followed in 1873, sending missionaries to explore possibilities and establish congregations. In 1930 Methodism in Mexico became united and the Methodist Church in Mexico was born as an autonomous church. Its bishops are elected every four years. At present the church has six episcopal areas covering 28 of the 30 states of the nation and the federal district. It has a university, two theological seminaries, 150 centres of theological study by extension, 12 schools from nursery to high school, four social centres, two hospitals, two clinics, two orphanages, two homes for the elderly, and a girls' hostel.

NICARAGUA

Population: 5,727,367

Surface area: 130,000 sq.km

Capital: Managua

GNI per capita: 790 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages : Spanish, Miskito

Religions: Christian 97%

Christianity: Catholics 4,860,000; Protestants 739,060; Anglicans 9,500;
Independent 434,520 (double affiliation)

Indigenous people were living in the region when it was colonized by Spain in the 16th century. Britain established its influence on the Caribbean coast in the 17th century. Nicaragua became sovereign in 1854 and added the east coast, where the Miskitos live, to its territory in 1894. Dictatorships succeeded each other during the first half of the 20th century, with frequent US intervention, and armed resistance under the guerilla leader Sandino. From 1936 to 1979 the Somoza dictatorship held the country in its grip. In 1972, Managua was totally destroyed by an earthquake that took 50,000 lives. The mismanagement of international relief funds accelerated the armed opposition, resulting in the Sandinista revolution of 1979. The new regime introduced widespread social and economic reform, aiming at justice and popular participation, and had the support of the poor. As of 1981, however, the USA armed a counter-revolution and strangled Nicaragua economically, which brought the Sandinistas down in 1990. Nicaragua's economy, based on subsistence farming and the export of bananas, coffee and other cash crops, virtually collapsed during the war. The Catholic Church is the majority church. The largest non-Catholic church is the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal). Pentecostals churches represent close to 10 percent of all Christians. The National Evangelical Council of Nicaragua is affiliated with the WEA. Sectors of the Christian churches and Christian groups have been supportive of the struggle for social justice, in cooperation with the ecumenical movement and the WCC.

Baptist Convention of Nicaragua

(Convención Bautista de Nicaragua, CBN)

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 25,000

Local churches: 170

Pastors: 170

Member of : WCC (1983) – CLAI – BWA – UBLA

The Baptist Convention of Nicaragua was founded in 1917 under the auspices of missionaries of the American Baptist churches. Its main objective is to proclaim and live out the gospel of the reign of God in Nicaraguan society. From the beginning the CBN has developed an integrated way of proclaiming the gospel, as is manifested through its Baptist hospital, the Baptist college, its home for the mentally handicapped, a radio station, a programme of preventive health care, a centre for theological formation and a university of Protestant inspiration. Many of the local churches have in similar ways integrated evangelization and service to the community. The CBN has also taken an active part in the founding of larger ministries such as CEPAD (Council of Evangelical Churches of Nicaragua), the first Protestant radio in the country, and the Inter-Church Centre for Social and Theological Studies (CIEETS). Besides the pastors in the local churches, the convention employs several hundred leaders and workers in its institutions. The highest governing body of the CBN is the general assembly which meets once a year. An executive board and the general secretariat look after the on-going matters and the programmes in between the sessions of the general assembly.

The CBN sees as its main challenges an articulation of the gospel which responds to the needs of society, and the development of a prophetic and biblical testimony in different socio-economic circumstances; the strengthening of the

local churches and institutional ministries; the modernization of the governance and administration of the convention, in response to new institutional developments and new forms of ecclesial expression which are emerging in its constituency.

Moravian Church in Nicaragua

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 82,944

Congregations: 199

Bishops: 3

Pastors: 70

Lay pastors: 120

Member of: WCC (1984) – CLAI – MUB

Moravian presence in Nicaragua dates back to 1847, when German Moravian missionaries started work in Bluefields. From the beginning, their work developed among the ethnic groups of the Caribbean coast: the Afro-Caribbeans, and Miskito, Sumu and Rama Indians, which is why today 96 percent of the membership of the Moravian church is in this area. In 1899 the first Nicaraguan pastor was ordained. During the first world war communication became difficult and the mission board in Herrnhut (Germany) decided, in 1916, to transfer the responsibility of administration and finance to the Moravian Church in the USA. In 1949, the first Nicaraguan bishop was consecrated. In 1958, churches were also established on the Pacific side of the country, starting in Managua. In 1972, the leadership and administration of the MCN passed into the hands of a native pastor, and the church became completely autonomous in 1974.

The Moravian Church in Nicaragua as a part of the body of Christ affirms the chief doctrines of the faith as follows: the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whose name baptism is performed; God, the father almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, and the father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came in human form and gives to all who believe in him the power to become children of God; the Holy Spirit who works within all who believe and enables them to know the truth; the doctrine that God, through Christ, visits and redeems his people. The church administers the sacrament of baptism for both children and adults, by pouring or sprinkling of water. The MCN does not dispute other forms of baptism as practised by other churches. It invites all baptized Christians to join with it in celebrating the Lord's supper. It embraces the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, but maintains an ordained ministry of both men and women for administering the sacraments. The MCN regards the chief doctrine of the Christian faith to be that Jesus Christ is the means by which sins are forgiven, not of believers only, but also the sins of the whole world. The person of Christ and his redeeming love is the central point of the church's teaching and preaching.

The MCN has established schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics and institutions of theological and Christian education. In 1974, the synod created a social development programme which includes nutrition, agriculture, fisheries, community development, cooperatives and emergency aid.

Organizationally, the MCN is represented in a provincial synod which meets every three years to review and plan church policy and programme. An executive board is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the synod between meetings. The motto of the church is the same as that of all Moravian churches: "In Essentials – Unity, in Non-Essentials – Liberty, and in all things – Charity (Love)". This is the basis of all its ecumenical relations. In cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, it has produced a translation of the New Testament in Miskito. In 1999,

in cooperation with the Bible Society it completed the entire Bible in both the Miskito and Sumu languages. In 1995, in conjunction with the Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University, the MCN established a nucleus of the aforementioned university in Puerto Cabezas.

In 2004, the MCN completed a Miskito-Spanish-English dictionary which, it is hoped, will be printed in 2005. Presently, a hymnal in Sumu is being prepared. Since the triumph of the People's Revolution in 1979, the MCN has been working hand in hand with repatriated citizens on the Caribbean coast, both infra-structurally as well as spiritually.

PANAMA

Ecumenical Committee of Panama

(Comité Ecuaménico de Panamá, COEPA)

Founded in 1986.

Basis: The Ecumenical Committee of Panama is a fraternal association of churches which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whose name they administer holy baptism.

Member churches:

Calvary Baptist Church
Catholic Church
Episcopal Anglican Church of Panama
Evangelical Methodist Church of Panama
Greek Orthodox Church
Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas
Russian Orthodox Church

Associate member:

Focolare Movement

PERU

Population: 27,968,365
Surface area: 652,200 sq.km
Capital: Lima
GNI per capita: 2,360 US\$
Classification: Developing economy
Languages: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara, other
Religions: Christian 97%
Christianity: Catholics 26,355,003; Protestants 2,013,820; Orthodox 6,300;
Anglican 1,700; Independents 1,301,300 (double affiliation)

Peru was home to various indigenous cultures and later to the Inca empire. The Spanish conquered it in 1532 and exploited the gold and silver mines. Lima became the political and economic centre of the region for several centuries. The Catholic Church established an archbishopric in Lima as early as 1546. Peru declared its independence in 1821. Together with Bolivia, it was involved in the War of the Pacific with Chile, from 1879-83. In the second half of the 20th cen-

ture Peru experienced successively a progressive military regime, bloody attacks by the “Shining Path” guerilla, its repression with massive killings and human rights abuses, and democratically elected but corrupt governments, which were unable to respond to the expectations of the people. The country is rich in mineral resources and produces oil, but its leaders have not succeeded in building a sound and equitable economy. The Andinos, who make up almost half of the population, are the poorest, living in the urban slums and in the mountain areas. Protestant missions began in Peru in the 19th century. Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Holiness churches have grown rapidly in the 20th century, especially among the Andinos. Many of these are members of the National Evangelical Council of Peru. Some of largest churches are the Seventh-day Adventists, the Evangelical Church of Peru, and the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal). Together, the Evangelicals and Pentecostals/Charismatics represented about 12 percent of the Christians in Peru in 2005. The WCC cooperates with several ecumenical groups

National Evangelical Council of Peru

(Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú, CONEP)

Founded in 1940.

Objectives: The objectives of the National Evangelical Council of Peru are to encourage the fellowship and collaboration between the Evangelical organizations of Peru ... and in the spirit of Jesus Christ, to work for the harmony and cooperation between the Christian bodies in Peru, whether they are members of the council or not.

Member churches and missions:

- Assemblies of God of Peru
- Association Christian Mennonite Brethren Churches
- Association Evangelical Church Maranatha of Peru
- Association Evangelical Churches of North-East Peru
- Association Evangelical Church Shipibo-Conibo
- Association Evangelical German-Peruvian Mission
- Association Free Evangelical Churches of Peru
- Autonomous Evangelical Pentecostal Church
- Baptist Association of the South
- Christian and Missionary Alliance of Peru
- Christian Community Body of Christ
- Christian Community Church Living Water
- Church of God in Peru
- Church of God of Peru
- Church of the Evangelical Alliance
- Church of the Mennonite Brethren of North America in Peru
- Church of the Nazarene
- Episcopal Anglican Church of Peru*
- Evangelical Alliance Mission
- Evangelical Andino Mission of Peru
- Evangelical Baptist Convention of Peru
- Evangelical Baptist Union of Peru
- Evangelical Church of Christ of Peru
- Evangelical Church of Peru
- Evangelical Church of Restoration and Missions
- Evangelical Church of the Pilgrims of Peru
- Evangelical Mennonite Mission
- Evangelical Pentecostal Church of Peru
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Peru
- First Baptist Church of Trujillo
- Free Evangelical Church of America in Peru

Friends National Evangelical Church of Peru
 Global Presbyterian Missions
 International Movement Pentecostal Church of God of Peru
 Japanese Evangelical Church of Peru
 Korea Presbyterian Mission in Peru
 Korean Peruvian Missionary Association
 Lutheran Mission of Norway
 Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Peru
 Mission of the Free Church of Scotland
 Missionary Evangelical Church of Peru
 Missionary Evangelical Church of Pucallpa
 Missionary Evangelical Pentecostal Church
 Missionary Fellowship of the Assemblies of God
 Reformed and Presbyterian Evangelical Church in Peru
 Salvation Army
 South America Mission
 Swiss Mission in Peru
 Wesleyan Pilgrim Church

Member organizations:

CONEP has also a number of member organizations, which are not listed here.

Methodist Church of Peru*

(Iglesia Metodista del Perú, IMP)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 8,000

Congregations: 130

Pastors: 50

Member of: WCC (1972) – CLAI – WMC – CIEMAL

Methodist work in Peru dates back to the late 1870s. It failed because of the Pacific War between Peru, Chile and Bolivia. After the war mission work resumed, especially in Lima and the seaport city of Callao. One of the missionaries, Rev. F. Penzotti, was imprisoned because he distributed Bibles. His case became internationally known because the principle of religious freedom was at stake, and he was eventually released. The first Methodist church of Callao was founded in 1889. It was the first evangelical Spanish-speaking church in Peru. Most of the members were migrants from the rural areas. Marginalized by society, they found a warm welcome in the church. The vision of a developing and growing church led the missionaries to set up several colleges, which today are among the best educational institutions of the country. The Colegio América in Callao with 1,200 students is known throughout South America. Other large Methodist colleges exist in Lima, La Victoria, Huancayo, Tarma and Chincha.

The Methodist Church of Peru became autonomous in 1970. It is organized in six districts. The general assembly is the highest governing body. It is presided over by the bishop. Church leaders and pastors are trained at the “Wenceslao Bahamonde” biblical theological community. Some 7,000 children and young people attend the Sunday schools. The church is committed socially and runs various communal assistance programmes.

URUGUAY

Population: 3,463,202

Surface area: 176,200 sq.km

Capital: Montevideo

GNI per capita: 3,950 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Spanish

Religions: Christian 50%; Jewish 1,2%

Christianity*: Catholics 1,212,121; Protestants and Evangelicals 173,160;

Orthodox 28,930; Anglicans 1,400

The indigenous people who lived in the plains of Uruguay were decimated in the three hundred years following the colonization in the 16th century. The last mass killing took place in 1831, after the country's independence in 1825. In the 19th century many Europeans migrated to Uruguay. It was a politically stable and prosperous country with an advanced welfare system. In the 1960s an economic crisis occurred and a left-wing guerilla emerged, the Tupamaros. The movement was repressed by the army, which seized power in 1973. Under the military dictatorship, which lasted until 1984, huge human rights violations took place. Since then, Uruguay is again a functioning democracy. The economy is essentially agricultural, with some manufacturing industry. Export consists of meat, dairy and leather products, wool, etc. Uruguay is the smallest country in Latin America, and also the most secularized. The Catholic Church, which dates back to the beginning of colonization, is the largest church. The Methodists are the oldest Protestant church. There is a large Waldensian community, which is part of the Waldensian Church in Italy, and therefore also of the WCC. Pentecostals represent about 30 percent of the Protestant and Independent churches. The Federation of Evangelical Churches is the oldest ecumenical body. In 1998, a Council of Christian Churches was set up, with the participation of the Catholic and Anglican churches. There is also a Christian Association of Evangelical Churches, affiliated with the WEA. The Orthodox churches are the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Moscow Patriarchate, and Armenian Apostolic Church.

*statistics from Uruguay

Federation of Evangelical Churches of Uruguay

(Federación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Uruguay, FIEU)

Founded in 1956.

Basis of membership: To be a member, a church must indicate its agreement with the objectives of the Federation, and the application must be approved unanimously by the members of the executive board. The final decision is with the assembly.

Member churches:

Armenian Evangelical Church

Evangelical Church of the River Plate

Evangelical Waldensian Church of the River Plate

Mennonite Church of Uruguay

Methodist Church of Uruguay

Pentecostal Church Naciente

Salvation Army

United Evangelical Lutheran Church

Associate members:

Bible Society of Uruguay
 Christian Association of Youth
 Evangelical Gerontological Foundation of Uruguay
 Evangelical Hospital
 Youth for Christ

The Federation of Evangelical Churches of Uruguay is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Council of Christian Churches of Uruguay

(Consejo de Iglesias Cristianas del Uruguay, CICU)

Founded in 1998.

Objectives: Information between the churches and mutual knowledge of each other; promotion of initiatives of dialogue, common prayer, and witness; discernment, in the light of the gospel, of the signs of the times in the national and global community, to contribute to awareness-building and speak with a common voice where possible; serving the churches by promoting ecumenical endeavour and fraternal rapprochement.

Member churches:

Anglican Diocese of Uruguay
 Armenian Evangelical Church
 Catholic Episcopal Conference of Uruguay
Evangelical Church of the River Plate
Evangelical Waldensian Church of Uruguay
Methodist Church of Uruguay
 Pentecostal Church Naciente
 Salvation Army
United Evangelical Lutheran Church

Methodist Church of Uruguay*

(Iglesia Metodista del Uruguay, IMU)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 1,000

Congregations: 21

Pastors: 12

Lay pastors: 4

Member of: WCC (1971) – CLAI – FIEU – CICU – WMC – CIEMAL

Periodical: *Boletín Metodista* (quarterly, in Spanish)

Website www.imu.org.uy

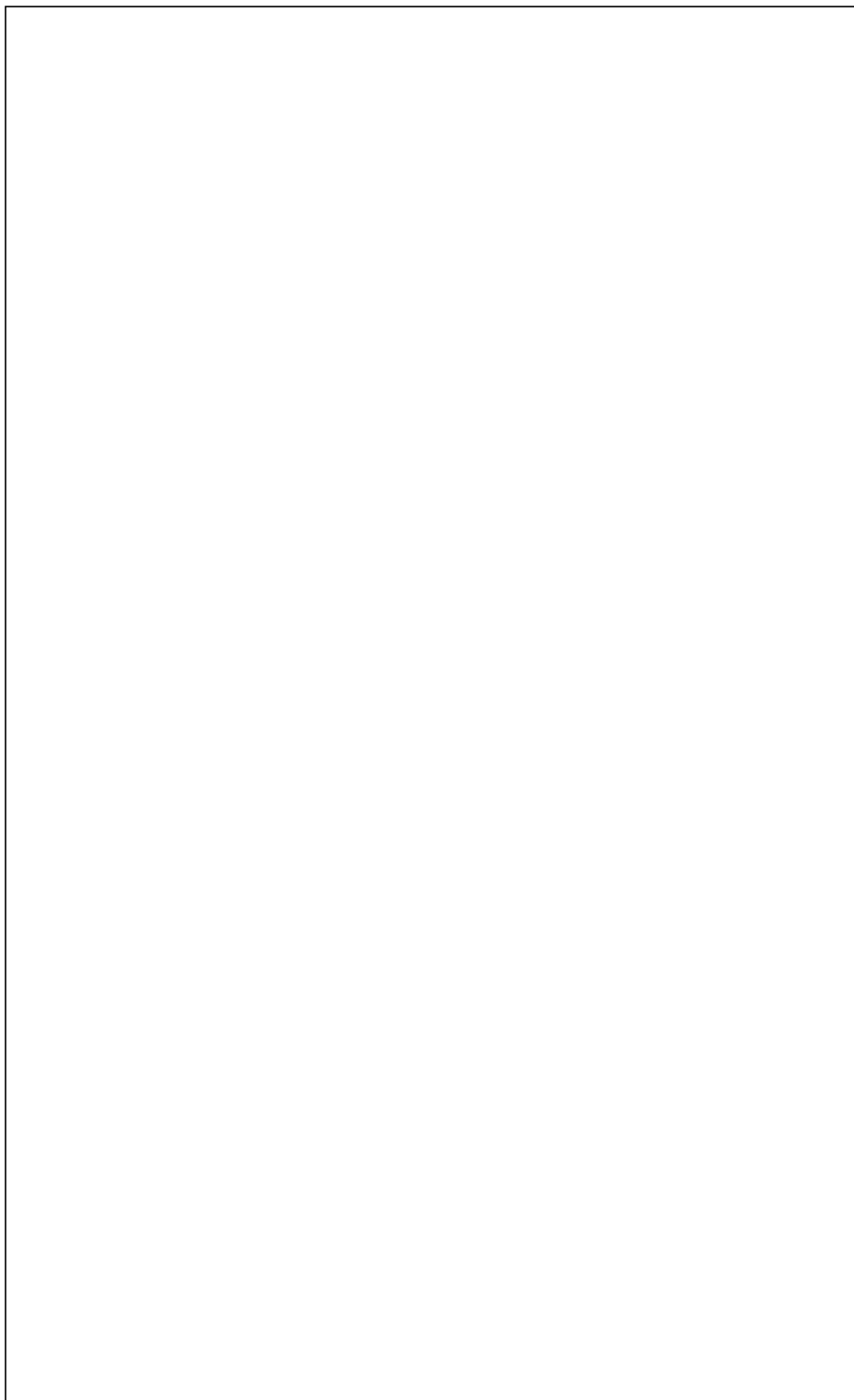
Methodism came to Uruguay in 1838 through mission from England. It was interrupted in 1842 and re-initiated by the Methodist Missionary Society from the USA in 1870. During those first years the work in Uruguay was part of the mission based in Buenos Aires. When the annual conference of South America was formed in 1893, Uruguay became a district. From the beginning there was a strong emphasis on education. The Crandon Institute of Montevideo was founded, which until today is one of the most prestigious educational establishments of the country. Later the Crandon Lyceum and College of Salto were added, and more recently the Institute of Good Will which is dedicated to the formation of young people who are physically handicapped. In 1952 Uruguay became a provisional conference separate from Argentina and in 1968 it was authorized by the general

conference of the United Methodist Church to be an autonomous church. The district conferences were abolished and instead of the episcopal tradition the church adopted the system of a president as leader. The position is open to clergy as well as lay members. The highest authority is the national assembly and a board for Life and Mission composed of three clergy and six lay persons supervises the whole church. Besides the one thousand members there is a wider community of about two thousand people who are related to the church.

The mission of the church is implemented through five departments: evangelism, education and formation, women and family, youth, and service and witness. The coordination between these departments and with the department of communication aims at an integrated response to mission. In 2004 a pastoral institute was created for the on-going formation of the laity and the renewal of pastoral studies. Two large programmes are the focus of the mission of the church: the integrated rural mission in the north, in the most impoverished region where the church is growing more than elsewhere, and the urban mission in Montevideo. Both are challenges to the whole church and areas of voluntary service of professionals and lay persons from the congregations and the wider community. The church has taken a leadership role together with the Waldensian Church on the issue of women's rights in reproductive health and has a ministry with persons of diverse sexual orientations. Historically the IMU has marked itself by its commitment to human and political rights in the country.

Together with the Conference of Argentina and the Church in the South of Brazil the programme "Churches without Borders" was initiated in 2003, as a joint mission and pastoral project in the border zone between Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina. The IMU maintains close relations with the Methodist churches in the USA, the UK, Switzerland, Argentina and Brazil.

Middle East



MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) is a fellowship of churches relating to the mainstream of the modern ecumenical movement, the same that gave birth to the World Council of Churches and other regional councils throughout the world. The Middle East is the region where the church was born, and where the Orthodox churches (Eastern and Oriental) have existed since the beginning of Christianity. The Catholic presence dates back to the time of the crusades and the Latin penetration of the region. In the 19th and 20th century, Protestant missions established themselves in the Middle East and Protestant churches came into being. They formed in 1962 the Near East Christian Council. Informal contacts between Protestant groups and the Orthodox, which began in the 1930s, led in 1964 to intentional dialogue. By 1972, sufficient progress had been made to draft a constitution for an ecumenical body. In 1974 the Middle East Council of Churches was brought into being at its first general assembly, in Nicosia, Cyprus. From the outset, the MECC adopted the model of "families of churches". The Eastern Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox and the Protestants were the three founding families. In 1990 the Catholic churches (Latin and Oriental rite) joined the council, constituting the Catholic family within the MECC. Each family is equally represented in the governing bodies and the general assembly, and decides on its own representation.

The MECC has been a sign of hope for the Christians in the region in the midst of fear and despair caused by conflict and division. The churches have endeavoured to hold up the council as an instrument through which they could demonstrate together their hope in a better future through spiritual renewal, the search for unity and common witness. This has included efforts for a true and credible witness to justice and peace in the Middle East. The general assemblies since 1974 have been spiritual events and opportunities for mutual enrichment:

Nicosia	1974	<i>Our Common Christian Message Today</i>
Broummana, Lebanon	1977	<i>... and He gave us the Ministry of Reconciliation</i>
Nicosia	1980	<i>Your Kingdom Come</i>
Nicosia	1985	<i>The Living Hope</i>
Nicosia	1990	<i>Keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace</i>
Limassol	1994	<i>Peace I Leave With You, My Peace I Give Unto You</i>
Beirut	1999	<i>Jesus Christ is the Same, Yesterday, Today, and Forever</i>
Limassol	2003	<i>Abide in My Love</i>

The recurrent concepts of unity, peace, hope and perseverance that are reflected in the themes of the assemblies point to the will of the churches to address together the issues of the Middle East. The MECC has worked quietly and effectively as an agent of mercy and reconciliation in war-torn Lebanon. It has a long-standing record of solidarity with the Palestinians, providing assistance to refugees, upholding the rightful quest for a Palestinian state and supporting peace initiatives. It was early on the scene in Iraq after the Gulf War, and has supported

the churches and people of Iraq in the situation of violence and conflict since 2003. It has initiated discussions within the Arab society to engage both Muslims and Christians in the examination of what should go into the building of a just and peaceful civil society, and it has participated in some important initiatives of Christian reconciliation. The inclusion of the Catholic churches in 1990, which was the fruit of long and patient efforts, has made the MECC the most representative Christian body in the region. The council has also been engaged in a dialogue with Evangelical missions operating in the Middle East, which sometimes bypass the established churches and create tensions.

The guiding principles of the council are to strengthen the fellowship of its member churches, to encourage mutual support between the churches, to build understanding and respect between Christians and people of other faiths, to nurture a spirit of service (*diakonia*), and to be a mediator between Christians and churches in the Middle East and their brothers and sisters in Christ elsewhere. Programmatically, the MECC works on questions of faith and unity, education and renewal, life and service, and communication. The MECC has 27 member churches in 12 countries, representing 14 million Christians. The head offices are in Beirut, Lebanon, and smaller offices exist in Limassol, Cyprus, and Cairo, Egypt.

Periodical: *MECC News Report*, *Courrier œcuménique*, *Al-Muntada*

Website: www.mec-churches.org

Member churches of the Middle East Council of Churches

Catholic family:

- Armenian Catholic Church of Cilicia
- Chaldean Catholic Church of Babylon
- Greek Melkite Patriarchate of Antioch, Alexandria & Jerusalem
- Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- Maronite Church of Antioch
- Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch

Eastern Orthodox family:

- Church of Cyprus*
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa*
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East*
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem*

Evangelical family:

- Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East*
- *Diocese of Egypt*
- *Diocese of Jerusalem*
- *Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf*
- *Diocese of Iran*
- Episcopal Church in the Sudan*
- Evangelical Church in Sudan
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt – Synod of the Nile*
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran*
- National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon*
- National Evangelical Union of Lebanon
- Presbyterian Church in the Sudan*
- Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East*
- Protestant Church in Algeria*

French Reformed Church in Tunisia
National Evangelical Church in Kuwait

Oriental Orthodox family:

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)

Coptic Orthodox Church

Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

The Middle East Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

FELLOWSHIP OF MIDDLE EAST EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

The Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches is an association of the Evangelical (Protestant) churches of the Middle East which believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in Jesus Christ as Lord, Saviour and the one head of the church. They believe that the Holy Bible is the sole foundation for Christian doctrine. They confess that justification is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and that good works are the fruit of faith.

The motivation for unity was always rooted in the faith and life of the Evangelical churches in the Middle East. The ecumenical movement in the Middle East sprang up from within the evangelical church, which through its biblical concepts and spirituality, yearns for unity. This motivation brought the Evangelical churches of the Middle East together. "The United Missionary Council in Jerusalem" (1924) was the first step, followed by the "Council of West Asia and North Africa" held at Helwan, Egypt in 1927, and its two peers, "The Missionary Conference of Syria and Palestine" held in the north, and "The Missionary Conference of all Egypt" held in the south. Later all these assemblies joined under one nomenclature, "The Near East Christian Council". Thirty-five years later, in 1964 in Egypt, the Syrian Orthodox Church joined the council, whose name changed to "The Near East Council of Churches". Then, in 1974, in order to encourage other churches in the Middle East to join the ecumenical movement, the Evangelical churches initiated the idea of playing a lesser role in administration and direct responsibility, in order that the other churches in the Middle East might join. As a result "The Middle East Council of Churches" came into existence on the basis of Orthodox, Oriental and Evangelical church families.

The yearning for unity does not mean that the member churches within the Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches are fully united. Theological questions related to eucharist and ministry are still unresolved, therefore the quest for unity is still a top priority for the FMEEC, which believes that unity amongst its members will foster the unity with the other families within the MECC. In 1997 the Fellowship formulated a "Proposal for the Unity of the Evangelical Churches in the Middle East", which however was not accepted by all its members. In 2005 a new proposal was launched, aiming at a formal agreement between the churches of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions in the Fellowship.

The objectives of the Fellowship are to strengthen the mission and ministry of the Protestant churches, to promote leadership training and formation of the laity, men and women, and to bring the member churches to closer unity through working and learning together.

The Fellowship runs programmes in the areas of theology, women, Christian education, church-related schools, and service to the churches in Iran and Sudan.

Member churches of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches

Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Egypt
Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Iran
Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem
Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Cyprus and the Gulf
Episcopal Church in the Sudan
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt
 Evangelical Presbyterian Synod of the Sudan
 Methodist Church in Tunisia
 National Evangelical Church in Kuwait
National Evangelical Synod in Syria and Lebanon
 National Evangelical Union in Lebanon
Presbyterian Church in the Sudan
Protestant Church in Algeria
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran
Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East

CYPRUS

Population: 802,500
 Surface area: 9,250 sq.km
 Capital: Nicosia
 GNI per capita: 17,580 US\$ (in the part occupied by Turkey: 7,135 US\$)
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Greek, Turkish, English
 Religions: Christian 82%; Muslim (Sunni) 18%
 Christianity: Orthodox 642,600; Catholics 13,300; Protestants 5,000;
 Anglicans 2,900

Cyprus is an independent republic since 1960. The constitution divided the population into two ethnic communities, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot. In 1963 tensions began to develop which resulted in a rebellion led by the Turkish Cypriot leaders. A United Nations peacekeeping force was established in 1964. In 1974, after a coup d'état staged by the ruling military junta of Greece, Turkey invaded the northern part of the island. As a result, 142,000 Greek Cypriots and 55,000 Turkish Cypriots were displaced, and another 20,000 Greek Cypriots enclaved in the area were gradually forced to leave. In 1983 the Turkish occupied area was unilaterally declared an independent "state", recognized by Turkey only. UN-led direct talks between the two sides resumed in 1999. In 2002 the UN presented a plan for a comprehensive settlement. After further negotiations it was submitted to the people of Cyprus in two simultaneous referenda in 2005. The Greek Cypriots rejected it, the Turkish Cypriots voted in favour. Cyprus was admitted as a member of the European Union in 2005, but without achieving the goal of unity. In the event of a solution, which is still hoped for by all Greek and Turkish Cypriots, there is a provision for the admission of the Turkish-occupied part of the island. The Church of Cyprus is the majority church. There is an Armenian Apostolic Church which is part of the Holy See of Cilicia. The Anglican community belongs to the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East. Latin and Maronite Catholic churches, and several small Protestant and Pentecostal churches are also present in Cyprus.

Church of Cyprus

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)
 Membership: 654,000
 Dioceses: 6
 Parishes: 628
 Bishops: 10
 Priests: 600
 Member of: WCC (1948) – MECC – CEC
 Periodical: *Apostolos Varnavas* (monthly, in Greek)

Cyprus was evangelized from the very beginning of Christianity. The Apostle Barnabas is regarded as the founder and first bishop of the local church, because of his great contribution to the establishment of the new faith and his martyrdom (AD 57). Towards the end of the 4th century, the Church of Cyprus was fully established. Bishoprics were organized in all main towns and church life flourished in all its aspects. The Patriarchate of Antioch wanted to place the church under its jurisdiction, but the Council of Ephesus in 431, and later the emperor, recognized the autocephaly of the Church of Cyprus. Politically, Cyprus became dependent on Byzantium. From the 7th to the 10th century it suffered under the attacks of Arab Muslims. It was in this period that the local church leaders began to assume the political role of ethnarchs, which became gradually established thereafter in the course of the country's history. Cyprus was definitively liberated from the Arabs in 965, and there followed a flourishing of monasticism and Byzantine art. Most of the monasteries of Cyprus were founded in the 11th century.

This progressive course of the church was stopped when the Crusaders conquered the island in 1191. The period of French (1191-1489) and Venetian rule (1489-1570/1) that followed lasted for almost four centuries. The conquerors introduced a Latin hierarchy and took control of church affairs. The Orthodox Church suffered much under the Latin rule. The bishops, priests and monks defended the Greek Orthodox faith and identity (tradition, culture, language) and the faithful gathered around them. Under the Turkish occupation (1570-1878) the Latin church was almost completely extinguished. The Turks allowed only the existence of the Greek Orthodox Church, which was permitted to reconstitute itself. Nevertheless, the Ottoman period was also a time of hardship. The bishops, and especially the archbishop, were the only shelter and protection for the Orthodox people. They were also held responsible by the regime for any problem, disturbance or protest, and many were exiled. During this period, the Ecumenical Patriarchate assisted the Church of Cyprus many times and in many ways.

When the British established their rule over Cyprus, in 1878, the Orthodox Church and people believed that an era of justice, prosperity and modernization would begin, and that the British would allow the fulfillment of the national dream, the union (*enosis*) of Cyprus with motherland Greece. Unfortunately, nothing of that happened. After a spontaneous protest in 1931, which was violently repressed, the struggle for liberation began in 1955, organized, financed and guided by the Orthodox Church. Archbishop Makarios III, following the long tradition of *ethnarchy*, was the political leader of the liberating organization (EOKA). He was exiled, but Cyprus became an independent state in 1960, for the first time in its long history, with Archbishop Makarios as its first president.

Unfortunately, the coup d'état of 1974, organized by the junta in Athens, was a disaster for the people, the Republic and the Church of Cyprus. Turkey invaded the island under the pretext of protecting the rights of the Turkish-Cypriot community, occupied 37 percent of the land, and destroyed churches, monasteries,

cemeteries and other shrines. Archbishop Makarios, who returned to Cyprus in December 1974, resumed the struggle for the rights of his flock and efforts to rebuild the country upon the ruins left by the invasion. The Church of Cyprus has consistently denounced and opposed the division of the country.

Since independence, the church has developed many and diverse activities, covering all aspects of life and society in Cyprus. It has built many schools and has set up cultural, philanthropic and church foundations, as well as a radio-TV station. Scholarship programmes for needy students have been put in place. The church has established two new bishoprics (Limassol and Morphou) and has initiated missionary activity in Africa. A new (1979) constitutional charter of the church was written to replace the old one of 1914. The Church of Cyprus has become host to many international Orthodox and ecumenical meetings.

EGYPT

Population: 74,878,313

Surface area: 1 million sq.km

Capital: Cairo

GNI per capita: 1,390 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Arabic

Religions : Muslim 86%; Christian 14%

Christianity: Orthodox 9,971,860; Protestants 545,844; Catholics 257,000;

Egypt was the cradle of one of the world's great civilizations. An empire grew up around 3200 BC in the Nile valley, and a series of dynasties ruled Egypt for the next three millennia. The last dynasty fell to the Persians in 341 BC who in turn were replaced by the Greeks, and later the Romans. The Arabs introduced Islam and Arabic in the 7th century and ruled Egypt until it was taken over by the Turks in 1517. Britain seized control of the country in 1822. Egypt recovered full sovereignty after World War II, and became a republic in 1952 under President Nasser, who nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956. Another major milestone was the construction of the Aswan dam in Upper Egypt, which was finished in 1971. Egypt fought three wars with Israel in 1956, 1967 and 1973, before it signed the Camp David peace agreement in 1978. It is the most populated country in the Arab world. It struggles with huge economic problems and social inequalities. Egypt was Christianized as of the first century and Alexandria was one of the main centres of the early church. Islam is the majority religion, but the Coptic Christians still form a sizeable minority. The Copts are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians. Besides the Coptic Orthodox Church, there is also the smaller Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria. Anglican, Catholic and Protestant-Evangelical and Pentecostal churches have come into being in the 19th and 20th century, mostly – but not only – among the Copts. The Fellowship of Evangelicals in Egypt is affiliated with the WEA.

Coptic Orthodox Church

Church Family: Orthodox (Oriental)

Membership: 12,000,000*

Dioceses: 72

Parishes: 1,500

Bishops: 101

Priests: 3,100

Member of: WCC (1948) – AACC – MECC

Periodicals: *El-Kerazah and Watany* (weekly, in Arabic)

Website: www.coptic.org

The Copts are the native Christians of Egypt and the direct descendants of the ancient Egyptians. Eusebius records the tradition that the church in Egypt was founded by St Mark the Evangelist, and Alexandria ranked with Antioch and Rome as one of the chief sees of the early church. The Coptic Church suffered severely in the persecution under Diocletian. In Egypt the rapid development of monasticism is attested by the many Coptic “Lives of the Saints” and “Sayings of the Fathers”. The Byzantine political domination and the misunderstanding of the Coptic doctrine caused the Coptic Church to undergo severe sufferings at the hands of the Byzantine rulers. In 616 the Copts came under Persian domination. In 642 they were conquered by the Arabs, whose rule in varying forms has lasted to the present day. Long periods of comparative peace would suddenly be broken by persecution, e.g. under the Caliph el Hakim (996-1021), who is said to have destroyed 3,000 churches and caused large numbers to apostatize. The Coptic Church is the largest Christian community in the Middle East. The Coptic language is used mainly in the church and in the service books, which provide the Arabic text in parallel columns. The liturgies used are those of St Basil, St Gregory and St Cyril. Five important fasts are observed: 1) the pre-Lenten fast of Nineveh, 2) the great fast of Lent, 3) the fast of the Nativity before Christmas, 4) the fast of the Apostles, after the Ascension, 5) the fast of the Virgin, before the Assumption. In addition Wednesday and Friday are fasting days except between Easter and Pentecost. Of the hundreds of monasteries which flourished in the deserts of Egypt there are now twenty left with more than 1000 monks, and seven convents with about 600 nuns.

Towards the middle of the 19th century the Coptic Church began to undergo phases of new development. Primary, secondary and technical schools for boys and girls were established, some by the patriarchate and the diocesan authorities, others by various Coptic benevolent societies. The theological school for the preparation of priests and lay leaders was re-established in Cairo in 1975 under the name of Theological Seminary. Today there are nine seminaries in Egypt and five outside the country.

It should be noted that the Coptic language, being the last form or stage of the ancient Egyptian language (originally written in picture-form called hieroglyphics), is indispensable for the study of Pharaonic history and for biblical studies. In the 2nd century AD, Pantaenus, the principal of the theological school in Alexandria, established the Coptic alphabet, using Greek characters and adding seven from the Egyptian which correspond to sounds that do not exist in Greek, in order to record phonetically the vernacular of Egypt. Public interest in theological studies as well as in Coptic history and tradition has led to the foundation by the church of the Institute of Coptic Studies in Cairo. More than one hundred post-graduate students are currently enrolled in the institute.

The Coptic laity (men and women) participate actively in the life of the church. Parish church councils comprise various sub-committees which cooperate with the clergy to meet the pastoral and social needs of the community. Diocesan communities and parish congregations have established a large number of benevolent societies covering a wide range of spiritual, educational and welfare services.

*Distribution:

– Egypt: 11,000,000

– Outside Egypt: 1,000,000 (Australia, Europe, North America)

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 250,000*

Congregations: 314

Pastors: 234

Member of: WCC (1963) – MECC – FMEEC – WARC

Periodical: *Al-Huda* (in Arabic)

Website: www.epcegypt.org

Founded in 1854 by American Presbyterian missionaries, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt became autonomous in 1926 and has since carried on the tradition of serving the local communities through countless social, educational, medical, evangelistic and mission programmes. At the forefront of education and inclusivity in Egypt, the Synod of the Nile founded the country's first primary schools for girls, for students with special needs, and vocational training centres ranging from secretarial work to dairy farming. Inheriting 13 American mission schools, the synod now operates 23, in addition to 37 schools for all ages administered by local churches. Members of the Synod of the Nile are credited with co-founding Egypt's two leading academic institutions, Cairo University and the American University in Cairo, while training pastors from across Africa and the Middle East at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo. The seminary reforms itself to this day to meet the demands of mission and pastoral leadership amidst a diverse geographical, socio-economic and religious constituency.

"The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person" reminds all church members of their great privilege and responsibility. This mantra describes the newest training programme for lay ministers working in hospitals, youth centres, nursing homes, hostels, orphanages and retreat centres across the country, struggling for quality and dignity of life for Christians and Muslims alike. The church runs three hospitals and four orphanages. Youth centres have become a vital part of the life of the church; there are five in Alexandria, one in Port Said and several others in different places in Egypt. Working with the poorest of the poor, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services represents one of Egypt's largest development organizations addressing rampant illiteracy, women's rights, sexual education, industrialized urbanization and tolerance. The Synod of the Nile was among those that initiated the inclusion of the Orthodox and Catholic churches into the Middle East Council of Churches, and continues to be a voice for ecumenism. It hosts an inter-denominational dialogue with the Episcopalians and Lutherans, in which it is hoped to include the Coptic Orthodox Church in the near future. The church is also running two programmes for Christian-Muslim dialogue.

*Official church membership does not accurately reflect church attendance. For various political and social reasons, an unknown but large number of people, while fully active and vital "members" of a congregation, maintain their official membership in the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)
 Membership: 500,000
 Dioceses: 18
 Parishes: 500
 Metropolitans and Bishops: 18
 Priests: 500
 Member of: WCC (1948) – MECC
 Website: www.greekorthodox-alexandria.org

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa is the second ranking Orthodox See (after the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople). It is in communion with all the (Eastern) Orthodox churches in the world and belongs to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Patriarchate of Alexandria extends its ecclesiastical jurisdiction to all the countries of the African continent. Christianity made its way to Alexandria at a very early date, via the Jews of the Diaspora. However, it is St Mark the Evangelist who is regarded both by tradition and in the light of various written sources as the founder of the church in Egypt and, indeed, throughout the continent of Africa. St Mark arrived in Egypt in 43 AD and met a martyr's death on his second visit to Alexandria. Already in its very first years the church of Alexandria expanded its activities to cover not only Egypt and Libya, but also the sub-Saharan countries of Africa. The history of the church can be divided into the following periods: from its foundation to the First Ecumenical Council in 325; from 325 to the Arab conquest of Egypt in 642; from 642 to 1517 when Egypt came under the sway of the Ottoman Turks; from the Turkish conquest to the liberation of Greece from the Turkish yoke in 1821; from 1821 to the present day. All the way through the first centuries of the life of the Church of Alexandria, persecution and heresy were twin threats, but the church rose to the occasion and never lost its courage. The entire period of Arab rule was also a prolonged torment for the Christians of Egypt. The Patriarchate of Alexandria was more than once in danger of complete extinction as a result of the cruel measures taken by the rulers of Egypt. When the Turks took Egypt in 1517, a new era dawned for the Christians. Persecution ceased. The patriarch received from the sultan a firman safeguarding all the patriarchal privileges and guaranteeing that the patriarchate would be allowed to perform its duties in peace. The 19th century could most aptly be described as the period in which the church experienced a renaissance. The spiritual regeneration reached completion during the 20th century.

Among the most important milestones in the early history of the Church of Alexandria are the appearance of monasticism in Egypt, the creation of the famous School of Alexandria, and the emergence of a distinct Christian community among the Egyptians, separate from the Greeks. Since the 4th Ecumenical Council in 451 the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa have been separate churches.

In the course of the 20th century the Patriarchate of Alexandria developed a remarkable missionary activity on the African continent, with the assistance of the Orthodox churches of Cyprus and Greece. Whereas in the past the church mainly served the Greek expatriate communities throughout Africa, it was now reaching out to the local people. Kenya, Ghana and South Africa were countries where African Orthodox communities were established and granted recognition, and from where the mission spread to other countries like Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, the DRC, etc. In 1981 the Orthodox Patriarchal Theological School was

opened in Nairobi, Kenya. It plays a crucial role in the formation of African clergy. The church is striving to be a truly African Orthodox Church, struggling to find ways and means to support itself and to build upon the foundations of the original work of the Apostle Mark, Evangelist of Africa.

IRAN

Population: 70,675,076

Surface area: 1,648,195 sq.km

Capital: Teheran

GNI per capita: 2,010 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Language: Farsi

Religions: Muslim 97%; Zoroastrian, Baha'i, Jewish, Christian 3%

Christianity*: Orthodox 135,000; Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Catholics 10,000; Protestants and Evangelicals 5,000

Iran, the old Persia, was settled over 3000 years ago by the Aryan peoples, from which the country's name is derived. From the 16th century onwards, Iran was ruled by a shah, or king. In 1978, the monarchy was overthrown. An Islamic theocratic republic was established, in which the political authority is vested in religious scholars. The regime has conservative and reformist currents. Shi'a Islam has been the official religion of Iran since the 16th century, and Shiites form 89 percent of the population; 9 percent are Sunni. Iran has rich oil and gas reserves. Production and export are controlled by the state. The majority of the population live from small-scale industry, commerce and farming. While Christians form less than 1 percent of the population, the church has a long history in Iran. The Assyrian Church of the East extended to Persia and beyond, from the 5th to the 7th century. Historically, this small church was called the Church of Persia. A small community still exists in Iran. The largest Christian group is the Armenian Apostolic Church, under the jurisdiction of the Holy See of Cilicia. During the 19th century, Catholic (both Latin and Eastern rites), Anglican and Protestant churches were established in Iran. There is also an Assembly of God church (Pentecostal). After the Islamic revolution in 1978, most newly established church properties were confiscated and educational institutions were limited to Christian education among Christians. During the 1980s the Bible society was banned and the government shut down many newly formed Protestant and Evangelical churches.

*statistics from Iran

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 1,500

Presbyteries: 3

Congregations: 7

Places of worship: 9

Pastors: 5

Elders: 35

Member of: WCC (1950) – MECC – FMEEC – WARC

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran developed out of the work of American Presbyterian and Congregational missionaries, the first of whom came to Iran in 1834. The work started among the Assyrian Christians (Assyrian Church of the East) of Urumia (Rezaieh) district in north-west Iran. The hope was that the old churches of the East might be revitalized so that once again, as in the Middle Ages, they would become powerful and zealous agents of mission. Unfortunately, those members who were touched by the evangelical spirit were forced to leave the old church, and in 1855 several Protestant congregations came into existence in and around Rezaieh. The first presbytery was organized in 1862, and others were established later. In the meantime, Presbyterian missionary work in Iran led to the formation of other congregations in various parts of the country, composed of people from different backgrounds, e.g. Armenian Christians and converts from Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. In 1934 all the Evangelical churches in Iran joined together in a synod, which became an autonomous national Iranian church. In 1963, it adopted a new constitution and took the name of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran.

Today services in the congregations are held in Persian, Assyrian and Armenian, and the three presbyteries are organized according to these languages. The common language is Farsi. Two representatives from each presbytery make up the executive committee of the synod. There are six young lay preachers, two part-time Christian educators and about 30 young women and men who are voluntarily involved in different Christian education programmes of the congregations.

ISRAEL / PALESTINE

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 400,000

Parishes: 50

Bishops: 17

Priests: 50

Member of: WCC (1948) – MECC

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, or Church of Jerusalem, is the uninterrupted continuation of the first Christian community, whose first bishop was St James, the brother of the Lord. St James presided over the first Apostolic Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD. From 70 to 134 AD the Church of Jerusalem was in exile in Transjordan, but throughout the centuries the See has been Jerusalem. St Alexander, one of the prominent bishops in the early period, founded a theological school and a library. During the three centuries of persecution against Christianity, many members of the Church of Jerusalem became martyrs. A new period started in the 4th century when St Helen, commissioned by her son the emperor Constantine the Great, erected the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. More churches were built in places related to the life of Jesus Christ, such as the river Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, Mount Tabor, the Mount of Olives, etc. A monastic order, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, was established in order to serve and safeguard the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places, and to witness to the truth of Christ.

The period from the 4th to the 7th century was the golden age of the Church of Jerusalem. Many embraced the Christian faith, pilgrims came to the Holy Land,

and monks gathered in the desert or lived as hermits. It was also the time of great theologians and desert fathers. Their contribution to the doctrinal theology and ascetic life of the church remains an inspiration to this day. The Church of Jerusalem was promoted from a bishopric to a patriarchate (5th after Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch) by the 4th Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451. Its jurisdiction covered the territories of the three Palestines: Caesarea, Skythopolis and Petra (which correspond in the political situation of today to Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan).

The Persian invasion in 614 was a catastrophe for the Church of Jerusalem. It was followed by the Islamic invasion of 638 which put an end to Byzantine sovereignty over the city. From that time onwards the church tried to adapt to the new situation of an Islamic state. The Actiname, an agreement signed by Patriarch Sophronios and Omar-Ibn-Khatab, accorded privileges and rights to the Church of Jerusalem. Again there were some famous theologians, poets and monks in the church. In 1099 a new trauma came, when the Crusaders took Jerusalem. Their presence lasted for almost a century. Salah-Edin restored the rights of the Church of Jerusalem in 1189. New difficulties were to be overcome, but the church's life continued during the reign of the Mamelukes. From 1517 to 1917, the church was under the authority of the Ottoman empire. During this period, other Christian denominations began to show interest in the Holy Land, accosting the local Orthodox faithful and approaching the Turkish authorities in order to acquire rights to the holy shrines. The struggle for prevalence between communities led to the Berlin Conference in 1878, which confirmed the status quo in the holy places. Several patriarchs of this period deserve special memory, among them Chrysantos, the founder of St George Hospital, and Cyril, in whose days the Theological School of the Holy Cross, the library and the printing press were established and many liturgical books were translated into Arabic, for the Arabic-speaking congregations.

The political changes of the 20th century in the Middle East have affected the church, and have pushed many of the faithful to emigrate from the Holy Land. In spite of all the vicissitudes, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, with the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and its 100 members, with its congregations in three political sovereignties, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, continues its religious, social, cultural and reconciling mission, under the spiritual guidance of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III, the 141st patriarch of Jerusalem.

Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 37,000

Dioceses: 4

Parishes: 31

Bishops: 4

Priests: 78

Member of: WCC (1976) – MECC – ACC

Periodical: *Bible Lands*

Website: www.jerusalem.anglican.org

The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East was officially inaugurated in 1976. It succeeded the old Jerusalem archbishopric and was established in accordance with principles set by the Anglican Consultative Council. Metropolitan authority has been delegated by the archbishop of Canterbury to the cen-

tral synod of the church. The primate is elected by the synod from among the diocesan bishops. St George's Church in Jerusalem is the centre of Anglican presence in the Middle East. Though in no way detracting from the acknowledgment of the position of the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem as the successor to St James as Bishop of Jerusalem, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the Cathedral of Jerusalem, St George's has the status of a cathedral church. It serves not only the diocese, but also in a unique way the whole Anglican communion, with which it is linked by the episcopal canons who have a share in the government of the cathedral. The dean of St George's is appointed by a special electoral college on which the episcopal canons are represented. The cathedral ministers to both local and expatriate congregations and to pilgrims, and works with the bishop in fostering good relations with the other churches represented in the parent city of the Christian faith. While acknowledging the unique place of Jerusalem in the Christian world, the Anglican Consultative Council decided that the general principle by which the Anglican Church in any place is represented by its diocesan bishop should also obtain in Jerusalem and the Middle East, and that the bishop in Jerusalem should therefore, apart from fulfilling his primary function as minister and pastor, be its representative in the holy city.

The diocese of Iran is presently in great difficulties. Besides losing its hospital and other church properties, it has no bishop or ordained priest to give pastoral care. The diocese of Egypt, with jurisdiction over North Africa, Ethiopia and Somalia, ministers to small communities of Egyptians mainly in and around Cairo and to expatriate communities in the other countries. The diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf ministers not only to British and American expatriates but also to Pakistanis, Indians, Palestinians and others throughout the area of the Gulf. The diocese of Jerusalem has considerable responsibilities for schools, welfare centres, and work among the aged and the handicapped. It also ministers to many refugees. St George's College continues to perform its particular role in providing facilities for study and research; St George's hostel continues to cater for pilgrims and visitors.

Together with the other churches in Jerusalem, the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East is actively involved in seeking a just solution of the conflict in the Holy Land and building bridges of reconciliation.

LEBANON

Population: 3,760,703
 Surface area: 10,452 sq.km
 Capital: Beirut
 GNI per capita: 4,980 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Arabic, English, French
 Religions: Muslim 59%; Christian 39%
 Christianity: Catholics 1,180,000; Orthodox 419,300; Protestants 20,810;
 Independent 63,080

Lebanon was Christianized as of the first century AD. With the Arab conquest and Islamization in the 7th century, it became the area with the highest proportion of Christians in the Middle East. It was occupied by the Turks from the 16th century until 1918 when the western powers liberated Lebanon. Under French mandate until 1943, it became independent in 1944, with a political system that

provided a distribution of power between the majority Christians, the Muslims (Sunni and Shi'ite), and the Druze (a Muslim sect). This balance was gradually disrupted because of demographic changes among the religious communities. From 1975 to 1990 Lebanon was the scene of a civil war which devastated the country. It ended with an arrangement that placed Lebanon under the military and political tutelage of Syria. Israel, which had occupied southern Lebanon in the 1980s, withdrew in 2000. Syria repatriated its forces in 2005 under popular and international pressure. Lebanon is faced with the challenges of political stability, economic recovery and reconstruction. Christians have made a distinguished contribution to the making of Lebanon and continue to play a key role in the social and political development of the country. The largest Christian community is the Maronite Church, which traces its origins back to the 4th century and is Catholic. The main Orthodox churches are the Patriarchate of Antioch (Eastern), and the Armenian Apostolic and Syrian Orthodox churches (Oriental). Smaller Catholic churches are the Melkites (Greek), Chaldean, Latin, Armenian and Syrian. The small Protestant churches are the fruit of missionary work in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)

Church Family: Orthodox (Oriental)

Membership: 1,285,000*

Dioceses: 13

Parishes: 150

Bishops: 19

Priests: 120

Member of: WCC (1962) – MECC

Periodical: *Hask* (monthly, in Armenian)

Website: www.cathcil.org

The origin of the Armenian Church dates back to the apostolic age. Christianity was preached in Armenia as early as the second half of the first century by St Thaddeus and St Bartholomew, two apostles of Jesus Christ. During the first three centuries Christianity in Armenia was a hidden religion under heavy persecution. In 301 AD Christianity was officially accepted by the Armenians as the state religion. St Gregory the Illuminator, the patron saint of the Armenian Church, and King Tiridates III, the ruler of the time, played a pivotal role in the Christianization of Armenia. It is a well recognized historical fact that the Armenians were the first nation to formally adhere to Christianity.

St Gregory the Illuminator organized the Armenian Church hierarchy and chose as the site of the Catholicosate the then capital city of Vagharshapat (Holy Etchmiadzin). Because of the continuous political upheavals, the Catholicosate was transferred to various cities, beginning in 485, and was established in 1080 in Cilicia, when the Armenian kingdom also settled there. In 1441, a new catholicos was elected in Holy Etchmiadzin, in the person of Kirakos Virapetsi. At that time Krikor Moussaepiants (1439-1446) was the catholicos residing in Cilicia. Therefore, due to these historical circumstances and the geographical dispersion of the Armenian people, two Catholicosates – Catholicosate of All Armenians (Holy Etchmiadzin) and the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia (Antelias) – have continued to function since 1441, with equal rights and privileges, and with their respective jurisdictions. His Holiness Aram I, who has since 1991 been the moderator of the central committee of the WCC, is the 142nd pontiff counted from the Apostle St Thaddeus.

During World War I, one and a half million Armenians were massacred by the Turkish government. The rest of the Armenians in Turkey were forced to leave their homeland and found refuge in the countries of the Middle East, in Europe, and in North and South America. In 1930, the Catholicosate of Cilicia was established in Antelias, Lebanon. Thus, a new era opened, with the organization of dioceses and the founding of a new theological seminary and community-related institutions. The Catholicosate of Cilicia played a significant role in the organization of the world-wide Armenian diaspora. It also takes a major part in the cultural, social and other aspects of the life of the Armenian communities. The Armenian Church in diaspora finds itself in different contexts and faces various problems and challenges. It is truly a global church. Deeply rooted in its centuries-old tradition, it continues to bear witness to the salvation in Christ, and to work for the renewal of its life by responding to the challenges of modern societies. Theological formation, Christian education, community schools, youth and women, leadership training, social action, care for children of broken families, homes for the aged, medical care and housing projects for the needy families – all these are among the priority concerns and activities of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. In the area of publications, the printing house produces theological journals and hundreds of volumes on a regular basis. Ecumenical collaboration, theological dialogues and inter-religious relations occupy an important place in the life and witness of the Catholicosate.

The jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of Cilicia covers Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, the Gulf region, Iran, Greece and the Americas.

*Distribution of membership:

Middle East: 650,000

North America: 600,000

South America: 10,000

Europe: 25,000

National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 20,000

Congregations: 38

Preaching stations: 20

Pastors: 22

Lay preachers: 4

Member of: WCC (1948) – MECC – MEEC – WARC

Periodical: *Al-Nashra* (monthly, in Arabic)

The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon has its origins in the evangelical revival in the region in the early 19th century, which was part of the intellectual awakening in the Arabic-speaking parts of the Ottoman Empire. The revival found guidance and support in the witness and service of Reformed missionaries from North America and Britain. The Ottoman authorities recognized the Evangelical (Protestant) faith in 1848, and the first churches were founded in Beirut and in Hasbaya on the slopes of Mt Hermon. Eventually congregations were established in most of the major cities and in many villages in what ultimately became the independent countries of Syria and Lebanon. The synod is the administrative body for Arabic-speaking congregations and groups in some sixty centres where the expression of the Evangelical faith follows the Reformed tradition and the Presbyterian polity. The synod was organized in 1920 as a union of several presbyteries; other parishes have joined the synod more recently. Since

1959 the synod has assumed responsibility for the direction of nearly all the work of former mission bodies from the United States, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, Scotland, France and Switzerland. There is a continuing relationship of partnership in service with some overseas bodies.

Although there has been a steady growth in new members over the years, there has also been emigration of a significant number of Evangelicals to the Americas, Australia and Scandinavia. The troubled times of the decade of war and violence in Lebanon following 1975 led to the damage or destruction of a number of churches and schools and the scattering of some congregations.

The synod has chosen to carry on the educational ministry which has been a part of the Evangelical movement from its earliest days. This is a service to the larger community and a means of reconciliation in a society troubled by sectarian divisions. The synod and its churches sponsor eight secondary schools and several elementary schools with an enrolment of about 12,500 pupils of all religious backgrounds. It also has a hospital in Lebanon and joins with other groups in programmes of social service. The synod shares in the sponsorship and governance of the Near East School of Theology and the Lebanese American University, and is also a member and co-founder of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, and the Supreme Council of Protestant Churches in Syria and Lebanon.

Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 9,500

Congregations: 25

Pastors: 25

Member of: WCC (1948) – MECC – FMEEC – WARC

Periodicals: Religious monthly for *Youth*

Literary monthly for *Juniors*

Devotional quarterly to promote *Family Worship* (all in Armenian)

This church is an autonomous body comprised of congregations throughout Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Iran, and also Australia. It began in the 19th century as an indigenous reform movement within the Armenian Apostolic Church, and developed into an independent community in 1846 in Istanbul, and in subsequent decades registered a membership of 60,000 throughout the Ottoman empire. After the First World War, when the Armenian population was decimated and the remnant deported from its historic homeland in what is now Turkey, the Union was reorganized in Syria and Lebanon. The Union is composed of autonomous congregations. Its organizational pattern is a kind of modified congregationalism. The annual convention of the Union is the highest authority. The central committee of 12 members, elected at the convention, acts as an administrative body supervising and coordinating the activities of the member churches and church-related institutions.

From its inception, the Armenian Evangelical Church has stressed the importance of education. It now operates 23 schools and four high schools and owns the only university in the Armenian diaspora: Haigazian University, with an enrolment of 650 students. It operates four conference centres in Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Turkey. Together with the Arabic-speaking Evangelical churches, the Union owns and operates a secondary school in Aleppo and the Near East School of Theology in Beirut (the latter also supported by foreign missionary agencies).

With the Armenian Orthodox and Armenian Catholic Catholicosates it operates the old people's homes in Aleppo and Beirut, and a sanatorium in Lebanon.

It has developed ecumenical ties with several churches and fraternal relations with the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, the Armenian Evangelical Union of France and the Armenian Evangelical Union of Armenia. In spite of grave problems of emigration and persecution, the Union continues to function with a growing awareness of its mission in its territories.

SYRIA

Population: 18,650,334

Surface area: 185,200 sq.km

Capital: Damascus

GNI per capita: 1,190 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Arabic

Religions: Muslim 92 %; Christian 5%; Jewish 1%

Christianity*: Orthodox 1,490,000; Catholics 615,000; Protestants 80,000; Assyrians 40,000

Ancient Syria was home to the Canaanites, Assyrians, Persians and Babylonians. Antioch (now in Turkey) was the Christian centre of the eastern part of the Roman empire. With the Arab conquest and Islamization in the 7th century, Christians became a minority. Syria was part of the Ottoman empire until 1918, and under French rule until it achieved independence in 1946. After a brief union with Egypt (1958-61), the socialist Ba-ath party seized power and established a radical regime. A military coup in 1970 brought president Hafiz al-Asad into power, until his death in 2000. He was succeeded by his son. Syria is the only secular country in the Arab world. It does not tolerate opposition, neither Islamic nor political. The country has been in the forefront of support for the Palestinian cause, and the struggle against Israel. Syria's economy is based on agriculture, some manufacturing industry, and oil production and export. All major enterprises have been nationalized since the 1960s and the economy is under government control. The main Orthodox churches in Syria are the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, which is Arab and uses the Arab liturgy, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate (Oriental), and the Armenian Apostolic Church, also Oriental. There are six Catholic rites: Melkite, Armenian, Syrian, Maronite, Latin and Chaldean. The Ancient Church of the East (Assyrian) is also present, and is part of the WCC through its patriarchate in the USA. The main Protestant churches are the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, and the Union of Evangelical Armenian Churches.

*Statistics: Secretariat of the Patriarchal Documents – Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, Damascus.

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 4,320,000*

Dioceses: 22

Parishes: 496

Bishops: 28

Priests: 408

Member of: WCC (1948) – MECC

Periodicals: *The Word* (in English)

Orthodoxia (in Spanish)

Al-Kalima, An-Nour, An Nachra (in Arabic)

Website: www.antiochpat.org

The Orthodox Church of Antioch goes back to the time of the apostles (cf. Acts). In the 4th century the total Christian population of the eastern province of the Roman Empire, of which Antioch was the capital, was under its jurisdiction, and in the 6th century it had more than 150 metropolitans and bishops. Since then, however, the number has gone down because of the division of the church, the heresies of the 4th and 5th centuries, the granting of independence to the churches of Cyprus and Iberia, the Islamic advance in the 7th century and the formation of the Uniate Church in the 18th century. Since the beginning of the 20th century, especially after the second world war, an enormous number of Orthodox people belonging to the Church of Antioch have been emigrating or moving from the countryside to the big towns and to different parts of the world (Europe, Latin and North America, Australia).

The jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East covers all of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran, the Arabian peninsula, the whole orient and also certain areas of southern Turkey (Antioch region where there are six Antiochian congregations). It also extends to the Arab-speaking Orthodox who live in Europe, North and South America, Australia and New Zealand. The holy synod is the highest ecclesiastical authority of Antioch and consists of the patriarch as president and the metropolitans who are the diocesan leaders as members. Priests are trained at St John of Damascus theological faculty at Tripoli, Lebanon and the theological seminary at Patriarchal St George Monastery, Syria. Currently there are 100 students.

The Patriarchate is greatly concerned about the suffering in the Middle East, the creation of a Palestinian state, and its responsibilities for its people in the midst of a multi-religious society. An authentic witness to the Christian faith, pastoral care of youth, and reorganization of its establishment in order to express more clearly its apostolicity and its unity, are high on its agenda. Particular emphasis is laid on the coherence of the family which is the centre of the church and the source of spiritual formation, as well as on youth who represent the active elements of the church and its future leaders. Besides, the diaconal services and ecumenical activities have a significant place on the agenda of the Patriarchate today.

*Distribution:

Middle East: 1,250,000

Asia: 80,000

Europe: 40,000

Latin America: 2,500,000

North America: 450,000

Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

Church Family: Orthodox (Oriental)

Membership: 1,430,000*

Dioceses: 39**

Parishes : 950

Bishops: 41

Priests: 1050

Member of: WCC (1960) – MECC

Periodical: *Journal of the Patriarchate* (in Arabic)

According to tradition, St Peter established the Holy See at Antioch in AD 37 and presided over the church, prior to his journey to Rome. In the 4th century the Catholicate of the East was established for the administration of the churches in the Persian Empire, Iraq and the Far East. Syrian missionaries went as far as India, China, and Mongolia. An outstanding saint was St Jacob Baradaeus (500-578) who revived the spiritual life of the church in Syria, Armenia, Egypt, Persia and Cyprus. At the beginning of the 13th century the Syrian Orthodox Church had about 20,000 parishes and hundreds of monasteries and convents. During the 14th century the church suffered greatly through the Mongol invasions. At the end of the 18th century its strength was further reduced because of the establishment of a separate Uniate Patriarchate of Antioch (Syrian Catholics), and at the turn of the present century it suffered severe persecution at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Hundreds of thousands perished. In 1964 the Catholicate of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East, vacant for centuries, was re-established in India. The seat of the patriarchate, after many moves over the centuries, is now in Damascus.

The Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (SOPA) refused to accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon about the person of Christ, on the ground that they had made too many concessions to the Nestorians. Their doctrinal position is thus similar to that of the Armenian, Coptic and Ethiopian churches. Veneration of the saints and prayers for the dead are essential elements of the church's tradition. The seven traditional sacraments are recognized. The Old Testament was translated into Syriac during the first century, the New Testament in the second century.

The liturgical language of the church is Syriac Aramaic. Other Syriac translations of the Bible were subsequently made by various Syrian scholars. Famous schools of theology were established in Antioch, Nassibeen, Edessa and Qenneshreen. St Aphrem the Syrian, St Jacob of Sarug, Philexinos of Maboug and Jacob of Edessa graduated from these schools. Ignatius Ephrem Barsaum (Patriarch, 1933-57) was the author of a valuable history of Syrian Orthodox literature in Arabic (recently published in English: *History of Syriac Sciences and Literature*). Since the church has spread widely during the centuries, languages like Arabic, Malayalam, Turkish, English, Spanish and Portuguese are today used, alongside Syriac, in religious services.

The SOPA maintains a number of monasteries which are an integral part of its spiritual and cultural heritage. There are two major and three minor seminaries for the training of the clergy. The church also operates other schools and institutions. It has close relations with the Coptic, Armenian and Ethiopian Orthodox churches.

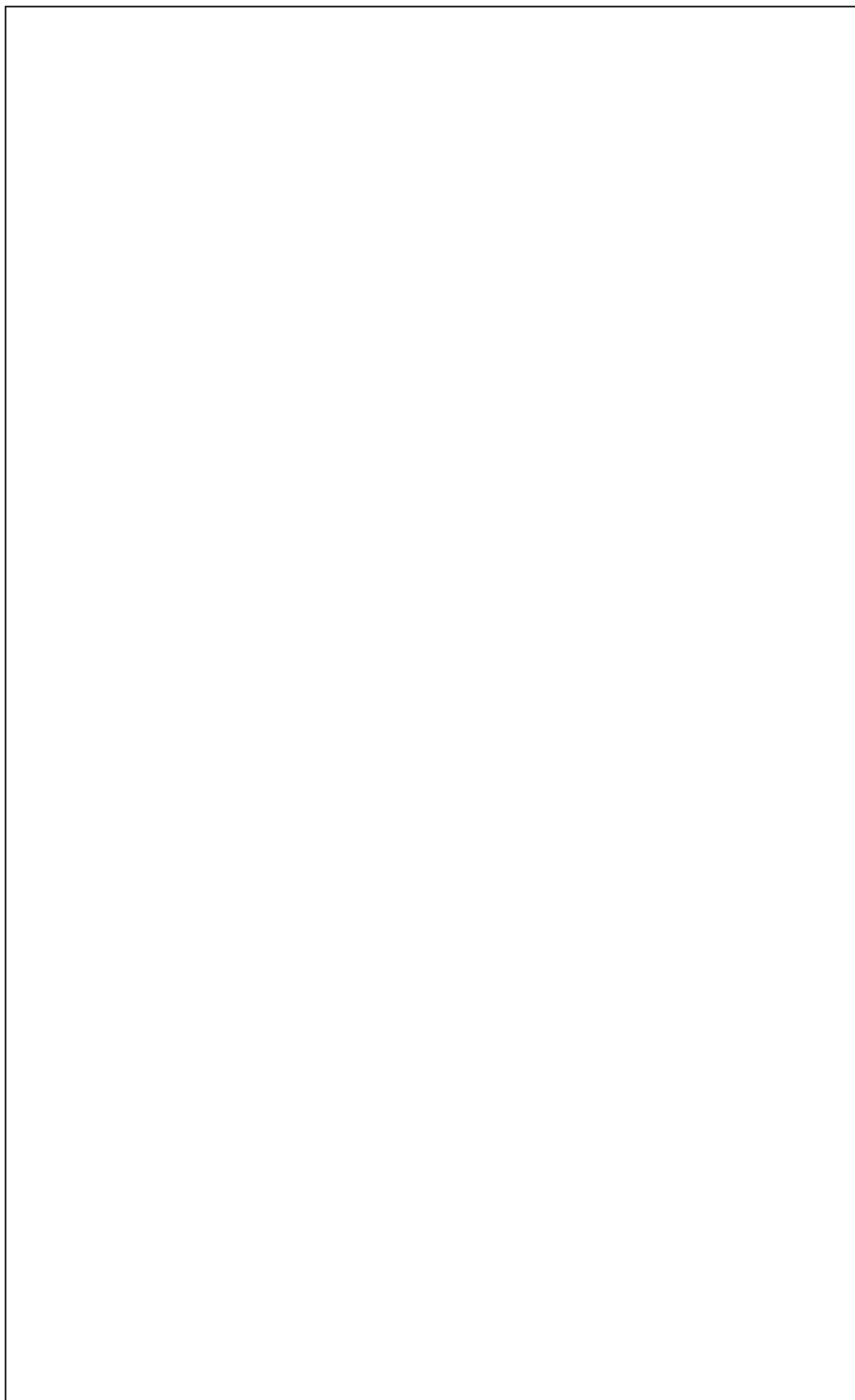
*Distribution:

Middle East:	300,000
Asia:	700,000
Europe:	170,000
Latin America:	100,000
North America:	160,000

**Dioceses:

Syria	4	Europe	4
Lebanon	3	North America	4
Jordan	1	Australia	1
Turkey	3	South Africa	2
Iraq	3	India	14

North America



CANADA

Population: 31,972,474

Surface area: 10 million sq.km

Capital: Ottawa

GNI per capita: 24,470 US\$

Classification: Major industrialized economy

Languages: English, French

Religions: Christian 80%; Jewish 1.3%; Muslim 1.7%; Buddhist 1.3%;
Hindu 1%

Christianity: Catholics 14,000,000; Protestants 4,636,290; Anglicans 718,000;
Orthodox 691,610; Independent 1,689,130

Canada, which was colonized first by the French and later by the British, became a confederation in 1867, and adopted its own constitution in 1981. Tensions between French- and English-speaking Canadians continue over language and culture to the present day. Immigration has brought people from many parts of the world to Canada, and multiculturalism is a defining characteristic of Canadian society. The indigenous people of Canada, called the “First Nations”, have successfully lobbied for increased autonomy and the settlement of their claim to their traditional lands. They have also obtained reparation for abuses suffered in the “Native Residential Schools”, which were operated by the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and United churches as official agents of the government’s policy of assimilation. This has been a test, also financially, for the churches, which have acknowledged and lamented their past with a remarkable sense of responsibility. Ecumenism has been a strong dimension of the Canadian churches. The United Church of Canada is one of the oldest organic unions in the ecumenical movement. In the 1980s the so-called “coalition model” marked the cooperation between the Canadian churches and ecumenical groups dealing with issues such as social justice, peace, etc. The Canadian Council of Churches, which includes the Catholic and Orthodox churches, has evolved into a “forum”. Working relationships with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, an affiliated body of the WEA, are good. Evangelicals and Pentecostals represent about 29 percent of the Protestants, and seven percent of the total number of Christians.

***Canadian Council of Churches**

Founded in 1944.

Basis: The Canadian Council of Churches is a community of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and also other churches which affirm the same faith but which do not make doctrinal confessions.

Member churches:

Anglican Church of Canada

Archdiocese of Canada of the Orthodox Church in America

Armenian Holy Apostolic Church Canadian Diocese

Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec
 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
Canadian Yearly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada
 Christian Reformed Church in North America-Canada
Coptic Orthodox Church of Canada
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Canada
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada)
 Mennonite Church of Canada
 Polish National Catholic Church of Canada
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Regional Synod of Canada Reformed Church in America
 Salvation Army
 Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
United Church of Canada

Associate member:

British Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada

Website <http://www.ccc-cce.ca>

The Canadian Council of Churches is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Anglican Church of Canada

(Eglise anglicane du Canada)

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 641,845

Dioceses: 30

Parishes: 2,884

Bishops: 42

Priests: 3,591

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCC – ACC

Periodicals: *The Anglican Journal* (10 times a year)

Ministry Matters (3 times a year)

Website: www.anglican.ca

The Anglican Church of Canada came into being as a result of missionary activities by churches in the British Isles and particularly the British Missionary Societies. The church owes much to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Church Missionary Society, both based in London, which sent missionaries and teachers to the new land in the 18th and 19th centuries. The first bishop was consecrated in 1787. Provincial synods date from the 1860s and the general synod was organized in 1893. There are now four ecclesiastical provinces.

The Anglican Church of Canada is the second largest Christian community in the country. The church's membership includes about 10 percent from the Indigenous peoples of Canada, First Nation, Inuit and Métis, as well as from many of the immigrant populations of Canada, such as British, Chinese, Scottish, South African, Haitian, Sri Lankan, Indian, West Indian, South and Central American, Pacific Islanders, etc. Both women and men are ordained to the priesthood and the episcopacy. The church has a long history of involvement in social and environmental justice issues, working ecumenically and internationally to promote peace, justice, human rights and the stewardship of creation. It is a member of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. The Primate's World Relief

and Development Fund (PWRDF) provides the church's response to international development needs and to natural disasters, while Partners in Mission nurtures mission relationships with the other provinces of the Anglican Communion.

The Indigenous members of the church are working towards greater self-determination within the Anglican family, and the whole church continues to support First Nation, Inuit and Métis people in their struggle for justice and the recognition of their rights.

Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Church Family: Free Church
 Membership: 1,200
 Local constituent meetings: 23
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCC – FWCC
 Periodical: *The Canadian Friend*
 Website: www.quaker.ca

The Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is composed of constituent meetings which are the local worshipping congregations of Quakers, and which convene for business monthly, quarterly and half-yearly. Committees of the yearly meeting, representative of all Canadian Friends, take care during the year of activities approved by the yearly meeting at its annual sessions, and report to it. Twice a year, between sessions of the yearly meeting, business is conducted by the representative meeting. The greatest part of the service work of Quakers in Canada is carried out under the auspices of the Canadian Friends Service Committee, formed in 1931. The CFSC, a standing committee of CYM with its own charitable organization status, works to aid war victims, the oppressed, the poor, and victims of social injustice around the world, as well as promoting peace education and a responsibility to the natural environment, as an expression of the Quaker belief in the worth of all human beings and all creation.

The Canadian Friends Foreign Missionary Board is active in Quaker medical and educational work overseas, in particular in Kenya. The Home Mission and Advancement committee seeks to nurture meetings, new and old, and to interpret the religious emphases of the society, answering enquiries, operating a Quaker book service, and publishing a periodical, *The Canadian Friend*. Other committees operate a Quaker camp, provide religious education, oversee representation on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, maintain records and archives, and administer the affairs of the society.

Canadian Yearly Meeting maintains membership in the Friends General Conference based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (USA), and the Friends United Meeting based in Richmond, Indiana (USA), both groupings of Friends yearly meetings in North America, and with the Friends World Committee for Consultation, a world-wide association of Friends yearly meetings. The association with the CCC and the WCC enables Canadian Friends to keep abreast of ecumenical thinking and participate in actions at national and international levels.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada

Church Family: Disciples
 Membership: 2,606
 Congregations: 25
 Pastors: 30
 Member of: WCC (1948) – CCC – DECC

The Christian churches in Canada had their beginnings in the early part of the 19th century, through the immigration of members of the Scottish Baptist Church from Scotland and of the Christian churches in the USA. These two movements united at the end of the 1840s to form the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada. A western Canada region was formed early in the 20th century and a national structure in 1922. The church officially functions as one of the regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada (see Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) USA).

Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 11,000

Congregations: 52

Pastors: 31

Member of: WCC (1962) – CEC – LWF

Periodical: *Eesti Kirik* (quarterly, in Estonian)

In 1940, Estonia, which had become independent in 1920, was annexed by the Soviet Union. This caused great upheaval in the nation and in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (see also under Estonia). In 1944, at the end of the German occupation, a mass exodus occurred of some 80,000 people, accompanied by the archbishop of the church and seventy pastors; 30,000 went to Sweden, 50,000 to Germany. The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Exile was established in Sweden. In war-torn Germany the situation was much more difficult. Eventually most of the Estonians who had sought refuge there emigrated to other countries. Currently the church has 21 congregations in the USA, 13 in Canada, eight in Sweden, four in Germany, four in Australia, one in Argentina and one in England. Through prayer, worship, witness and pastoral counselling in the Estonian language the church continues to serve its people in their countries of settlement. It no longer calls itself “in Exile” but the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad. The aim of the church is to serve, together with the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Estonia, Estonians world-wide as long as it is needed and possible.

The EELCA shares the history, ecclesial self-understanding and doctrinal confessions of the church in Estonia. Its headquarters have moved from Sweden to Canada.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

(Eglise évangélique luthérienne au Canada)

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 182,077

Congregations: 624

Pastors: 840

Member of: WCC (1985) – CCC – LWF

Periodical: *Canada Lutheran*

Website: www.elcic.ca

On 1 January 1986 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC) and the Lutheran Church in America-Canada Section (LCA-CS) merged to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). The merger process began in the early 1970s with three major bodies participating: ELCC, LCA-CS and

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in Canada (now Lutheran Church-Canada, LCC). In the late 1970s the LCC withdrew but the ELCC and the LCA-CS set 1985 as the target date for their merger. The national office of the church is in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which is in the centre of the country, east to west. Many of the members of this church are of Scandinavian and German ethnic origin, though many other backgrounds are also represented. While English is the major language of worship, German continues to be significant, and the ELCIC also worships in at least 15 other languages each Sunday, reflecting the cultural mosaic of Canada. In the earlier years and up to the decade after the second world war, the church not only provided a meaningful cultural link for immigrants but also assisted in the integration of immigrants into the Canadian mosaic.

Though small numerically, the church has contributed significantly to the development of Canadian society, especially through its colleges and schools, thousands of whose graduates have gone into the mainstream of Canadian society and continue to bring leadership with a Christian perspective into the various facets of Canadian culture – in the sciences, politics, medicine, business and educational fields. The ELCIC operates two seminaries, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in Waterloo, Ontario, and Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In addition, the Bible schools have contributed a significant number of missionaries who have taken their skills to various parts of the globe to share the gospel and aid in development.

The ELCIC is a member of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, which includes 10 other Canadian church bodies. Through KAIROS, together with the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, and other members, the ELCIC works in such areas as aboriginal rights, corporate issues, ecology, global justice, human rights, and refugee and migrant issues. The ELCIC is also a supporting member of Project Ploughshares, an ecumenical peace centre of the Canadian Council of Churches. Through such involvements, there is a growing sensitization of the ELCIC membership in matters of social justice in Canada and around the world. There is strong support for the international development and relief work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief, in partnership with the Global Hunger and Development Appeal of the ELCIC, and the Lutheran World Federation. In 2003 the ELCIC hosted the LWF tenth assembly in Winnipeg.

Believing that theology must undergird all aspects of its life and mission, the church is working with all its members towards a greater awareness of the relation of theology to personal, corporate and community life.

Presbyterian Church in Canada

(Eglise presbytérienne au Canada)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 125,500

Presbyteries: 46

Congregations: 980

Pastors: 1,000

Member of : WCC (1948) – CCC – WARC – CANAAC

Periodical: *The Presbyterian Record* (monthly)

Website: www.presbyterian.ca

The Presbyterian Church in Canada met in general assembly for the first time in 1875, in Montreal. Prior to that, there were four independent synods representing various branches of Presbyterianism, largely on the basis of links with

mother churches in the British Isles. The PCC is a national church, with presbyteries in each of the ten provinces and, though predominantly English-speaking, it has congregations which use French, Hungarian, Italian, Chinese, Ukrainian and even, in the older settlements of Nova Scotia, Gaelic. In 1925, the majority of Canadian Presbyterians merged with Congregationalists and Methodists to form the United Church of Canada. But a considerable minority, convinced that certain specific Presbyterian principles had to be maintained, remained in the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada. The general assembly of the PCC met in 1975 to celebrate the union of four Presbyterian synods in 1875. The church still remains strong in some parts of the Atlantic provinces, and in the Toronto Hamilton-St Catharines-Guelph area of Ontario. There are eight synods, corresponding for the most part to the provincial areas of the country.

Various boards and committees were restructured in the 1990s through the efforts of the organization and planning task force. An active programme is being carried out overseas, in Taiwan, Japan, Nigeria and other parts of the world.

United Church of Canada

(Eglise unie du Canada)

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 608,243

Congregations: 3,583

Pastors: 3,859

Diaconal ministers: 270

Member of: WCC (1948) – CCC – WMC – WARC – CANAAC

Periodical: *The United Church Observer*

Website: www.united-church.ca

The United Church of Canada came into being in 1925, bringing together the Congregational, Methodist and most Presbyterian (71 percent) churches in Canada. The new church began as, and remains, the largest non-Roman communion in Canada. Besides the members of its local congregations, the UCC has another million or more adherents among the Canadian population. In 1925, the UCC dedicated itself not only as united, but as a uniting church. In 1968, the Canada Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined the church. The United Church of Canada has a history of involvement in justice issues both in Canada and overseas, much of this coming from its Methodist and Reformed traditions of caring for people who suffer economic and social injustice.

Canadian society is multicultural and multifaith. It is a culture in which the pervasive economic worldview impacts relationships, values, identities, and understanding of church. The context of globalization and empire includes living next door to the super-power, with increased economic integration through free trade and continental security arrangements. Through advocacy and outreach the church ministers to those marginalized in this economy of exploitation, in addition to providing the traditional ministries and pastoral care. A growing area of work is with ethnic ministries and integration of churches brought to Canada by new immigrants; ministries in French are also an important focus. Meanwhile, in rural areas, the church accompanies local communities that continue to shrink.

Continuing the traditions of the earlier denominations, the church has spoken out strongly and consistently on controversial issues. Current issues receiving widespread attention include the church's support for equal marriage for same-sex couples, Aboriginal justice and the legacy of abuse in church-supported resi-

dential schools that housed Aboriginal students, systemic justice issues (race, gender, economic inequalities, etc.), ecology, biotechnology and food security issues (including climate change, genetically modified food, water, land use), and the rights of refugees. In all such matters, educational resources are provided for church groups and official positions are made known to governmental or other agencies. Working in a framework of “whole world ecumenism” focused on the mending of the world, the church has also supported processes of interchurch and interfaith dialogue, and published important statements on Jewish-United Church and Muslim-United Church relations.

After three decades of collaboration among Canadian churches on a wide variety of social justice issues in Canada and overseas, the work of ten inter-church coalitions was brought together in 2001 in a new coalition, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. The current agenda and mandate of KAIROS reflect dedication to action in the following priority areas: international human rights; global economic justice (including corporate social responsibility and global trade and debt issues); ecological justice; Canadian social development (including anti-poverty advocacy and funding, health care and refugees/migrants); Aboriginal rights; global partnerships; education and animation.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Population: 300,037,102

Surface area: 9,6 million sq.km

Capital: Washington D.C.

GNI per capita: 41,400 US\$

Classification: Major industrialized economy

Languages: English, Spanish

Religions: Christian 85%; Jewish 2%; Muslim 1,5%; other 3%

Christianity: Catholics 65,900,000; Protestants 61,294,590;

Orthodox 5,922,360; Anglicans 2,206,000; Independent 80,286,300

The first inhabitants of America were the Indians. As of the 16th century Europeans established colonies in the “new world” and brought in slaves from Africa. The British colonies declared their independence and founded the United States in 1776. A conflict over state rights and slavery led to the Civil War of 1861-63. In the second half of the 19th century the United States became a major economic power, through mass immigration from Europe, industrialization and expansion to the west. The American Indians were forced onto reservations or into assimilation. In the 20th century the United States emerged as a political and military power, confronting the communist block. Since the end of the cold war it is the only super power. Immigration in the 20th century, especially from Latin America and Asia, has contributed to the great diversity of the society. Christianity came to the US with the settlers. All the major traditions and denominations are present. The Great Awakenings of the 19th century have played a major role in the emergence of the Evangelical, Holiness, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements and their extension in the world. The African American churches were at the heart of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950-60s which brought an end to racial segregation. New forms of church, e.g. megachurches, non-denominational churches, have originated in the US and spread to other countries. The Catholic Church is the single largest church. Baptists make up 33 percent of the Protestants and independents, Pentecostals 18 percent, and non-denominational Evangelicals

and Charismatics 12 percent. Almost all the Orthodox patriarchates have archdioceses or dioceses in the US and are integrated in the society. The National Council of Churches is the ecumenical body, and the National Association of Evangelicals is affiliated with the WEA.

***National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA**

Founded in 1950 (forerunner: the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, founded in 1908).

Basis: The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA is a community of Christian communions which, in response to the gospel as revealed in the scriptures, confess Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, as Saviour and Lord. These communions covenant with one another to manifest ever more fully the unity of the church. Relying upon the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the communions come together as the Council in common mission, serving in all creation to the glory of God.

Member churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
 Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches in the USA
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
Armenian Church, Diocese of America
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of the Brethren
Coptic Orthodox Church in North America
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends United Meeting
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
International Council of Community Churches
 Korean Presbyterian Church in America (General Assembly of the)
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Mar Thoma Syrian Church of India
Moravian Church in America (Northern Province, Southern Province)
National Baptist Convention of America, Inc
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
 National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
Orthodox Church in America
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Polish National Catholic Church of America
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Reformed Church in America
Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada
 The Swedenborgian Church
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
 Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America
United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church

Website: www.nccusa.org

The National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA is affiliated with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Christian Churches Together in the USA

Founded: Christian Churches Together in the USA has been in formation since 2001, and will be formally organized in 2006.

Basis of participation: Christian Churches Together in the USA welcomes churches, Christian communities, and national Christian organizations that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures; worship and serve the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and seek ways to work together in order to present a more credible witness in and to the world.

Participants:

American Baptist Churches, USA
Armenian Apostolic Church of America
Armenian Orthodox Church in America
 Bread for the World
 Call to Renewal/Sojourners
 Christian Reformed Church in North America
 Church of God (Anderson)
 Church of God of Prophecy
 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Coptic Orthodox Church
Disciples of Christ (Christian Church)
Episcopal Church in the USA
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Evangelicals for Social Action
 Free Methodist Church
Friends United Meeting
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
International Council of Community Churches
 International Pentecostal Holiness Church
 Korean Presbyterian Church in America
 National Association of Congregational Christian Churches
National Baptist Convention of America
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc
 Open Bible Churches
Orthodox Church in America
Polish National Catholic Church of America
Reformed Church in America
Syrian Orthodox Church
 The Evangelical Covenant Church
 The Salvation Army
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church
 US Conference of Catholic Bishops
 World Vision

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Church Family: Methodist
 Membership: 2,510,000*
 Episcopal Districts: 20
 Congregations: 7,000
 Bishops: 21
 Pastors : 3,817
 Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – WMC
 Periodical: *The Christian Recorder* (monthly)
 Website: www.ame-church.org

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, a global Wesleyan body, emerged out of the Free African Society (FAS) in Philadelphia, PA. Founded in 1787 as a mutual aid society with a strong religious identity, the group developed into two black congregations, one African Methodist Episcopal and the other Protestant Episcopal. The FAS founder Richard Allen, a former slave who had been since 1783 a Methodist preacher, was enlisted by Philadelphia's St George Church to preach to local blacks. His increased following stirred St George officers to accost black members while praying and compel them to start separate congregations. The AME Church was formed in Philadelphia in 1816 and Richard Allen became the nation's first black bishop. The church spread rapidly throughout the North and Midwest. Bishop Allen believed that in emphasizing Methodist doctrine and discipline and a vigorous social witness, the AME members became better heirs to Wesleyanism than their white counterparts. He codified black folk religion and musical patterns in a hymnal for the denomination in 1818. He denounced slavery, opposed the removal of free blacks from the United States to Liberia, and presided over the national session of the black convention movement.

The AME Church did not ignore the slave and vulnerable status of its many parishioners. Several congregations served as schools, as stations for the legendary Underground Railroad, and as forums to condemn the black bondage and violence against those who were supposedly free. The church's efforts to protect and attain freedom for its constituents were reflected in the founding of the British Methodist Episcopal Church in 1856 on the free soil of Canada, the purchase of Wilberforce University in 1863, and the enlistment of AME clergy as Civil War chaplains and AME members as Union Army soldiers. Its rapid rush into the South after the Civil War, to evangelize among ex-slaves, began an era of unprecedented growth in areas where the denomination had never existed before. Hence, in 1880 the AME Church boasted 400,000 members and numerous schools and colleges to educate clergy and train teachers to improve the lives of African Americans. Nationalist sentiments in the 1890s expressed in the Afro-centric writings of several AME leaders coincided with expansion into West Africa in 1891 and South Africa in 1896.

The massive movement of African Americans from the agrarian South to major urban and industrial areas focused AME congregations on articulating a social gospel relevant to city challenges faced by black migrants. This orientation extended to civil rights activism and the filing of lawsuits against school segregation that culminated in the landmark "Brown decision" of 1954. At the turn of the 21st century the church has episcopal districts in over 30 countries on four continents (six in Africa and one in Latin America/Caribbean). It operates programmes in global ministry, publishing, Christian education and public information. In recent years the church has expanded to Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ivory Coast, Togo and Benin. There are headquarters facilities in Washington, DC and in Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee. Several schools, colleges and seminaries operate in the United States, the Caribbean and in Africa.

*Distribution:

USA: 2,120,000

Africa: 375,000

Caribbean: 15,000

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 1,432,795*

Episcopal Districts: 12
 Congregations: 3,226
 Pastors: 3,731
 Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – WMC.
 Periodical: *Star of Zion*

The African Methodist Episcopal Church dates from 1796 when it was organized by a group of black members protesting against discrimination in the John Street Church located in New York City. Their first church, built in 1800, was called Zion; later it became part of the name of the new denomination. The first annual conference was held in this church in 1821, with Philadelphia and Newark, NJ, represented by 19 clergy preachers, and presided over by a representative of the white Methodist Episcopal Church. The leader of the John Street dissension was elected as the first bishop at this conference. The name African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was approved in the general conference of 1848.

The AME Zion Church spread quickly over the northern states, and by the time of the general conference of 1880, there were 15 annual conferences in the south. Livingstone College and Hood Theological Seminary, located in Salisbury, North Carolina, are the largest educational institutions operated by the church. Both institutions are fully accredited. The general secretary's office was established in 1872, followed by the departments of missions, education, and publications, which were established in 1892. Administrative boards were established to direct work in church extension, evangelism, finance, ministerial relief, etc. Home missions are supported in all of the annual conferences. The church has sent foreign missionaries to Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, South America and the West Indies. The AME Zion Church now has conferences on five continents. There are three colleges, two seminaries and several foreign stations under the church. It also operates 2,508 Sunday schools with a total enrollment of 72,969.

*Distribution:
 USA: 1,202,195
 Africa: 170,600
 Caribbean: 60,000

American Baptist Churches in the USA

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 1,433,075
 Congregations: 5,834
 Pastors: 5,592
 Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – CCT USA – BWA
 Periodicals: *American Baptists In Mission* (quarterly)
 American Baptist News Service
 American Baptist Quarterly
 Website: www.abc-usa.org

The organized existence of the American Baptist Churches in the USA began in 1814, when a national body of Baptists, called the Triennial Convention, was formed. Its immediate purpose was to support a missionary couple to Burma. Later it became the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS). The second body to be founded was the General Tract Society, in 1824. This later became the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication Society (ABBEP). A third one, the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS)

followed in 1832. Baptist unity in America was first broken in 1845 over the issue of slavery. The Baptists in the south withdrew to organize the Southern Baptist Convention. Following the Civil War, ex-slaves both in the north and the south organized their own churches and conventions on both sides of the Mississippi River. Because they were nationwide, they called themselves National Baptist Conventions, of which there are now three. After the north-south schism in 1845, the Baptists of the north maintained the societal structure until 1907, when the Northern Baptist Convention was founded, involving participation by the three societies (ABFMS, ABBEP, ABHMS), on a voluntary basis. Many state and city Baptist associations became affiliated with the Northern Baptist Convention, also by voluntary action. In 1950 the name was changed to American Baptist Convention – to communicate a theological, philosophical and sociological posture of inclusiveness, racially and geographically.

Two parallel women's boards known as the Women's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (WABFMS) and the Women's American Baptist Home Mission Society (WABHMS) were founded to do work associated with the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society and the American Baptist Home Mission Society. In 1972 the directors of the three national societies were acknowledged to be the boards of the denomination with the following programme designations: ABFMS/WABFMS (Board of International Ministries), ABBEP (Board of Educational Ministries), ABHMS/WABHMS (Board of National Ministries). This new arrangement was called American Baptist Churches in the USA. It gave American Baptist laity more representational control over the denominational mission as expressed through the boards.

In 1979 the American Baptist Churches in the USA was further reorganized to provide for covenantal relationships among all denominational groupings of churches – region, state, city and nation-wide. At present the ABC is the most heterogeneous Baptist communion in the USA, with no majority racial group. It includes Caucasian churches, black American churches, Hispanic, Asian and Native American Indian congregations, and the Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico. The ABC maintains a close fraternal relationship with a number of conventions and associations of bilingual Baptist churches of nationality groupings from southern and eastern Europe organized as worshipping communities in the United States. There are also close relations with Baptist churches in such countries as Burma, India, Japan, Philippines, Thailand and the Republic of the Congo, and in Latin America.

Ongoing priorities and areas of concern for ABCUSA and its churches include evangelism and church growth, human rights, global religious freedom, economic justice, international stability and national security, peace and justice, pro-choice/pro-life issues, and human sexuality. Major denomination-wide programme foci and emphases include discipleship, leadership, healthy missional churches, church planting/growth, evangelism, peace and justice, youth, and denominational identity.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States

Church Family: Disciples

Membership: 830,000

Congregations: 4,200

Pastors: 7,130

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – CCC – DECC – CCT USA

Periodical: *DisciplesWorld* (monthly)

Website: www.disciples.org

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was established on the American frontier in the early 1800s, through the coming together of two movements: the “Christians” who were associated with Barton W. Stone in Kentucky, and the “Disciples” who were associated with Thomas and Alexander Campbell in western Pennsylvania. Both groups were established as Christian unity movements, seeking to overcome the historic divisions transplanted from Europe and the British Isles to the North American continent, through an appeal to the restoration of the New Testament faith. In 1832, representatives of the two groups came together in Lexington, Kentucky, to form a single movement with a strong evangelistic witness and committed to weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper, to a rational faith, to congregational leadership, and to Christian unity expressed in freedom and diversity.

As a mainline Protestant church in the North American context, much of the life of the Christian Church is focused upon the broad societal and international issues facing all Christians and churches. Wherever possible and appropriate, the programmes of the church are carried out through ecumenical channels and organizations.

At its 2000 General Board, the church adopted the following statement of its Mission Imperative for the coming years:

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

In our quest to embody Christian unity, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we believe God calls us.

OUR VISION:

To be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep spirituality and a passion for justice. (Micah 6:8)

OUR MISSION:

To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps “to the ends of the earth”. (Acts 1:8)

OUR IMPERATIVE:

To strengthen congregational life for this mission. (Ephesians 4:11-13, 15-16)

OUR COVENANT:

In accepting our Vision, Mission and Imperative, we affirm our need to be an anti-racist/pro-reconciliation church, strengthen relationships among all manifestations of the church, share mutually and more fully the stewardship of God’s gifts of our life in Christ, encourage our growing diversity within our church family and community, work with our many ecumenical and global partners to heal the brokenness of the body of Christ and the human community.

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 858,670*

Districts: 10

Congregations: 3,080

Bishops: 10

Pastors: 3,205

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – WMC

Periodicals: *Christian Index*

Missionary Messenger

Website: www.c-m-e.org

Known until 1954 as the Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church, this church was established in the South of the USA, in an amicable agreement between white and black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. There were at that time at least 225,000 slave members in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, but with the emancipation proclamation, all but 80,000 of them joined the two independent black bodies. When the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, met at New Orleans in 1866, a commission from the black membership expressed the desire to have a separate church of their own. The request was granted, and in 1870 the Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. This name was kept until the meeting of the general conference of the Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church at Memphis in 1954, when it was decided to change it to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

The doctrine of the CME Church is the doctrine of the parent church. The denomination adds a local church conference to the quarterly, district, annual, and general conferences usual in Methodism. Seven boards supervise the national work, each presided over by a bishop assigned as chairman by the college of bishops. The general secretaries of the various departments are elected every four years by the general conference. The CMEC sponsors four colleges: Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee; Miles College in Birmingham, Alabama; Texas College in Tyler, Texas; and Paine College in Augusta, Georgia. Its theological seminary is the Philipps School of Theology of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The church has 2,850 Sunday schools with a total enrolment of 67,514. The ten episcopal districts of the CMEC are located in the United States, Haiti, Jamaica, Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria.

*Distribution:

USA : 792,670

Africa: 61,000

Caribbean: 5,000

Church of the Brethren

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 134,000

Districts: 23

Congregations: 1,025

Pastors: 961

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA

Periodical: *Messenger* (monthly)

Website: www.brethren.org

The Church of the Brethren grew out of the Pietist movement of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe. While most Pietists sought to renew the church from within, some (the Radical Pietists) separated themselves from the state churches. The Brethren movement dates its birth to 1708, when the first Brethren baptism took place at Schwarzenau, Germany. Eight men and women, all of whom had been members of state churches, formed the new group. Because of persecution and economic hardship, the Brethren relocated to colonial Pennsylvania. The first group emigrated in 1719, and by 1730 most were in America. In both Europe and America, the Brethren often lived in the same areas as Anabaptists. While it is unclear how much the early Brethren were influenced by the Anabaptists, some scholars understand the Brethren as combining Pietist and Anabaptist thought.

As the United States grew, Brethren spread west across the country, often following the same migration pattern as other German-speaking groups. Through-

out most of the 1800s Brethren sought to remain separated from the larger society. They wore a prescribed dress, built simple meeting houses, and continued to speak German at home and in worship. With the coming of the 20th century, Brethren became less ethnic and sectarian, and began to participate in movements such as temperance and foreign missions. In 1908 the Brethren changed their official name from German Baptist Brethren to Church of the Brethren. During the first half of the 20th century, foreign missions became the great work of the Brethren, with major mission fields in India, China and Nigeria. After World War II Brethren became known for their service work and began such programmes as Heifer Project, International Christian Youth Exchange, and Brethren Volunteer Service.

Seeking to pattern themselves after the primitive church, the early Brethren took the New Testament as the guide for their faith and practice. Today this is still the Brethren understanding. While much of Brethren theology is the same as mainstream Protestantism, the Brethren do emphasize certain beliefs and practices, such as 1) the love feast, which combines communion with a fellowship meal and foot-washing; 2) nonresistance, which leads some to active peacemaking and conscientious objection to military service; 3) service, which leads Brethren to participate in programmes to relieve hunger, provide health care, and improve the lives of others in the United States and other parts of the world; 4) believers' baptism, whereby infant baptism is rejected in favour of a conscious decision to follow Jesus; 5) the simple life, which calls Brethren to resist the temptations of the consumer society and treat creation with respect; 6) anointing for healing based on James 5:13-16; and 7) non-creedalism, whereby Brethren remain open to discovering new biblical truths. All Brethren beliefs and practices are rooted in their understanding of the church as a New Testament community, rather than a group of individual Christians.

The ultimate legislative authority in the Church of the Brethren is the annual conference, which is made up of representatives from congregations. The conference's primary administrative body, the general board, carries out worldwide ministries in areas such as mission, service and development, witness, education, discipleship, and publishing. Congregations have a great deal of autonomy and choose their own leadership, including pastors.

Episcopal Church in the USA

Church Family: Anglican

Membership: 2,419,562*

Dioceses: 111**

Parishes: 7,566

Bishops: 145

Priests: 17,174

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – ACC – CCT USA

Periodicals: *Journal of the General Convention*

Episcopal Life

Website: www.episcopalchurch.org

The origins of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America go back to the British colonial period at the beginning of the 17th century. The church was established by law and supported by public tax in certain colonies, and in others it was in the minority and was supported by the Church of England through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and technically under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. After the American Revolution, the Episcopal Church

was formed in 1789 and secured a succession of bishops and approved a Book of Common Prayer. After the difficulties of the Revolutionary period, the church grew steadily along with the new nation. With the outbreak of the Civil War, there was a temporary division in the Episcopal Church which was reconciled immediately thereafter. A dispute rising out of the Oxford Movement resulted in the separation of a small group into the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1873, but otherwise Episcopal unity held fast. The church's domestic mission was westward in the United States and overseas missions resulted in the establishment of dioceses in Asia, Latin America and Liberia, many of which have now achieved autonomy.

The Episcopal Church's form of government is a federal union, consisting of 111 dioceses, which have substantial autonomy so long as they do not contradict the national church's constitution or canons. The dioceses associated originally for the maintenance of common doctrine, discipline and worship, to which have been added church unity, the prosecution of missionary, educational and social programmes on a national scale, and development. The church accepts two creeds: the Apostles' and the Nicene. The old distinction between high church people with elaborate ritual and ceremony and low church people with more of an evangelistic emphasis has been replaced with eucharistic practice influenced by the liturgical movement and other movements of renewal.

The primary concerns of the church as expressed in the 1979 revised Book of Common Prayer are missionary, that is "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ". It pursues mission through prayer and worship, proclaiming the gospel, and promoting justice and peace. For these purposes it seeks to equip all its members for ministry. The tasks of ecumenism are stressed, as are issues of hunger, peace, development, economic justice and family life.

Full communion has been established among other churches of the Anglican Communion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Old Catholic Church, Philippine Independent, Mar Thoma, and the Churches of South India, North India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Full communion is expected to lead to regular organs of consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness.

*of which 90,052 in the Caribbean and 46,242 in Latin America.

**Dioceses outside the United States are: Haiti, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador Central and Ecuador Litoral, Honduras, Venezuela, Convocation of American Churches in Europe, Episcopal Church in Micronesia.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Church Family: Lutheran

Membership: 5,038,006

Synods: 65

Congregations: 10,721

Pastors: 17,785

Member of: WCC (1948/1988) – NCCCUSA – LWF – CCT USA

Periodical: *The Lutheran* (monthly)

Website: www.elca.org

Ecumenical relations website: www.elca.org/ecumenical

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the youngest of the large US Lutheran church bodies – and also the oldest. The ELCA was constituted in 1987 and began operation in 1988, as a result of the union of the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). The ELCA traces its history

through predecessor church bodies to the formation in 1748 of the first synod in North America, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. Two of the uniting churches that formed the ELCA were the result of mergers. The ALC was formed in 1960, bringing together four churches of German, Norwegian, and Danish heritage. Subsequently, in 1962, the LCA was established in a four-way merger of German, Danish, Finnish, and Swedish heritage churches. Those mergers of the early 1960s marked a movement away from ethnic identity for US Lutheran church bodies. By contrast to mergers, the AELC resulted from a break in 1976 from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in a dispute over the authority and interpretation of scripture.

The ELCA represents historical continuity for Lutherans from colonial days as well as the weaving together into one body all of the threads of Lutheran history in North America. Efforts to form the ELCA formally began in 1982 when the three uniting churches elected a 70-member commission to draft the constitution and other agreements. In August 1986, the conventions of the three churches approved the merger. That action led to the ELCA's constituting assembly in May 1987. Its congregations are grouped into 65 synods throughout the US and the Caribbean region, each led by a bishop elected by voting members at a synod assembly to six-year, renewable terms. The highest governing authority in the ELCA is the churchwide assembly, which includes 600 lay voting members equally divided by gender and about 400 clergy voting members. A 37-member church council, elected by the assembly, serves as the board of directors and interim legislative authority between assemblies. The presiding bishop is the ELCA's chief pastor and the executive officer of the churchwide organization. Both the presiding bishop and secretary are elected by the churchwide assembly. Their terms of office are six years and incumbents are eligible for re-election. A lay vice president, who is elected to the volunteer position by the churchwide assembly, chairs the church council.

Units within the churchwide organization include: congregational ministries, rostered ministries, outreach, higher education and schools, church in society, and global mission. Ecumenical relations are coordinated through the office of the presiding bishop and include ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious activities. The publishing unit, located in Minneapolis, is known as Augsburg Fortress, Publishers. A formal relationship of full communion was established in 1997 between the ELCA and the Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. In 1999, relationships of full communion were formed with the Episcopal Church USA, and with the Moravian Church. As a member of the Lutheran World Federation, the ELCA affirmed in 1999 the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" with the Roman Catholic Church.

Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East

Church Family: Assyrian
 Membership: 323,300 (WCD)
 Metropolitans : 3
 Bishops: 8
 Parishes: 124
 Priests: 117
 Member of: WCC (1948)
 Periodical: *The Voice from the East* (quarterly, in English, modern Syriac, Arabic and Farsi)

The Church of the East is that ancient church which developed in the regions of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia (today's Iraq and western Iran), to the east of the Roman-Byzantine empire. It is an Apostolic church, established by the apostles St Thomas, St Thaddeus, and St Bartholomew. St Peter, the chief of the apostles added his blessing to the Church of the East at the time of his visit to the see at Babylon, in the earliest days of the church: "... *The chosen church which is at Babylon, and Mark, my son, salute you ... greet one another with a holy kiss ...*" (1 Peter 5:13-14). During the first century of the Christian era, the Church of the East was established in the city of Edessa, in the northern-most Aramaic-speaking city-state of the eastern region. Reference to this can be found in the writings of the historian Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*; bk 1, ch 13). In 280, the Church of the East was officially organized under the Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Papa bar Gaggai of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and in 410 it renounced all subjection to the see of Antioch. The eastward movement of the church saw Christian communities flourishing in what is now Afghanistan and south-central Asia.

Many churches were established along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, following the "silk and spice route" of the ancient caravans. The great subcontinent of India was evangelized by Thomas the apostle. By the end of the 3rd century, 19 episcopal see cities existed, with their bishops spiritually governing the faithful in the holy tradition of the apostles and their teachings.

The Church of the East suffered persecution at the hands of the Persians, because of the hostility between the Persian empire and the Roman-Byzantine empire which had adopted Christianity. The church was and remained a minority in Persia, but was large and active, and noted for its scholastic achievements, its monastic centres, its martyrs and teachers. The pressure of persecution favoured expansion to the east. Missionaries from the Church of the East spread into the Asian continent, proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ in the far off regions of the Mongol tribes. In the 7th century they made their way into China. The so-called "Nestorian Tablet" found in Xi'an witnesses to this early Christian presence in China.

The Muslim conquest beginning in the 7th century affected the church and brought new persecutions. The Mongol khans who had been open to Christianity came under the influence of Islam and turned against the church during their invasions of the Arabian peninsula. Many Christians were killed or forced to convert to Islam. The Church of the East withdrew into the Hakkari mountains (today's northern Iraq and eastern Turkey) which became the home of the patriarchal see, and where it remained in isolation for centuries. When the British established their rule in Iraq after World War I, the patriarch was exiled to Cyprus. Eventually he moved to the USA, when it became evident that the Iraqi authorities would not let him return to his people.

The Church of the East is now thinly spread throughout the world, with its main centres in Iraq, Iran, Syria, India (where it is known as the Chaldean Syrian church), North America, Australia, New Zealand and Europe. It has archdioceses for Iraq and Russia, India, Lebanon and Europe, three dioceses in the USA and one each in Syria, Iran, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. The Catholicos-Patriarch resides in the USA.

The Assyrian Church was represented at the Council of Nicea in 325. The Nicene Creed is the universally received faith of the church. With regard to the teaching of Nestorius, the Church of the East maintains that Jesus Christ is Son of God and Son of Man, two *qnome* united in one Sonship. All the documents of the church are in Aramaic, utilizing the Nestorian Syriac script. The sacred rites of the Church of the East include the pre-431 rite of Addai and Mari, together with other texts.

In the 16th century a split occurred in the Church of the East. A part of the church which became known as the Chaldean Catholic Church joined the Roman Catholic Church. Another, smaller group separated in the second half of the 20th century and took the name Ancient Church of the East, under its own patriarch who resides in Baghdad.

Hungarian Reformed Church in America

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 6080

Congregations: 29

Pastors: 27

Member of: WCC (1958) – NCCCUSA – WARC – CANAAC

Periodical: *Magyar Church – Magyar Egyház* (monthly, in English and Hungarian)

In 1921 the Reformed Church of Hungary transferred its two classes in America to the Reformed Church in the United States (now the United Church of Christ). Certain Hungarian Reformed congregations refused the agreement, and founded the Free Hungarian Reformed Church in America, in 1924. In 1959 the general assembly of the church decided to change the name to Hungarian Reformed Church in America. All the members of the church cherish their Hungarian roots, their culture and mother tongue, and want to uphold that heritage in their new homeland. In 2004 they celebrated the 80th anniversary of the church. Their spirit and faith remain strong, as they consider it God's will and their duty to maintain the American Hungarian churches, a large part of that heritage. The pastors have a strong sense of serving and building the church. The pastors' conference and the presbyters' conference are working well together in raising the spirits of the congregations. The monthly magazine *Magyar Church – Magyar Egyház* is also an important instrument in holding the communities together. The activities of the church are carried out jointly by the members of the congregations, the elders and the pastors, with the support of the church-wide organizations.

The Hungarian Reformed Church in America is organized in three classes: Western, Central, and Eastern. It is a member of the consultative synod of the Hungarian Reformed Churches and the World Federation of the Hungarian Reformed Churches. It considers itself to be one branch only of the Reformed family, as part of Christ's church.

International Council of Community Churches

Church Family: Non-denominational

Membership: 108,806

Congregations: 166

Pastors: 283

Member of : WCC (1974) – NCCCUSA – CCT USA

Periodicals: *The Christian Community*

The Inclusive Pulpit

Website: www.icccusa.com

Community Churches in the United States date from the mid-1800s. They are a result of the desire to eliminate over-churching in some communities and solve

attendant economic and staffing problems, to replace the restrictiveness and divisiveness of some denominationalism with self-determination and Christian unity, and to refocus primary loyalty to an organization outside a community to the community itself. By addressing specific needs in various places they hope to promote a more relevant religion. The earliest national organization began in 1923. The current one resulted from a 1950 merger of two previous councils, one comprised of churches with predominantly black and the other of churches with predominantly white memberships.

The ICCC is directly related to each community in which its local congregations are located and encourages each local church to take an active part in all ecumenical affairs within its community. It seeks to encourage every local church to share its faith with other Christians and people of other faiths. Its stance is that of representing ecumenical Christian religion in the local community. In concert with other mainline religious bodies it seeks to bring the light of Christian faith to bear upon all problems of society, political, social, cultural, etc. Its concept of the "people of God being one in the place where they are" is of great influence in drawing people of different backgrounds together in action to build the good community. Because it was the first significant merger of predominantly white and predominantly black religious bodies (1950) it has always had as one of its major emphases the overcoming of racism. The ICCC does not have its separate "missions" or "outreach" programmes or institutions but encourages its member congregations to support interdenominational mission programmes or those of other religious bodies.

The ICCC sees racism as one of the major issues it must tackle, along with combating all forms of prejudice, organized and individual. The growing threat of war and poverty and their effect on people are yet other issues. The implication of Christian principles and the Christian faith on these problems is a central concern. Along with these is the emphasis the Council has always laid on ecumenicity, both locally and worldwide. Increased effectiveness of the church in local as well as national and international life is sought through annual conferences in which representatives of the churches come together for worship, education, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and to offer mutual support and encouragement.

International Evangelical Church

Church Family: Pentecostal

Membership: 21,000

Congregations: 50

Pastors: 85

Member of: WCC (1972)

This church was founded around 1970 by two American Pentecostal leaders. One of them was involved in missionary work in Italy, the other was the founder of an evangelizing ministry and church in Washington D.C. The full name of the organization was International Evangelical Church and Missionary Association. Through the activities of another Pentecostal leader associated with the organization, the work expanded to Brazil. A revival movement in Nigeria also became part of it. The missionary work in Italy developed slowly. In the 1980s another group joined, and in 2005 there were 45 churches with 80 pastors, and about 18,000 members. The church is known in Italy as CEIAM, the Italian acronym of International Evangelical Church and Missionary Association. It has its office in Rome. In the USA, the church continues to exist in Washington D.C. as a congregation of 3,000 members, called Evangel Cathedral. It is a lively, pioneering and

racially reconciling community. African Americans make up 95 percent of the membership. The church runs a Bible school with over 1700 students. Several other churches look to Evangel Cathedral for assistance and direction.

Note: According to the last edition of the Handbook of WCC member churches, the International Evangelical Church had 168,100 members in 1985. In 2005, no other than the above-mentioned information was available about the church in the USA and internationally.

Moravian Church in America

Church Family: Free Church

Membership: 36,095

Congregations: 160

Pastors: 171

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – MUB

Periodicals: *The Moravian* (monthly)

Moravian Daily Texts (annual)

Website: www.moravian.org

The Moravian Church in America is comprised of the Northern and Southern Provinces, two of the nineteen provinces of the worldwide Moravian Church. Both provinces are actively engaged in new church development, especially the 20/20 programme in the Northern Province. Several new churches and fellowships are emerging. Other concerns include mission, poverty, world and domestic hunger, educational ministries, youth ministry, stewardship development, family-life enrichment, camps and conferences, and congregational renewal. Educational enterprises include Salem Academy and College in Winston-Salem, NC, and Moravian College and Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, PA. With the other provinces of the Moravian Unity the church supports work among handicapped children in Palestine and educational institutions in North India.

The Moravian Church comes out of the Hussite movement in Bohemia-Moravia in the 15th century. Following the Counter-Reformation they practised their faith in secret until they found a certain degree of religious freedom on the estate of a young Pietistic nobleman in German Saxony, named Count Zinzendorf. The Germans referred to the newcomers as “Moravians”, from the land of their origin, and the name continued in use in English-speaking lands. Following an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1727, a remarkable missionary effort began from Zinzendorf’s estate in 1732 and has led to today’s worldwide church. Today two-thirds of all Moravians are in Tanzania and South Africa.

The Moravian Church continues to be true to its historic commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and to share this faith widely with others. “The Ground of the Unity” is the basic doctrinal statement of the worldwide unity and many of the provinces look to the “Covenant for Christian Living” as the principles by which Moravians live and bear witness. Both documents are available at www.moravian.org/believe. The Moravian Church in America is in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has numerous ecumenical ties through bilateral talks and through several ecumenical organizations.

National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 5,000,000

Local churches: 5,000

Pastors: 5,000

Member of: WCC (1955) – NCCC/USA – BWA – CCT USA

Periodical: *The Lantern* (quarterly)

Website: www.nbcamerica.net

Records show that in 1880 there were nearly two million former slaves in Baptist churches in the USA. The need for a national congregation of African-American Baptists led to the creation of the Foreign Mission Baptist Convention of the United States (1880), the American National Baptist Convention (1886), and the Baptist National Educational Convention (1893). These three united and formed in 1895 the National Baptist Convention. Controversy over the adoption of a charter and the ownership of the National Baptist Publishing Board led in 1919 to a split and the formation of two separate bodies, the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. and the National Baptist Convention of America (Inc.); the latter was incorporated in 1987. The matter was discussed again in the annual session of the NBCA, Inc. in 1988, after a joint worship service with the NBC USA Inc., but the controversy prevailed.

The National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. has made tremendous growth in numbers, ministries, and in honouring its commitment to education, evangelism, and mission at home and abroad. It continues to support mission fields in the Caribbean, the Virgin Islands, Panama, Haiti and Ghana. Its mission statement reads: "The National Baptist Convention of America shall serve to promote and support Christian education, Christian missions, and church extension through the combined efforts of Baptist churches, and shall seek to cause the gospel, as understood and practiced by our Baptist faith, to be spread throughout this nation and to the foreign nations. The Convention shall seek to positively impact and influence the spiritual, educational, social and economic conditions of all humankind."

The NBCA, Inc. convenes three times per year. One of the annual sessions is designated as the Convention at Study, which focuses upon the teaching ministry of the church, and is implemented through the National Baptist Congress of Christian Workers and the National Youth Convention. The NBCA, Inc. has several auxiliaries, for senior, intermediate, and junior women, and for men, all focusing on evangelism and leadership training; a health awareness team ministers to the physical needs of the family of God; an usher's auxiliary promotes support for the convention through prayer, Bible study and a covenant action plan for financial support; the pastors' and ministers' conference seeks to foster unity and to address the critical matters related to the task of ministry in the local church. Another set of organs of the convention are the boards. The college and seminary board, and the educational board, are in charge of relations with, and assistance to, educational institutions for the training of men and women for effective and full-time Christian service. The evangelical board is responsible for evangelism. It organizes annually a winter evangelism conference and a tent revival campaign. There is a publishing board, a home mission board for assistance to churches, pastors and individuals experiencing dire financial need, and a foreign mission board. Finally, the convention has a number of commissions, dealing with chaplaincy (especially in the armed forces), with orthodoxy (safeguarding Baptist distinctives and doctrinal beliefs), social justice (the welfare of oppressed people, global issues related to equity and justice), community and economic development, and labour relations.

National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

Church Family: Baptist

Membership: 7,500,000

Local churches: 6,697

Pastors: i.n.a.*

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – BWA – CCT USA

Periodical: *National Baptist Voice*

Website: www.nationalbaptist.com

Founded in 1886, the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. is the oldest and largest African American religious convention in the USA. In 1880, about 150 Baptist pastors met in Montgomery, Alabama, and formed the Baptist Mission Convention. In 1895, this convention merged with two other conventions to form the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America. The 1880 meeting and the formation of the Foreign Mission Convention was accepted as the origin of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated. The path to the formation of the convention was characterized by many previous cooperative efforts, and throughout its history there have been many ups and downs, triumphs and failures, splits and attempts at unification. The mission of the convention is to fulfil the great commission of Jesus Christ through preaching, teaching, and healing. The basic objectives and corporate purposes of this voluntary fellowship are: a) to unite National Baptist churches, district associations, and state conventions in Christian evangelism; b) to promote home and foreign mission efforts; c) to encourage and support Christian education; d) to publish and distribute Sunday school and other Christian literature, music, and other works of art and religious expression; and e) to engage in any other endeavours deemed fitting and proper in order to advance the cause of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

The nature of this convention is defined by its ideal of voluntary membership and participation at both the organization and individual member levels. As such, the convention does not have administrative or doctrinal control over any of its membership; these matters are left for the attention of local organization and church authorities. The strength of the convention lies in its ability to harness and coordinate and network the resources and efforts of its membership, to accomplish goals greater than those that could be accomplished in isolation. For this reason, the convention has enjoyed the devoted participation and support of many churches and individuals throughout its history.

The president of the convention is elected by the member churches every five years during the Annual Session. The current presidency is placed under the biblical mandate of “Jesus Christ Only, Always” (1 Cor. 2:2). The convention is governed by its board of directors, which is comprised of the officers, the presidents from each of the states and territories represented by constituent members of the convention, representatives from each of the boards and auxiliaries of the convention, and members-at-large. Matters of importance to the convention are taken up and acted upon by the board of directors or designated subgroups thereof. The major business meeting of the boards, auxiliaries and member churches of the convention is the Annual Session, which draws 10,000 or more delegates. The mid-winter board session is a second, smaller annual business meeting, with some 3,000 persons. Two other important annual events are the Christian Educators Conference of the Sunday School Publishing Board, also with some 3,000 participants, and the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education, which brings together 35,000 or more delegates and is the largest of the four major meetings of

the convention. These two meetings are open to participants who belong to churches that do not hold membership in the convention.

In 2005 a reunion of groups originally associated with the National Baptist Convention, USA, took place in Nashville, Tennessee. This included the Progressive National Baptist Convention, the National Baptist Convention of America, the National Missionary Baptist Convention, and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., itself. While the occasion did not mark the beginnings of organic institutional merger, it did indicate a renewed vision to promote and strengthen greater fellowship by "...working together on matters of common concern and addressing matters of public policy that affect the disenfranchized".

*information not available

Orthodox Church in America

Church Family: Orthodox (Eastern)

Membership: 1,000,000

Dioceses: 14 (1 in Canada)

Parishes: 697

Bishops: 13

Priests: 721

Member of : WCC (1953) – NCCC/USA – CCT USA

Periodicals: *The Orthodox Church* (monthly)

St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly

Website: www.oca.org

The Orthodox Church in America traces its roots to the arrival in Alaska in 1794 of missionaries from the monastery of Valamo in Karelia (in the Russian empire). Among these was St Herman, who was also the first saint to be canonized by the American Church (in 1970). In 1840 a bishop's seat was established at Sitka, Alaska. In 1867 Russia sold Alaska to the United States. The first parish church beyond Alaska was established in San Francisco in 1868. The diocesan seat was moved to San Francisco, and from there to New York in 1903. The diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska, which had been formed in 1870, became the diocese of the Aleutians and North America. By the turn of the century there were a large number of Orthodox Christians in the northeast of the United States, many of whom had previously been Eastern Catholics. Many of the texts for public worship were translated into English, and in 1905-06 the American archbishop projected the goal of self-government for the now multi-ethnic church in America.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 had a deeply unsettling effect on the Orthodox Church in America, which was still formally a diocese of the Russian church. In the ensuing confusion seminaries were closed and the stability and unity of the diocese were severely undermined. In 1921, for the first time, different ethnic Orthodox ecclesiastical jurisdictions appeared within the same geographical area. In the 1930s, with the Moscow Patriarchate under severe persecution by the communist regime, political "loyalty" to the USSR was seen as a condition for the restoration of church relations with what was now known as the American Metropolia. This was a condition that could not be accepted in America, and relations remained strained. During the 1940s the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia arrived in America. While the metropolitan see tolerated its presence, and in many cases fostered close relations with it, it did not unite with it, stressing rather its own identity as a multi-ethnic American church. The struggle over the identity and the status of the American metropolia was resolved in 1970. The

Russian Orthodox Church granted complete self-government to the metropolia whereby it became an autocephalous, or fully independent, local Orthodox church. Its jurisdiction extends over the whole of America and Canada, and in 1972 an exarchate was established in Mexico.

The holy synod, a conference of bishops to which all diocesan hierarchs belong and which is presided over by the archbishop of Washington, meets twice a year, in spring and autumn. When necessary a special session can be convened. A church-wide assembly of bishops and clergy and lay delegates, "The All-American Council," is convened every three years. Clergy and lay leaders are educated in St Vladimir's Seminary near New York, at St Tikhon's Seminary in Pennsylvania and in St Herman's Seminary, in Alaska. Founded in 1905, St Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA is the oldest Orthodox monastic community in North America; the Orthodox Church in America also maintains some 20 other monastic communities for men and women.

The Orthodox Church in America, as an expression of its commitment to Orthodox unity in North America, is a member of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), which brings together eight "jurisdictions" for coordination and cooperation. Under the aegis of the SCOBA, several agencies and commissions work "as if" Orthodoxy in America is fully united in mission and administration. Among these are International Orthodox Christian Charities, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, the Orthodox Christian Education Commission, and the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (a ministry to college students).

Clergy and lay leaders are educated in St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY, at St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, PA, and in St Herman's Seminary, Kodiak, Alaska. The Orthodox Church in America also maintains some 20 other monastic communities for men and women.

* One diocese in Canada.

Polish National Catholic Church

Church Family: Independent

Membership: 30,000

Congregations: 128

Pastors: 95

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – CCT USA

Periodicals: *God's Field* (Rola Boza)

(bi-weekly, in English and Polish)

Website: www.pncc.org

During the latter part of the 19th century, there were a number of conflicts between the Polish immigrants and the Roman Catholic clergy and hierarchy in the United States. These had primarily to do with church governance issues, the control of church property, the assignment of pastors, and the pastoral accessibility to the people. These conflicts generally arose in the areas where there was a large Polish immigrant population. In 1896, a group of people from Sacred Heart Roman Catholic parish in Scranton, Pennsylvania, had a disagreement with their pastor, and when they found no help from the clergy or the bishop they vowed to build their own church. In 1897, these determined people found property for a parish and called upon a priest they knew and trusted to be their pastor. When the people, together with the priest, got no results from the local hierarchy, and

even found themselves excommunicated, they attempted to turn to the Vatican. When their plea was also rejected there, they broke decisively with the Roman Catholic Church, and the Polish National Catholic Church was officially established. By this time, several other parishes in northeastern Pennsylvania had joined the movement. At the first general synod of the Polish National Catholic Church held in 1904, Fr Francis Hodur was elected bishop. He was consecrated by the Old-Catholic Bishop of Utrecht, Netherlands, in 1907.

Similar situations occurred among Poles in Chicago and New York, and after the bishops they had elected died, most of the parishes concerned became eventually part of the Polish National Catholic Church led from Scranton. In 1921 the PNCC began a mission to the nation of Poland. This led to the creation of the Polish Catholic Church in Poland, which is in full communion with the PNCC in the USA. Besides the Poles, other nationalities with the same needs also came to the PNCC, and Lithuanian, Czech, Slovak and Italian parishes came into being. Although the need for these ethnic parishes is less evident than it once was, today a number of Hispanic and American congregations have joined the PNCC for many of the same reasons as those for which it was originally organized.

The Polish National Catholic Church is a church which maintains the traditional elements of Catholicism, but for the most part has a democratic governance. In matters of faith, morals and ecclesiastical discipline, the church is governed by the prime bishop, with the bishops and clergy united with him. In all other matters, the highest governing body of the church is the general synod, which meets every four years, and has both lay and clerical representation. These synod meetings are also charged with choosing the candidates for the office of bishop. On the local level the parishes are owned and governed by the parishioners, under the leadership of a pastor and an elected parish committee.

The faith of the Polish National Catholic Church is to be found in holy scripture, as set forth in the Councils and the Tradition of the undivided church of the first thousand years. The pastors are trained at the theological seminary of the church in Scranton. At the present time the PNCC is in dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church.

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 2,405,311

Presbyteries: 173

Congregations: 11,064

Pastors: 21,248

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – WARC – CANAAC

Periodicals: *Call to Worship*, *Horizons Magazine*,

Church and Society Magazine,

Ideas! For Church Leaders,

Presbyterians Today

Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study

Website: www.pcusa.org

The arrival of French Huguenots in 1562 marked the first recorded visit of Reformed Christians to America. After 1600, many Presbyterians from Europe followed them, to escape persecution for their beliefs and to seek religious freedom. As their number increased, scattered groups formed into congregations. By 1709 the first presbytery was organized in Philadelphia, and in 1789 the first

general assembly of the Presbyterian Church was convened. In 1983 the Presbyterian Church (USA) brought together into a single reunited church the former Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), which had come into separate existence in 1861 as a result of tensions connected with the American Civil War, and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA). The latter body had been formed through a union in 1958 between the Presbyterian Church of North America (PCNA), which had had a separate history of some hundred years, and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA).

The Presbyterian Church (USA) maintains a broad spectrum of relationships with churches and ecumenical agencies in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East. Shared personnel and programme resources are extended to partner churches for mission endeavours, including evangelism, self-development, medical, education, and justice ministries. The Presbyterian Church (USA) receives into its midst persons from other churches around the world who serve in mission to the USA. Increasing emphasis is being placed on partnership in mission which is based on the needs of both US and other churches, and a high priority has been placed on development of global perspectives which can inform the whole life of the church. Focused attention on global issues is also central to the well-established Presbyterian peacemaking and hunger programmes.

Domestically, special attention has been given to issues of evangelism, multiculturalism, racial and economic justice, and relationships of Christians with the peoples of Jewish and Muslim faiths. There is also attention to development of curricula resources that teach the Reformed tradition upon whose roots Presbyterians move out into fellowship in the wider community of churches. The general assembly has had a special theological task force on the peace, purity and unity of the church, whose charge is to "lead the Presbyterian Church (USA) in spiritual discernment of our Christian identity in and for the 21st century ... seeking the peace, purity and unity of the church." The church is served by ten theological seminaries and a school of Christian education.

Within the United States, the Presbyterian Church (USA) is active not only in the National Council of Churches but also in Churches Uniting in Christ. CUIC is successor to the former Consultation on Church Union and is a covenantal relationship with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church, the International Council of Community Churches, the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. In 1999, the Presbyterian Church (USA) entered a full communion relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

Offices of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the highest governing body of the church, are located in Louisville, Kentucky. The Board of Pension of the general assembly and the Presbyterian Historical Society are both located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the Presbyterian Foundation is located in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

Church Family: Baptist
 Membership: 2,500,000*
 Regions: 5
 Local churches: 1,800

Pastors: 1,146 (in the USA)
 Member of: WCC (1975) – NCCC/USA – BWA
 Periodical: *The Worker* (quarterly)
 Website: www.pnbc.org

The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. (PNBC) started as a movement which reflected the religious, social and political climate in the USA in the 1950s. The seeds of the PNBC were sown at that time by discontent over election procedures in the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. But the roots of its development went far beyond issues of tenure of office. The formation of the convention was wrapped up in the civil rights movement and was begun by some of the same persons who were deeply involved in the freedom movement for African Americans in the United States. From a religious perspective, churches from across the United States were suffering from an identity crisis fostered by racism, and conservative political policies and practices that supported segregation and US apartheid. In this context, the question was whether the church would be at the forefront of the civil rights movement or would only emphasize narrow ecclesiastical concerns and worship.

In 1961, 33 delegates met to envision a new convention that would be progressive and forward-thinking, and respond to the spiritual and social needs of the time. As a result, the Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc. was formed. Leadership from across the United States joined the Progressive Baptist family and spawned the movement. The PNBC became a new Christian movement which included an array of social and political concerns embodied in its founding principles of fellowship, progress, peace and service. The movement was undergirded by Dr Martin Luther King Jr's struggle for freedom for African Americans. It was the PNBC that provided a denominational home for Dr King Jr and many of the Baptist leaders in the Civil Rights Movement. As a result of their involvement, the centrepiece of the PNBC witness became one of social justice and human liberation as a mandate of the gospel. In essence, the PNBC became a living African American Christian organism, vibrant with energy and committed to the social gospel for the transformation of US society.

From its very beginning, distinctive characteristics emerged that separated it from other African American Baptist conventions: tenure in office, a unified giving programme, and kingdom priorities. Any member of the convention whether lay, clergy, male or female is eligible to hold any office of the convention, which ensures the broadest possible participation of all of its members. The member churches are required to contribute one percent of their previous year's operating budget as their membership fee. The PNBC has an integrated mission programme. It is dedicated to the education of African Americans and has as one of its major priorities the support of African American colleges, schools of religion, theological schools and universities. The PNBC is actively engaged in national and international ministries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the United States of America.

The membership of the PNBC in the USA is primarily urban and comes from many different social classes and strata. A large percentage of PNBC churches are engaged in urban programmes that focus on the youth, the elderly, housing, economic development and prison ministries.

*Of which 1,000,000 outside the USA (in the UK, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Bahamas, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Ecuador, and Nicaragua).

Reformed Church in America

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 284,520

Congregations: 938

Pastors: 2,053

Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – CCT USA – WARC – CANAAC

Periodical: *Church Herald*

Website: www.rca.org

In the colonial town of New Amsterdam in 1628, nearly fifty people gathered in a mill loft to celebrate the Lord's supper. Their communion marks the birth-date of the Reformed Church in America. The congregation they founded continues today as the Collegiate Reformed Church in New York City, the oldest evangelical church in North America with a continuous ministry.

Incorporated in 1819 as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, the denomination changed its name in 1867 to the Reformed Church in America (RCA). The RCA spread westward throughout the 19th century, although most of the church's influence continued to be among settlers and immigrants of Dutch descent, including two congregations organized in Alberta, Canada, in the early 1900s. Another expansion in Canada took place following World War II, as the RCA worked to assist Dutch immigrants seeking to make a new start in Canada. In the 1950s, Americans moving to the cities and suburbs prompted the RCA to organize 120 new churches, many among people unfamiliar with the Dutch heritage and Dutch Reformed traditions. To further welcome people from other backgrounds, between 1969 and 1980 the RCA formed four racial-ethnic councils (Pacific and Asian American, Hispanic, Native American Indian, and African American). In addition, urban ministries focus on churches and people who live in cities throughout the US and Canada. Denominational approval of the ordination of women as elders and deacons came in 1972, though women had been ordained to those offices beginning in 1970. The first woman RCA minister was ordained in 1973, and ordination to the office of minister was opened to all women in 1979.

The RCA is presbyterian in government. It accepts the inspired word of God as its only rule of faith and practice. The concept of covenant and the sovereignty of God are important emphases in its theology. Mission continues to be a priority, especially through the "mutual mission" initiative (begun in 2002), which fosters exchanges of people, knowledge, and understanding between the long-established North American churches and their younger, innovative, growing counterparts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The church has a strong evangelical emphasis and seeks ways to address important social and global issues, including hunger, world peace, and disaster response.

The RCA's statement of Mission and Vision, introduced in 1997, spells out the calling of the church "to follow Christ in mission, in a lost and broken world so loved by God." "Our Call," the denominational goal, builds on the mission and vision statement. Our Call was initiated in 2003 and focuses on revitalizing existing congregations and starting new congregations, while building on the foundations of discipleship, leadership, and mission. Reformed and always reforming, the RCA has moved into the 21st century, rooted and established in careful theology and committed to grow as the Spirit leads.

Religious Society of Friends: Friends General Conference

Church Family: Free Church
 Membership: 32,000
 Yearly Meetings: 14
 Monthly Meetings: 400
 Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCC/USA – FWCC
 Periodical: *FGC Quarterly*
 Website: www.fgcquaker.org

The Friends General Conference is the oldest of the five major groupings of Friends in the United States and Canada. It had its beginnings just before 1900 when four Hicksite groups decided to meet annually at the same time and place. These were First Day School Conference, Friends Union for Philanthropic Labor, Friends Religious Conference, and Friends Education Conference. In 1900, seven yearly meetings which were involved in these groups joined to form Friends General Conference. In the 1950s, when yearly meetings were united, the scope of FGC membership was broadened to include meetings which had been identified as Orthodox, Conservative, and Evangelical, as well as Hicksite. Over the years, Friends have found that they come closer to truth when many Friends, rather than a few, are involved in ministry and in decisions. Monthly meetings have joined to form yearly meetings and yearly meetings have joined to form Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and Friends Evangelical International.

Today, Friends General Conference is an association of 14 yearly meetings and some other groups in the Religious Society of Friends. Representatives of these yearly meetings and other groups meet annually as a central committee and serve on programme and administrative committees designed to strengthen and enrich the spiritual dimension of the Society of Friends.

Friends General Conference (FGC) Friends have historic roots in Christianity. For them, the life and teaching of Jesus are central to their belief and to their day-to-day living. Most are open to the enrichment of theological diversity. FGC Friends believe that everyone has direct access to God through the Inner Light or Inner Christ. Worship is based on expectant waiting upon and communion with God. The FGC has a travelling ministries programme which provides opportunities for Friends to visit each other's communities, to share experiences and grow spiritually. The FGC also participates actively in the Decade to Overcome Violence.

Religious Society of Friends: Friends United Meeting

Church Family: Free Church
 Membership: 170,600*
 Yearly Meetings: 29
 Monthly Meetings: 2,585*
 Pastors: 1,201
 Member of: WCC (1948) – NCCCUSA – CCT USA – FWCC
 Periodical: *Quaker Life*
 Website: www.fum.org

Quakerism arose out of the religious ferment of the mid-17th century in England. Its founder emphasized the immediacy of Christ's teaching and held that for this, consecrated buildings and ordained ministers were irrelevant. By 1655 Quakers had spread throughout Great Britain and Ireland and to the continent of Europe, and in 1682 Pennsylvania was founded on a Quaker basis. From the para-

mount importance given to the Inward Christ of the new covenant derives the rejection of the outward sacraments, ordained ministry and all set forms of worship. The Society does, however, firmly believe in a spiritual baptism and a spiritual communion, and recognizes the gifts in ministry of all believers.

The Friends United Meeting (FUM) was established in 1902 as a gathering of American yearly meetings. Each yearly meeting remains autonomous in its governance, but joins together through Friends United Meeting for common witness and service. FUM has grown to include 29 yearly meetings around the world, with concentrations of membership in the United States and East Africa. Three quarters of its members are Kenyan. FUM's purpose statement commits it to "energize and equip Friends, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to gather people into fellowships where Jesus Christ is known, loved and obeyed as teacher and Lord." FUM currently has four strategic priorities: evangelism, leadership training, global partnerships and communications.

In the 19th century, Quakers were leaders in the movement to abolish slavery in the United States, and supported it by becoming a part of the underground railroad network. Continuing through the 20th century to live in the deep-rooted belief that all people are the children of God, Quakers have been active in relief work throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and South America in times of war and anguish, working through such agencies as the American Friends Service Committee. FUM is one of the founding organizations of Christian Peacemaker Teams, seeking to follow the way of Jesus by offering non-violent resistance to violent conflict. FUM Friends have also developed programmes of alternatives to violence, which have been implemented in diverse situations of conflict around the world. FUM is active in mission and evangelism. Its historic missions include schools, theological colleges, hospitals and orphanages in Kenya, Palestine, Jamaica, and Belize. Outreach in new areas includes Russia and the pastoralist people of northern Kenya. In North America FUM holds conferences for pastors and for emerging leaders.

FUM holds a world-wide triennial conference every three years, and is governed by a general board appointed by all its member yearly meetings. It has offices in Richmond, Indiana, USA and Kisumu, Kenya.

*of which 75 percent in Kenya.

United Church of Christ

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership : 1,400,000

Conferences: 39

Congregations: 6,000

Pastors: 10,000

Member of: WCC (1948/1961) – NCCC/USA – CCT USA – WARC – CANAAC

Periodical: *United Church News* (6 times per year)

Website www.ucc.org

The United Church of Christ, a church of the united and uniting church family, was created in 1957, from the merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational and Christian churches. Its roots grew out of German Lutheranism, German and Swiss Reformed traditions, Anabaptist Christian Church traditions, and English Congregationalism. The UCC also expresses its Reformed heritage through the presence of the non-geographic Calvin Synod from the Hungarian Reformed tradition. The Congregational churches were descended from Puritan and Separatist forebears in England and New England. Their roots

are in the Calvinist and free church traditions, but include influences from a variety of Reformation-era traditions. Seeking the simplicity of first century Christianity, and on the cusp of the 19th century "Second Awakening", the Christian Church arose from three diverse traditions: the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churches.

The Congregational Churches and the Christian Church came together in 1931 to become the Congregational Christian Churches. The German Reformed Church was established by early 18th century Swiss and German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and the surrounding area. The Evangelical Synod of North America was born of the Evangelical Church of the Prussian Union, a 19th century Reformed-Lutheran union in Germany. Settlers in the Mississippi Valley during the westward movement of the 19th century were gathered into congregations through missionary efforts. In 1934 these two churches united to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

The settings of the United Church of Christ are bound together by covenantal relationships. Authority rests in the individual congregation, and functions with a blend of congregational and presbyterial polity. Local churches are autonomous, own their property, and call their pastors. Congregations have membership in regional associations, which have the authority to ordain and grant ministerial standing to pastors. Associations are in turn gathered into conferences. The United Church of Christ meets biennially in general synod to establish priorities, make statements on public moral and social issues, recommend policy, vote on budget, and make programme recommendations. The general synod consists of delegates elected by the conferences, members of the four covenanted ministries of the national setting, and representatives from various other settings of the church. The head of communion for the United Church of Christ is the general minister and president, and the general synod elects four additional officers to give leadership to the church. These five together form the "Collegium of Officers."

At its inception the United Church of Christ was, and has continued to be, a diverse communion, including congregations of many racial and ethnic origins: African American, Hispanic, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and many others. As a result of its diversity and commitment to being a united and uniting church, the United Church of Christ has sought to engage the various ecclesial and liturgical perspectives brought by its members. It has continued to articulate its united and uniting vocation by naming a commitment to becoming ever more intentionally multi-racial and multicultural, open and affirming to the gifts of gay and lesbian persons for membership and ordained ministry, a church accessible to all people, and dedicated to the pursuit of ecumenical relationships. These commitments are seen to rest clearly in the stream of the Reformation tradition of a church "reformed and always reforming". This same commitment fosters a concern for justice and peace in the church and throughout the world.

United Methodist Church

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 10,103,323*

Congregations: 42,195

Bishops: 68

Pastors: 54,212

Member of : WCC (1948/1969) – NCCC/USA – CCT USA – WMC

Periodicals: *The Interpreter* (in English and Spanish)

Sixty other periodicals

Website: www.umc.org

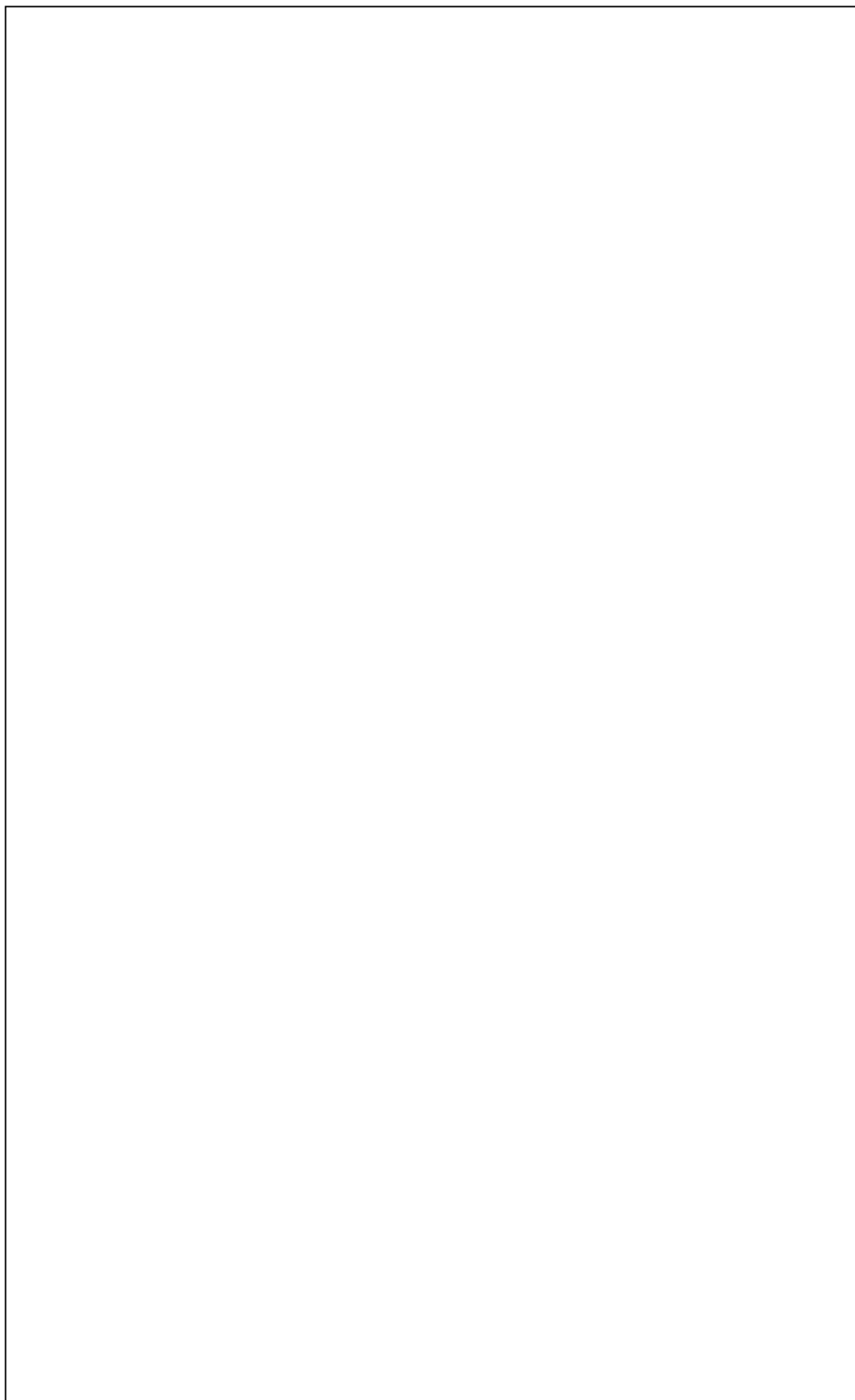
The United Methodist Church, now one of the largest Protestant denominations in the USA and with member churches in Africa, Asia and Europe, has its roots in English, Dutch and German groups working among the early settlers. The Methodist Episcopal Church, following the principles of John Wesley, was officially organized in 1784. During the 19th century, Methodism spread to Africa, Asia and Latin America through missionary efforts. The early 20th century brought about various unions. In 1939 the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church united into the Methodist Church, which created a "central jurisdiction", i.e., a non-geographical (segregated) jurisdiction based upon race. In 1946 the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church became the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which united with the Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church in 1968. The central jurisdiction was abolished. During the last half century mission churches, especially in Asia and Latin America, have become autonomous, although the parent denomination maintains close ties with them as it does with its own "mother church", the Methodist Church in Great Britain.

The UMC reflects the diversified society of the nation. Even though the official social creed of the church could be considered as liberal, individual members hold widely differing views on political and social issues. Throughout Methodism's history new congregations in particular communities have been made up of various ethnic groups – black, Asian, European, Native American, Hispanic, speaking several languages – sometimes integrated, sometimes not. Presently the UMC is growing most rapidly in Korea, parts of Africa and among newly arrived Asians and Hispanics in the USA. The church considers itself to be "an inclusive society without regard to ethnic origin, economic condition, sex or age of its constituents". It is striving to implement the gospel in the lives of persons and in the structures of society, joining in ecumenical efforts to these ends. The ethnic minority constituency of the UMC is larger than that of most other predominantly white religious bodies. One of the priorities is the development and strengthening of ethnic minority local churches. Among other priorities are the special emphases on education for awareness and responsibility for world hunger, peace with justice, television ministry, church and campus, Africa, and strengthening local churches through an emphasis on family life and evangelism.

The church's four programme agencies – Church and Society, Discipleship, Global Ministries, and Higher Education and Ministry – indicate its understanding of the principal concerns. There are also five active general commissions: Christian unity and inter-religious concerns, communications, religion and race, the status and role of women, and archives and history. The church has relationships with united churches with Methodist components and with affiliated autonomous churches in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Uruguay.

*Distribution:
Africa: 1,631,631
Asia: 179,452
Europe: 72,677
USA: 8,219,563

Pacific



PACIFIC CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

The Pacific Conference of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The roots of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) go back to the first consultation of the Pacific Churches, which took place in 1961, at Malua, Western Samoa. The PCC as such was founded in 1966, at its first assembly, on the Loyalty Island of Lifou, New Caledonia. The Conference grew rapidly as new churches joined, in particular the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences of the Pacific, in 1976 and 1991. In 1976 the membership was opened also to national councils of churches. The basic principles of the PCC are an ecumenical spirit welcoming all humankind regardless of religion, belief or ideology; the promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation; the respect of equality between men and women; the recognition of the cultures of population groups; equal sharing of resources; sharing of responsibilities; consistency between word and action. Ecumenism in the Pacific refers not only to the unity of the churches but also of the people of the Pacific islands and the communal life of their communities.

The programmatic activities of the PCC began after its second assembly, in 1971, in five areas: Christian education; Christian communication; family life; faith and action; church and society. The PCC has promoted the role and status of women and has devoted much attention to economic development rooted in the realities of village life. It has taken a lead in dealing with political problems in the region, and has spoken out against nuclear testing. In the 1980s, a drastic reduction of programmes and restructuring of the organization became necessary, because of the increasing dependence on external funding and other problems.

In a vast island region like the Pacific (the "liquid continent" as some have called it), the assemblies of the PCC have been especially important occasions for the churches to deliberate and celebrate together:

Davuillevu (Fiji)	1971	<i>God's Purpose for His People</i>
Port Moresby (PNG)	1976	<i>God's Mission in the Changing Pacific Society</i>
Nuku'alofa (Tonga)	1981	<i>Confessing Jesus Christ in the Pacific</i>
Western Samoa	1986	<i>Challenges of the Eighties and the Mission of the Church</i>
Vanuatu	1991	<i>Proclaiming a Living Hope – Born into a Living Hope</i>
Tahiti (French Polynesia)	1997	<i>Reaffirming God, the Hope of Fenua</i>
Raratonga (Cook Islands)	2002	<i>Holy Spirit, Weave us Together in Your Peace</i>

The themes of the early assemblies reveal the will of the Pacific churches to discern and understand their common calling as instruments of God's mission. The answer lies in the affirmation of hope, of Fenua (the land, a fundamental notion in the Pacific cultures), of peace. The next PCC assembly will be in 2007, in

Pagopago (American Samoa), under the theme: *Atua, Empower Us to be Liberating Communities*.

Among the current programmes of the PCC, a high priority is given to capacity building, i.e. the formation of the persons who are, or will be, in charge of the work of the churches and the councils of churches. This includes management skills as well as vision, and the ability to give leadership. Another high priority area is the empowerment of young people to assume responsibilities in the church and the society. The PCC has listed three more programme concerns as having medium term priority: partnership in mission, the prophetic voice and role of the churches, and women and development. Promoting ecumenical co-operation is a long term goal of the organisation. The PCC has 26 member churches and nine member councils of churches in 17 island states and territories. The offices are in Suva, Fiji.

Website: www.pacificforum.com/pcc

Member churches of the Pacific Conference of Churches

Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa
Cook Islands Christian Church
Anglican Diocese of Polynesia
 Catholic Episcopal Conference of the Pacific
Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma
 Protestant Church of Chuuck (Micronesia)
 United Church of Christ in Pohnpei (Federated States of Micronesia)
Kiribati Protestant Church
United Church of Christ – Congregational in the Marshall Islands
Evangelical Church in New Caledonia & the Loyalty Islands
 Nauru Congregational Church
Congregational Christian Church of Niue
 Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea
United Church in Papua New Guinea
Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
Methodist Church in Samoa
 Catholic Bishops' Conference in Solomon Islands
Church of Melanesia
United Church in the Solomon Islands
Maohi Protestant Church (French Polynesia)
Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga
Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu
 Church of Christ in Vanuatu
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (Komiti Moana Nui PCC)

Member councils of the Pacific Conference of Churches

National Council of Churches in American Samoa
 Fiji Council of Churches
 Micronesian Council of United Church
 Kiribati National Council of Churches
 Niue National Council of Churches
 Papua New Guinea Council of Churches

Samoa Council of Churches
 Solomon Islands Christian Association
 Tonga National Council of Churches

AMERICAN SAMOA

Population: 64,819
 Surface area: 200 sq.km
 Capital: Pago Pago
 GNP per capita: 2,600 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: English, Samoan
 Religions: Christian 95%
 Christianity: Protestants 32,710; Catholics 12,800; Independents 2,490

The Samoan archipelago is situated in the Polynesian part of the Pacific. Migrants from south-east Asia settled in the islands more than 2000 years ago, and from there moved on to other parts of Polynesia further to the east. At the beginning of the 20th century, the island group was divided in two by the USA and Germany. The eastern part was attributed to the USA. American Samoa is a self-governing unincorporated territory of the USA. It has a traditional Polynesian economy in which more than 90 percent of the land is communally owned. Economic activity is strongly linked to the US. Tuna fishing and processing plants are the backbone of the private sector, with canned tuna the primary export. Attempts by the government to develop a larger and broader economy are restrained by American Samoa's remote location, its limited transportation, and its devastating hurricanes. Tourism is a promising developing sector. The territory has a negative population growth rate because of migration, to Australia, New Zealand and the USA. The Congregational Christian Church is the majority church. Pentecostal and other independent churches have made significant inroads in the last decades. The national council of churches groups together the Protestant churches and the Catholic church. The Methodist churches in American Samoa and Samoa form one church.

***National Council of Churches in American Samoa**

Founded in 1985.

Basis of membership: Since we believe that it is God's will for all denominations in Samoa to become one, this council is established so as to attain that goal of oneness. We believe in the only true God, the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God; as revealed in the Holy Bible, through his saving works we have been redeemed. We mutually accept the Holy Bible as our only guidance in our faith and what we do.

Mission statement: Witnessing and serving God faithfully, with respect to each member's faith and doctrinal beliefs.

Member churches:

Anglican Church
 Baptist Church
 Catholic Church in American Samoa
 Church of Jesus Christ
 Church of the Nazarene

Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa
Methodist Church in American Samoa

Member organizations:

Piango
 Women's Ecumenical Fellowship in American Samoa
 National Ecumenical Youth of American Samoa

Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 39,000*

Congregations: 115**

Pastors: 130

Member of: WCC (1985) – PCC – NCCAS – CWM

Periodical: *LAMEPA* (bimonthly, in Samoan)

Website: www.efkas-cccas.org (under construction)

The early history of this church is the same as that of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa. As the Congregationalists in Western and in American Samoa were living in different political situations – though sharing in the same cultural and confessional tradition – there was a movement from 1964 to create an independent Congregational assembly in American Samoa. In 1980 this assembly was constituted. The division was difficult for Congregationalists in both Samoas but in December 1982 officials of the two churches together made a public declaration of reconciliation. Both sides have committed themselves to further mutual recognition.

The CCCAS is a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating church. In 1983 it established its own theological college in Kanana Fou, which offers a diploma in theological studies and a BD degree, and serves also the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu. It runs also an elementary and a high school. The church emphasizes youth activities both locally and at the national level, and has undertaken the construction of a multi-purpose youth centre. It is concerned with problems in the Samoan society such as drug and alcohol abuse and the influx of religious sects. The church has sent and continues to send its own missionaries and fraternal workers to Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand, to other Pacific nations and to the United States.

The area of church planting has been a new focus for the mission programme of the church, especially with an emphasis on those localities where a sizeable number of Samoans reside in the military communities. Having an ecumenical thrust, the CCCAS played a key role in creating a national council of churches in American Samoa together with the Methodists and Roman Catholics and other local groups. Over the years, the church has also become an active participant in the wider ecclesial fellowship through its membership in the Pacific Conference of Churches and other global ecumenical bodies. During its 2005 general assembly, the CCCAS celebrated its 25th anniversary since its inception in 1980.

*Distribution:

American Samoa: 29,000

Overseas: 10,000 (Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii and continental USA)

**Including the congregations overseas.

COOK ISLANDS

Population: 21,388
 Surface area: 240 sq.km
 Capital : Avarua
 GDP per capita: 5,000 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: English, Maori
 Religions: Christian 90%
 Christianity: Protestants 15,000; Catholics 3,600

The Cook Islands are a group of fifteen small islands situated in the Polynesian part of the Pacific. They are named after the British explorer Captain Cook. The islands became a British protectorate in 1888, and came under administrative control of New Zealand in 1900. In 1965 the Cook Islanders opted for self-government in free association with New Zealand. The economy of the Cook Islands is based on agriculture and some small industries. Copra and citrus fruit are the main export products. Many skilled people emigrate to New Zealand or elsewhere. The population is predominantly Protestant. The largest church is the Cook Islands Christian Church. The Cook Islands have a Religious Advisory Council which besides the Protestants, Catholics and Pentecostals, also includes the Mormons.

Cook Islands Religious Advisory Council

Founded in 1968.

Basis: The Cook Islands Religious Advisory Council was set up to advise the government and traditional leaders on key issues affecting the social, economic, and cultural development affairs of the people of the Cook Islands, and to oversee religious events, functions and undertakings of major government and community programmes.

Member denominations:

Apostolic Church
 Assemblies of God Church
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Cook Islands Christian Church
 Roman Catholic Church in the Cook Islands
 Seventh-day Adventist Church

Cook Islands Christian Church

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 18,000*
 Congregations: 54*
 Pastors: 74
 Member of: WCC (1975) – PCC – CIRAC
 Periodical: *Karere* (newsletter, in Cook Islands Maori)

The Cook Islands Christian Church was founded by the London Missionary Society, which started working in the area in 1821. Gradually the mission spread and in 1852 the Cook Islands LMS Church as it was known then, was established in all the islands. The church remained under the authority and management of the LMS until 1965, with very strong ties to the church authorities in New

Zealand. It became autonomous in 1968, under the name Cook Islands Christian Church. The faith of the church is based on the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. The church is organized according to the congregational model. All the parishes share in the financial responsibilities for the overall budget, which is managed by an elected executive body. The contributions are fixed by the church assembly conference which meets every two years. Pastors are trained at the Takamoa Theological College in the capital Rarotonga, which is probably the first and oldest theological college in the South Pacific, and from where many pastors were sent out to take the gospel to other places, like Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, etc.

Immigration to New Zealand has always been a dominant factor in the life of Cook Islanders. In 1978 the church established its first congregation in Auckland. Today, through travel and attracted by various opportunities, Cook Islanders continue to migrate overseas. There are currently 19 congregations in New Zealand and 11 in Australia. The activities and priorities of the Cook Island Christian Church are focused on the gospel itself. For many people the Christian faith is no longer as central in their life as it was in the past. The church is encouraging its members to attend the worship services and other gatherings, and to live their lives according to the teachings of the Holy Bible. Bible studies are being organized, youth programmes are put in place and the church seeks to redirect the Christians to the source of life, God the Creator who sent his Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of humankind.

*Including the congregations in New Zealand and Australia.

FJI

Population: 854,471

Surface area: 18,270 sq.km

Capital: Suva

GNI per capita: 2,240 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: Fijian, English, Hindi

Religions: Christian 57%; Hindu 33%; Muslim 7%; Other 3%

Christianity: Protestants 385,680; Catholics 88,000; Anglicans 8,500;

Independent 120,980

Fiji comprises a group of islands in the Melanesian part of the Pacific. These were inhabited long before the arrival of the Europeans in the area. In 1874 the islands became a British colony. Fiji achieved its independence in 1970. It has the second largest population of the Pacific, after Papua New Guinea. Its economy is agrarian. The main export product is sugar. Tourism is an important source of income. Under British colonial rule, many Indians were brought to Fiji, to work in the sugar plantations. They settled in the country and constitute an integral group in the Fijian society, with their own religion, language, culture and customs. In 1987 Fiji suffered two military coups, which had to do with the balance of power between the indigenous Fijians and the Indians, economically – especially the question of land tenure – and politically, in terms of democratic representation. A nationalist movement sought to impose indigenous Fijian control of the country. Eventually an equitable arrangement was found, and embedded in the constitution. The largest church in Fiji is the Methodist Church. Pentecostals and charismatic groups number about 25 percent of the Protestants. The Fiji Council

of Churches is the ecumenical body. The Evangelical Fellowship of Fiji is affiliated with the WEA. The Pacific Conference of Churches, the ecumenical regional body, is located in Suva, Fiji's capital.

Fiji Council of Churches

Founded in 1963.

Basis of membership: The Fiji Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Anglican Church
 Catholic Church
Congregational Church of Samoa
Coptic Orthodox Church
 Fiji Baptist Convention
 Fiji Community Churches of Christ
Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma
 Presbyterian Church
 Salvation Army

Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 212,860

Divisions: 49

Congregations: 2860

Pastors: 430 (of whom 15 women)

Member of: WCC (1976) – PCC – FCC – ACCF – WMC

The first Christian missionaries to Fiji were three Tahitian teachers of the London Missionary Society, in 1830. The Wesleyan Missionary Society (Methodist) from Australia began working in the island in 1835. In 1854, many notable chiefs of Fiji became Christian. Following these conversions, many people openly confirmed their faith in the gospel. As the church grew, Fijians went out as missionaries to the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and North Australia. When British rule was established in Fiji in 1874, the government became the third strand in the Fijian consciousness, called *Matanitu*, along with the two other strands, the way of the land (*Vanua*), and Christianity (*Lotu*). For a century and a half, the Methodist Church in Fiji has enjoyed the close working together of these three strands.

Starting in 1879, large numbers of Indians were brought to Fiji by the British, to work as indentured labourers in the sugar cane industry. They came with their religion, language, culture, and customs. The Methodist Mission responded to this new challenge by setting up the Indian Mission in 1892. Towards the end of the 19th century the Methodist Church was very active in the field of education. A large number of Fijian ministers were trained. In 1964 the Methodist Church in Fiji became autonomous; in 1986, close to 75 percent of the indigenous Fijian population belonged to the Methodist Church. The Indian Methodists represent about 1.5 percent of the total membership of the church.

In 1987, Fiji suffered two military coups. These events were a turning point in the political history of the country, and caused a split in the Methodist Church,

which became apparent in 1988. The conflict touched the basic understanding of the role of the church in Fiji's multiracial, multi-religious and multicultural society. A majority faction backed the movement against the Indian population in Fiji during and after the military coups, a minority denounced this as a Christian domination over against a non-Christian religion. The division was eventually repaired but it left the Methodist Church with a crisis of identity. An authentic and clear witness to the lordship of Christ is called for, in order for the church to recapture its mission. The church must become an instrument of peace, justice and unity in the multi-coloured society of Fiji.

After the coup d'état of 2000, the Methodist Church in Fiji & Rotuma took the leading role in the formation of another Christian organization, called the Assembly of Christian Churches in Fiji (ACCF). There is a strong sense of mission within the ACCF member churches, to stand united and bring healing and transformation. It is encouraging to see that the churches, the state and the Vanua are all working together towards this common goal.

An important development in the preparation of clergymen and women has been the launching of BD and BM programmes in 2003-2004. Quality theological education of the clergy is part of the response of the church to the challenges which the pluralistic society of Fiji is facing.

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Population: 251,717

Surface area: 4,000 sq.km (land)

Capital: Papeete

GDP per capita: 17,500 US\$

Classification: High income (World Bank classification)

Languages: French, Tahitian, Chinese

Religions: Christian 88%; Chinese folk religion 8%; other 4%

Christianity: Protestants 111,740; Catholics 96,820; Independent 5,130

French Polynesia is made up of a group of islands in the Polynesian part of the Pacific. The main island is Tahiti. France annexed the territory in the 19th century. It has the status of an overseas territory, with a government, assembly and administration. The original inhabitants of the islands constitute 80 percent of the population. In 2005, they obtained the majority in the assembly and the presidency of the government. The economy of French Polynesia is based on agriculture, fishing and pearl-farming, with some local processing industry. The high income per capita is mostly due to transfers from the central government, and activities induced by metropolitan French. France used the territory for its nuclear testing from 1966 to 1992, and again in 1995-96. The presence of military personnel was an important economic asset for the population. However, protest against the nuclear tests has been vigorous, and has had significant international support. Independent research has brought to light the damage done to the population and the environment, which France has always denied. The tests have stopped, but actions continue to obtain recognition, reparations, truth and justice. Protestant missions were present in the area before French colonization. The former Evangelical Church of French Polynesia, which now calls itself Maohi Protestant Church, is the largest church. Maohi is the name of the people. The church has been in the forefront of the anti-nuclear struggle.

Maohi Protestant Church

(Eglise protestante Maohi)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 130,000

Congregations: 96

Pastors: 77

Member of: WCC (1963) – PCC – WARC – Cevaa

Periodical: *Veā Porotetani* (monthly, in Tahitian and French)

This is the former Evangelical Church of French Polynesia, which changed its name to Maohi Protestant Church by decision of its synod in 2004. The church grew out of the work of the London Missionary Society which came to Tahiti in 1797. The LMS missionaries faced various problems, one of which was to learn the Tahitian language, “reo maohi”. The LMS was replaced by the Paris Mission Society in 1863 which, as of 1884, was assisted in its work by a senior council, later called general senior council (1927). The Evangelical Church of French Polynesia got its juridical structure in 1884, which was modified in 1927. The church became autonomous in 1963. More than half of the population of the territory belongs to the Maohi Protestant Church. The official language is Reo Maohi (Tahitian). There is one francophone and one Chinese-speaking congregation. The church is organized according to the synodal-presbyterian system and is independent financially.

Much emphasis is put on the formation of the people of God, at the level of the local congregations, and on an innovating ministry with the young people. Youth is a major concern of the church. Various youth movements are grouped under the Protestant youth committee, e.g. “Temaram” which focuses on street youth, Sunday school, working with the children in the congregations, Young People’s Christian Association, doing youth work in the congregations, Protestant education dealing with school children from nursery to high school, Protestant committee of holiday centres, young girls’ hostel for female students and young workers, Uruai a Tama, caring for children with difficulties or under tutelage. Through the activities of these organizations the church seeks to promote an evolution in its life, and to contribute to the well-being of the society. The Maohi Protestant Church struggles with the issues of cultural identity and social development. Its role in preserving the language and traditional songs (“Himene Tarava”) is widely recognized. Other important concerns of the church are alcoholism, and the impact of nuclear testing performed by France from 1966 to 1996 on the atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa.

KIRIBATI

Population: 90,159

Surface area: 730 sq.km

Capital: Tarawa

GNI per capita: 970 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: English, Kiribati

Religions: Christian 94%; Baha’i 5%

Christianity: Catholics 48,908; Protestants 39,330

Kiribati is an island nation in the middle of the Pacific, made up of three groups of small islands on both sides of the equator and the international date line. The main group, the former Gilbert Islands, was inhabited by a Micronesian population when it became a British protectorate in 1892, together with the Ellice Islands. In 1915 the protectorate became a colony. Kiribati became fully independent in 1979, after the Ellice Islands had opted for their own independence in 1978 (see Tuvalu). The Gilbert Islands had phosphate deposits, which were however exhausted at the time of independence. The main economic activities are tourism, copra and fishing. Development is hampered by isolation, lack of skills and weak infrastructures. Christianity came to these islands in the 19th century. Besides the Catholic Church and the Kiribati Protestant Church, there are some smaller Pentecostal and other groups. The Kiribati National Council of Churches is the main body bringing the churches together.

Kiribati National Council of Churches

Founded in 1979.

Basis of membership: Those Christian churches which believe in the Holy Trinity.

Member churches:

Church of God
Roman Catholic Church
Kiribati Protestant Church

Observer member:

Assemblies of God

Kiribati Protestant Church

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 40,000

Congregations: 136

Pastors: 209

Member of: WCC (1989) – PCC – KNCC – WARC – CWM

The first resident missionary to today's Kiribati came with some Hawaiian pastors in 1857, through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM). They settled in Northern Kiribati and established a school to teach young people to read and write. Although their success in evangelization was limited, their greatest contribution was the translation of the Bible, completed in 1893 and the translation of Christian hymns into the Kiribati language. In 1870 a number of Samoan missionaries came with a missionary from the London Missionary Society (LMS) to Southern Kiribati. A boarding school, a training institution for pastors and a printing press were established in 1900. The ABCFM finally left in 1917 and entrusted all the schools and churches in Northern and Central Kiribati to the London Missionary Society. In 1920 local pastors started to help the Samoan pastors in the evangelization and recruiting for pastors from Samoa gradually ended. By 1945, after World War II, the local pastors gradually took over from the Samoans and started to prepare plans for autonomy which culminated at the first general assembly of the Gilbert Island Protestant Church in 1968. The name changed to Kiribati Protestant Church in 1979 when the Gilbert Islands – the larger part of the British Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony – became independent as the Republic of Kiribati.

The Kiribati Protestant Church is actively involved in youth and Sunday school programmes, women's activities, mission to seamen (a joint venture with the Roman Catholic Church), chaplaincy work, vocational training for young men and women, and secondary schools. The pastors of the church are trained at Tangintebu Theological College.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Population: 59,071
 Surface area: 181 sq.km
 Capital: Majuro
 GNI per capita: 2,370 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Marshallese, English
 Religions: Christian 96%; Baha'i 1%
 Christianity: Protestants 54,650; Catholics 4,840; Independent 10,320 (double affiliation)

The Marshall Islands are situated in the centre of the Pacific, north of the equator. They were settled by Micronesians several thousand years ago. The islands became part of the protectorate of German New Guinea in 1885, and were conquered by Japan in World War I. After World War II, the Marshall Islands were added to the USA's Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Independence was achieved in 1990, after a period of free association with the USA. The islands were used by the US for nuclear testing until 1962. Many inhabitants suffered from high radiation levels. At the sixth assembly of the WCC in 1983 in Vancouver, a young Marshallese woman affected by three tumours, Darleen Keju-Johnson, gave a moving testimony of her condition and her struggle for a nuclear-free Pacific. The economy of the Marshall Islands is based on small farming and some processing industry. Christianity came to the islands in the 19th century. The largest churches are United Church of Christ – Congregational, and the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal).

United Church of Christ – Congregational in the Marshall Islands

Church Family: Reformed
 Membership: 40,225
 Congregations: 38
 Sub-congregations: 97
 Pastors: 52
 Member of: WCC (1992) – PCC – WARC

The United Church of Christ – Congregational in the Marshall Islands (UCCMI) grew out of the work started in 1857 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (now the Wider Church Ministry of the United Church of Christ). From the beginning the main mission work was carried out by Pacific islanders, which meant that the life of the church was predominantly indigenous. When the United Church of Christ came into being in the USA in 1957, the church in the Marshall Islands took the same name. Full autonomy was achieved in 1972. After some internal difficulties a dissident group established the Reformed Congregational Church, and the UCCMI took its present name. The

church runs nine elementary schools and four chartered Christian high schools. Its pastors are trained at the Marshall's Theological College, which receives students from all over Micronesia. The highest authority of the church is the assembly. A board of directors composed of seven men provides leadership in between the meetings of the assembly. The Church Women Fellowship has its own executive board.

The UCCMI has some congregations in the USA, e.g. in Los Angeles, Honolulu and Eugene (Oregon). It is affiliated with the Wider Church Ministry of the UCC and the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA. It has a partnership relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

NEW CALEDONIA (KANAKY)

Population: 236,979

Surface area: 18,580 sq.km

Capital: Nouméa

GNI per capita: 14,060 US\$

Classification: Developing economy

Languages: French, Lifou, Maré

Religions: Christian 87%; Muslim 3%; other

Christianity: Catholics 125,000; Protestants 32,332; Independent 10,590

New Caledonia belongs to the Melanesian part of the Pacific. It was inhabited by indigenous people when France took possession of it in 1853. It has the status of an overseas territory. The Kanak community constitutes 42 percent of the population; the second largest group are the French (37 percent) and immigrant groups from the Pacific and Asia form another 17 percent. The island has 25 percent of the world's resources of nickel. In the 1970s the Kanaks began to organize themselves in political parties with the aim to achieve independence. Violence erupted in the 1980s, which led to the Agreements of Matignon in 1988, establishing a territorial congress and government, and a referendum on independence to be held in ten years time. In 1989, the disappointment among the Kanaks resulted in the assassination of their leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou, by one of his own people. The 1998 referendum failed to establish independence because of the anti-independent position of the French and other population groups. It was followed by the Nouméa Agreement that same year, stipulating further devolution of powers, introducing New Caledonian citizenship and granting the right to the territorial congress to call another referendum on independence after 2014. The Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, which is the largest Protestant church and 86 percent Kanak, has been deeply involved in supporting the independence movement. The Catholic Church has a higher membership among the other population groups.

Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles

(Eglise évangélique en Nouvelle Calédonie et aux Isles Loyautés, EENCIL)

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 40,000

Congregations: 90

Pastors: 77

Member of: WCC (1961) – PCC – WARC – Cevaa

This church is the fruit of the work of two mission bodies: the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society. From the very first contact of the LMS with the Pacific in 1779 in Tahiti, an in-depth effort was made to form Polynesians for the propagation of the gospel. Native agencies were set up in Samoa and the Cook Islands, from where Polynesian evangelists went to evangelize the islands of the South Pacific. They began working in what are now New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles from 1841 onwards, well before the arrival of the first missionary from the Paris Missionary Society in 1902. During this period the Protestant Church in New Caledonia depended first on the LMS and was led subsequently by the Paris Mission. In 1958 a division occurred which resulted in the creation of two churches one of which, the Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles, became autonomous in 1969.

The church attaches much importance to its cultural identity. It seeks to accompany the Kanaky people in their search for dignity and the community in its quest for emancipation, in view of shaping a new identity. To this end, the church is involved in a major effort of training national leadership. Another aspect is the search for forms of liturgy that are inculturated, and indigenous expressions of hymnology and prayer, based on the values and culture of the population. The church believes that in taking seriously the human being in the cultural, historical and social context, the Christian community can become the authentic people of God and a true witness of salvation. The EENCIL engages with other churches in the country in ecumenical dialogue and joint celebrations. Its area of mission is a young developing country that faces social problems such as alcoholism, suicide among young people, an increase of divorces, precarious life situations and drug addiction. Like the other countries of the Pacific it is threatened by global warming and ecological problems linked to development. New Caledonia is an overseas territory on the way to emancipation as stated in the Matignon Agreements of 1988 and the Agreement of Nouméa. In 2002 the synod of the EENCIL, reflecting on its missionary task, described its vision as "a church united in diversity in order to witness faithfully to God's mission here and everywhere". In all its actions the church tries to be the visible and intelligible witness of God's presence in the society and the world.

With the support of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles maintains a chaplaincy for the hospitals in Sydney. Through the Cevaa, of which it is a founding member, the church is in partnership with churches in France, Switzerland and Argentina. It also cooperates with the churches in New Zealand, and with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu.

NIUE

Population: 1,896
 Surface area: 260 sq.km
 Capital: Alofi
 GDP per capita: 3,600 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Niuean, English
 Religions: Christian 90%; other 10%
 Christianity: Protestants 1500; Catholics 150; Anglicans 40

Niue is an island located east of Tonga, in the Polynesian part of the Pacific. After a brief British protectorate, it was annexed by New Zealand in 1901. Since 1974, it is a self-governing nation in free association with New Zealand, which is responsible for foreign affairs and defence. The economy of Niue consists of subsistence farming, some cash crops, and some processing industry. Postage stamps for collectors are a source of income for the government. Many Niueans have migrated to New Zealand to find work, which has a negative impact on economic prospects. In 2005, geological data were found that might suggest large deposits of uranium. The Ekalesia Niue is the largest church. Besides the Catholic Church and the Anglicans, there is a Seventh-day Adventist community and small groups of Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter Day Saints. The Niue Council of Churches includes the Catholic Church and the Ekalesia Niue, plus some smaller churches.

Niue National Council of Churches

Note: The Niue National Council of Churches was in the process of drafting a constitution in 2005.

Member churches:

- Apostolic Church
- Christian Outreach
- Congregational Christian Church of Niue*
- Roman Catholic Church
- Seventh-day Adventist Church

Congregational Christian Church of Niue

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 1,300

Congregations: 13

Pastors: 12

Member of: WCC (2001) – PCC – NNCC – WARC

Christianity was brought to Niue in 1846 by a Niuean missionary who received training in Samoa. Later on the work was supported and consolidated by Samoan pastors and missionaries from the London Missionary Society (LMS). The church became autonomous and took the name Ekalesia Niue in 1970, and is officially recognized as the Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue (Congregational Christian Church of Niue), which represents 75 percent of the total population. In 1996 a branch of the Ekalesia Niue was established in Auckland, New Zealand, to minister together with its partner churches, the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Congregational Union of New Zealand, to the migrant community of Niueans there. The agreement between the three churches was signed in 2001. Emigration is one of the main problems the church is facing. It is related to questions of unemployment, low standards of education and the economic situation of Niue.

The Christian education section of the church provides Bible lessons to the only two government schools, as well as to the Sunday schools of the congregations. The training of the laity, and ministry to the youth, Boys' and Girls' Brigades are among the main activities of the church. The women's fellowship known as the Federation of Christian Women plays an active role in the church; it is made up of fellowships from each of the congregations and includes also women from other denominations. The Ekalesia is ecumenically committed and active in the Pacific Conference of Churches.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Population: 5,745,706
 Surface area: 462,800 sq.km
 Capital: Port Moresby
 GNI per capita: 580 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: English; Pidgin; over 700 local languages
 Religions: Christian 95%
 Christianity: Protestants 3,137,400; Catholics 1,670,000; Anglicans 310,000;
 Independent 321,000

Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, and many off-shore islands. It is part of Melanesia. It has been inhabited for thousands of years, and is one of the ethnically most diverse countries in the world. In 1884, Germany took possession of Papua, the north-eastern part of the island, and Britain annexed New Guinea, the southern part, in 1888. The German territory was taken over by Australia in 1914. Following World War II, the two parts were brought together as the Territory of Papua New Guinea, with a local government, under Australian administration. The country achieved its independence in 1975 and joined the British Commonwealth. On the island of Bougainville (North Solomons), which has an important zinc mine, a secessionist war was fought from 1989 to 1997, claiming some 20,000 lives. The peace agreement, signed in 1998, foresees local autonomy and possibly a referendum on independence. Papua New Guinea has rich natural resources and mineral deposits, which are only partly exploited. Most of the population relies on subsistence farming. Coffee, cocoa and copra are important export products. Christianity came to Papua New Guinea in the 19th century. The largest church is the Catholic Church, but Protestants constitute the majority. There is also an Anglican Church. They form together the national council of churches. Besides the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Church, there are several other large Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, and an Evangelical Alliance which is affiliated with the WEA.

***Papua New Guinea Council of Churches**

Founded in 1965 (forerunner: the Christian Council of Papua New Guinea, formed in 1959).

Basis of membership: We believe in and worship the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God as revealed in holy scriptures, and his atonement as the basis of our forgiveness and acceptance by God. We accept the holy scriptures as our supreme rule of faith and practice, and the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as a true expression of fundamental Christian beliefs.

Mission statement: We believe that by joining together in study and work, by accepting one another as members of the one family of God and by witnessing together we are proclaiming the unity to which God calls us. Therefore we hereby constitute this council to further the attainment of this unity.

Member churches:

Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea
 Baptist Union
 Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
 Gutnius Lutheran Church

Salvation Army
United Church in Papua New Guinea

Associate members:

Bible Society of PNG
 Church of Nazarene
 Churches Council for Media
 Churches Education Council
 Churches Medical Council
 Kristen Press
 Kristen Radio
 Lifeline
 Melanesian Association for Theological Schools
 Melanesian Environment Foundation
 Missionary Aviation Fellowship
 National YWCA
 Scripture Union
 Summer Institute of Linguistics
 Word Publishing
 World Vision International

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea

Church Family: Lutheran
 Membership: 900,000
 Congregations: 2,000
 Pastors: 800
 Evangelists: 2,000
 Member of: WCC (1990) – PCC – PNGCC – LWF
 Periodical: *Niugini Luteran*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea grew out of the work of the Neuendettelsau Mission Society (1886) and the Rhenish Mission Society (1887), both from Germany. During World War II all missionaries left the area, and many mission stations, churches, schools and hospitals were damaged. In spite of this, the indigenous church leaders and local Christians stood firm in the work of the church. After the war the Lutheran churches in Australia and North America were asked to help reconstruct the church in Papua New Guinea, working together as the Lutheran Mission New Guinea. In 1956 expatriate missionaries and indigenous church leaders gathered and formed the present indigenous church. At the time of its founding the church was called Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea (ELCONG), and its founding bishop was an expatriate missionary from the American Lutheran Church, USA. The first indigenous bishop was elected in 1973. In 1975, on the eve of the country's independence, the name of the church was changed to Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG). In 1977 the church was officially declared autonomous and another local Lutheran church organized by the Australian Lutheran Mission joined with the ELCPNG.

The ELCPNG believes that the church is the body of Christ on earth so that people can grow in faith and live as brothers and sisters. This function of the church is seen in the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, bringing people closer to God so that they may inherit eternal life. The promise of the Holy Spirit strengthens this work of the church. The stated aims are:

- to strengthen fellowship among members – koinonia

- to strengthen the practice of worship – liturgia
- to strengthen the work of evangelism – martyria
- to strengthen the work of holding fast to the word of God as proclaimed by the Apostles – theology and confession – theologia
- to strengthen the work of service and welfare – diakonia.

The church has seven departments: evangelism, education, lands and properties, ministerial training, medical services, development services, finance. There are 16 districts divided according to geographical and population needs. Circuits cover smaller areas within the districts; within the circuits are the local parishes/congregations. The church runs 12 health centres, 170 primary schools, six high schools, one teacher training college, a nursing college, five girls' Bible schools, three seminaries and a training centre for evangelists.

United Church in Papua New Guinea

Church Family: United and Uniting

Membership: 600,000

Congregations: 2,600

Pastors: 400

Member of: WCC (1971) – PCC – PNGCC – CWM

Periodical: *United Church News* (in English, Pidgin and Motu)

The London Missionary Society began its work in today's Papua New Guinea in 1872. Several groups of Christians from the Pacific islands came to work with the mission, which expanded through the Papuan mainland. The Australian Methodist Church, now the Uniting Church in Australia, responded to the request to join the pioneering work. The Methodist mission covered three independent areas, called districts. These joined together in 1950 in mission work in the southern highlands. In 1962 the LMS, together with the mission of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand and another mission body, formed the Papua Ekalesia, at the time the largest single church in Papua. A further union took place in 1968 involving the Papua Ekalesia, the Methodists and the Union Church of Port Moresby, which together established the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In 1996 the general assembly of the UC-PNG/SI resolved that the existence of one united church covering two independent countries should no longer be maintained. Thus the United Church in Papua New Guinea came into being as an autonomous church on its own.

The UCPNG runs elementary, primary and secondary schools under the national education system, a teachers' training college, a theological college for the formation of its pastors, and a lay leaders' training institute. It supports Bible schools in each region of the country. Developing and training people for mission and training of women and youth are among the priorities of the church. The UCPNG has been involved in efforts to solve the conflict in Bougainville between secessionists and the government of Papua New Guinea, and is participating in programmes of reconciliation and reconstruction. The high level of crime in a country that is officially 98 percent Christian is a major challenge to the church.

SAMOA

Population: 181,618

Surface area: 2,840 sq.km

Capital: Apia

GNI per capita: 1,860 US\$

Classification: LDC

Languages: Samoan, English

Religions: Christian 97%; Baha'i 2%

Christianity: Protestants 113,340; Catholics 30,900; Independent 4,720

The Samoan archipelago is situated in the Polynesian part of the Pacific. Migrants from south-east Asia settled in the islands more than 2000 years ago, and from there moved on to other parts of Polynesia further to the east. At the beginning of the 20th century, the island group was divided in two by the USA and Germany. The western part was attributed to Germany and came under the control of New Zealand in 1914. Western Samoa became the first independent Pacific nation in 1962. It changed its name to Samoa in 1997. Samoa consists of two large and four small islands. Land tenure is communal, according to Samoan custom. The economy is based on agriculture, fishing, tourism and some processing industry. Many Samoans have migrated, to New Zealand, Australia and the USA, which has resulted in a negative population growth rate. The Samoa Council of Churches groups together the two large Protestant churches, Congregational and Methodist, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church which is part of the diocese of Polynesia, and several smaller Pentecostal and other churches. The Samoan Evangelical Fellowship is affiliated with the WEA. There is also a large Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) in Samoa.

***Samoa Council of Churches**

Founded in 1961.

Mission statement: To develop sincere fraternal fellowship and cooperation among member churches and to work together towards true Christian unity.

Member churches:

Anglican Church in Samoa

Apia Protestant Church

Baptist Church

Church of Nazarene in Samoa

Congregational Christian Church in Samoa

Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa

Methodist Church of Samoa

Pentecostal Church

Roman Catholic Church in Samoa

Member organization:

National Christian Women's Council

Congregational Christian Church in Samoa

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 70,000

Congregations: 327

Pastors: 350

Member of: WCC (1961) – PCC – SCC – WARC – CWM

Publication: *O le Sulu Samoa* (Church Chronicle, monthly, in Samoan)

The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa traces its beginnings to the arrival in 1830 of missionaries sent by the London Missionary Society, accompanied by missionary teachers from Tahiti and the Cook Islands and a Samoan couple from Tonga. They arrived at a time of fierce warfare and fighting between local chiefs, and the people who were weary of violence and bloodshed readily received the missionary's gospel of peace.

When a renowned paramount chief of a much respected family lineage officially accepted the new religion, all his followers and kinsfolk immediately followed suit. Within a few years, virtually the whole of Samoa was converted to Christianity. A burning zeal for the gospel was engendered within the spirit of the newly converted nation. Huge numbers of people soon offered themselves for overseas mission work. In 1839, only nine years after the arrival of the LMS, the first twelve Samoan missionaries left for mission work in Melanesia. Ever since then, and up to 1975, Samoans have continued to take the gospel message to other Pacific islands, e.g. Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Niue, Tokelau, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Wallis & Fortuna. Many of these early Samoan missionaries never returned home; they occupy many of the un-named and unmarked graves in the islands of the Pacific.

Within the first years of their work, the LMS missionaries developed a Samoan alphabet and put the language into written form. The setting-up of the first printing press in Samoa (1839), only the second in the Pacific region, was a mark of the missionary zeal to bring the people to understand the gospel through the written word. By 1855 the whole Bible was translated into Samoan. The missionaries also introduced a monthly journal – the *Church Chronicle* – which continues to this day. Malua Theological College was established in 1844, with the main objective to teach and educate local students so that each village of Samoa would eventually have a theologically educated pastor as spiritual leader. By the end of the 19th century, a pattern of ministry had emerged. It was modeled on the Samoan village structural organization and aimed at preserving, as much as possible, the value systems of the Samoan way of life. The church community functions in the same way as the village, where five main groups – matais (titled men), spouses of matais, untitled men, unmarried women, and children – each have their own individual and corporate roles and responsibilities for the maintenance of order and welfare. The village congregation is the basic unit of the CCCS with the pastor as the spiritual leader.

The Samoan church during the missionary period engaged itself in the “social redemption of humanity”. This vision was based on the church's understanding of God's sovereignty. It saw the divine purpose of redemption not in individual terms only but also in corporate, social and political terms. The newly acquired faith had its focus on the transformation of life and society. That legacy remains a motivating force in the nation's idealism as well as in the church's commitment to active social efforts. The church has been able to maintain five high schools, one girls' college and one theological college.

Since the second half of the 20th century, the Samoan church has continued to forge ecumenical relationships with other churches locally, regionally and internationally. Now it has become a transnational church with eight districts (synod or diocese) outside Samoa: one in the USA, one in Hawaii, three in Australia and three in New Zealand. It has one congregation each in Fiji and American Samoa.

Methodist Church of Samoa

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 35,983

Synods: 12

Parishes: 186

Pastors: 279

Member of: WCC (1975) – PCC – SCC – WMC

When the first missionary arrived in 1835, some 2,000 Samoans were already following Lotu Tonga (Tongan religion). They worshipped in rough chapels, observing a few basic Christian practices taught them by a Samoan chief who had embraced Christianity in Tonga and on his return had become a missionary to his own country. In 1839, it was ordered that Methodism be abandoned, and the missionary left the country. Some Methodist Christians returned to paganism, and some went over to the Roman Catholic Church. But Methodism survived, and for 18 years it was served by Tongan and Samoan teachers. In 1856 the conference in Australia decided to resume the work in Samoa. Towards the end of the 19th century Samoa suffered badly from civil wars and political conflicts.

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by several developments. The church began to realize that its task was to be a sending church, not only a receiving church. It sought to become financially independent and to rid itself of illiteracy and ignorance. The political independence of Samoa in 1962 was followed by the autonomy of the Methodist Conference in 1964.

Since then notable changes have taken place. The number of ordained ministers has increased and lay people participate in the work of the church. Present programmes of the church extend to areas such as land development and home economics. There is a great evangelistic zeal and a growing enthusiasm for missionary outreach. The life of the church is based on the tradition and culture of the people. Education at all levels is a priority. The MCS has a primary school and three secondary schools, a technical college and Piula Theological College near the capital, where the ministers are trained. It also has very active women and youth departments. The church maintains close relationships with Methodist churches in New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, the USA, the Caribbean, and with the Uniting Church in Australia.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Population: 504,405

Surface area: 28,900 sq.km

Capital: Honiara

GNI per capita: 550 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: English, Pidgin

Religions: Christian 96%; Baha'i 1%

Christianity: Protestants 207,600; Catholics 96,000; Anglicans 175,000;
Independent 30,120

The Solomon Islands is a nation composed of about 1,000 islands east of Papua New Guinea, in the Melanesian part of the Pacific, where people have lived for

thousands of years. In 1886 Great Britain and Germany divided the islands between them but Britain achieved control of the entire territory in 1890. It was occupied by the Japanese during World War II. In 1978 the Solomon Islands became independent and joined the British Commonwealth. Ethnic violence and crime shook the country from 1999-2003. An international peace-keeping force led by Australia restored order. The economy of the Solomon Islands is based on agriculture, fishing and forestry. There are rich mineral resources which have not yet been exploited. The Church of Melanesia (Anglican), the Catholic Church, and the United Church, which represent together 60 percent of the population, have formed the Solomon Islands Christian Association as the ecumenical body. Two other large churches, the Seventh-day Adventists and the South Sea Evangelical Church are associated members; the latter is affiliated with the WEA. There are also some growing Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

Solomon Islands Christian Association

Founded in 1967.

Basis of membership: The Solomon Islands Christian Association is a fellowship of churches and organizations which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Mission statement: We as a national body commit ourselves to promoting the spirit of unity and solidarity both with SICA and non-SICA member Christian churches.

Member churches:

- Catholic Church
- Church of Melanesia (Anglican)*
- Church of Nazarene
- Seventh-day Adventist Church
- South Sea Evangelical Church
- United Church in the Solomon Islands*

Associate members:

- Bible Society
- Campus Crusade for Christ
- Child Evangelism
- Family Planning Australia
- Language Recording
- Scripture Union
- Short Workshop in Mission
- Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group
- World Vision

Church of Melanesia

- Church Family: Anglican
- Membership: 200,000
- Dioceses: 8
- Bishops: 9
- Parishes/Districts: 197
- Priests and deacons: 400
- Member of: WCC (1977) – PCC – SICA – VCC – ACC
- Periodical: *Church of Melanesia Messenger* (in English, quarterly)

The Anglican Church came first to Melanesia in 1849 through mission efforts from New Zealand. Later on missionaries from Australia and the UK joined. At first they concentrated on New Caledonia, the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and the Solomon Islands. The first bishop of Melanesia was consecrated in 1861. His goal was to form a native clergy who would train and guide local lay teachers of the Christian faith. To train these catechists, a school was first set up on Mota, and later on Norfolk Island. Because of the much larger area and population of the Solomon Islands, most of the effort by the mission was soon directed towards the Solomon Islands. Missionaries worked together with local clergy to develop Christianity in Melanesia into a local expression of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Since independence in the 1970s, the church has been experiencing growth in areas previously untouched by Anglicanism.

The ethos of the Church of Melanesia is catholic, with a lively liturgical worship including the daily offices and the celebration of the seven sacraments with full appeal to the five senses. The liturgies are usually in English or a local language, following ecumenical patterns, but celebrated with a local style of singing and native dancing. There are four established religious orders with about 500 brothers and sisters. The oldest is the Melanesian Brotherhood, the largest religious order in the Anglican Communion. The martyrdom by torture and death of seven brothers in 2003 brought international outcry and challenged the Church of Melanesia to go deeper into the mystery of faith. The other communities are the two international pan-Anglican orders of the Society of Saint Francis (for men) and the Community of the Sisters of the Church, and the provincial Community of the Sisters of Melanesia. The ministry of these communities encompasses thousands of lay people, encouraging a disciplined way of life through their companions, associates and third orders. The communities operate a Christian care centre for battered women and abused children in a rural area near Honiara.

The church runs several church schools, secondary and primary, and one tertiary institution where most clergy are trained. Other clergy are trained in ecumenical cooperation with the Presbyterians in Vanuatu and at diocesan training centres. Primarily for married women, the Mothers' Union in the Church of Melanesia has many young, educated women working for women's equality and rights in the church and other social spheres. The Union concentrates on the needs of developing Christian family life, literacy and hospitality programmes.

The Church of the Province of Melanesia as a whole is governed by the general convention composed of all bishops, and lay and ordained representatives from every diocese. The eight dioceses are each led by a diocesan bishop and a diocesan secretary. Each diocese is responsible for carrying out the mission of the church in its own area. Each is governed by its own synod including lay and ordained representatives. Each diocese is divided into parishes, each led by a parish priest and lay leaders. The problems faced by the Church of Melanesia in the 21st century are numerous: inflation, tremendous numbers of unemployed people, urbanization, isolation in remote communities, and the transformation of traditional Melanesian lifestyles. The tragedy of nearly five years of civil unrest and the death of many people, including members of religious communities, has sorely tested the church, but witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Church of Melanesia goes on in the sure and certain hope of resurrection and new life in the new millennium.

United Church in the Solomon Islands

Church Family: United and Uniting
Membership: 50,000

Congregations: 191
 Pastors (ordained): 73
 Pastors (lay): 200
 Member of: WCC (1971) – PCC – SICA – CWM

The United Church in the Solomon Islands used to be part of the former United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, which was founded in 1968. In 1996 the general assembly of the UC-PNG/SI resolved that the existence of one united church covering two independent countries should no longer be maintained. Thus the United Church in the Solomon Islands came into being as an autonomous church on its own. Its history goes back to the Australian Methodist Church, now the Uniting Church in Australia, which began missionary work in Papua New Guinea in the 19th century, and in the Solomon Islands in 1902, in what is now the western province. The Methodists became the predominant denomination in that region. The Methodists together with the Papua Ekalesia and the Union Church in Port Moresby formed the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands in 1968.

The western province of the Solomon Islands has remained the area of concentration of the United Church. In the 1980s the church started spreading out to other parts of the country, including the capital Honiara. The church runs several primary schools, a hospital and some clinics. It is involved in training people for mission, and in overcoming distances, ethnic and linguistic diversity in mission, particularly with Kiribati. Women participate in decision making at all levels of the church, and the United Women's Fellowship is very active in the local congregations. The church supports the Boys and Girls' Brigades, and youth camps. Programmes of the church include urban ministry among young people, skills training for school drop-outs and the unemployed, and the improvement of literacy. The United Church is concerned with the issue of the damage done to the environment because of excessive logging.

TONGA

Population: 105,797
 Surface area: 750 sq.km
 Capital: Nuku'Alofa
 GNI per capita: 1,830 US\$
 Classification: Developing economy
 Languages: Tongan, English
 Religions: Christian 92%; Baha'i 7%
 Christianity: Protestants 39,760; Catholics 16,200; Anglicans 550;
 Independent 20,950

Tonga is part of Polynesia and consists of about 150 islands, divided into three main groups. It was settled by people who migrated from South-East Asia some 6000 years ago, and is probably the oldest inhabited archipelago in the region. In the 12th century, Tongans were known across the Pacific as navigators and adventurers. In the 19th century, Tonga was united into a kingdom. It came under British protection in 1900, and joined the British Commonwealth as an independent monarchy, which had never lost its internal governance. Tonga's population is ethnically very homogenous. The society is made up of nobles, a caste of elite, and the common people, who are mostly poor. The king (or queen) is revered by

all. The land is the property of the crown, and is distributed according to a system that guarantees some equal treatment for the commoners. The economy is based on farming and the export of cash crops, and on tourism. Many Tongans live in New Zealand, Australia and the USA. Migration is to some extent a safety valve to avoid over-population of the limited land area. The Free Wesleyan Church (Methodist) is the largest church. Together with the Catholic Church and the small Anglican community it has formed the national council of churches. Other churches are the Constitutional Church and the Anglican Church, which is part of the diocese of Polynesia. The Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) and other charismatic groups have grown much faster than the larger churches, but remain relatively small. The Tonga Evangelical Union is affiliated with the WEA.

***Tonga National Council of Churches**

Founded in 1973.

Basis of membership: The Tonga National Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Mission statement: Praising one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and reconciling all people to God, through Jesus Christ, the way, truth, and life.

Member churches:

Anglican Diocese of Tonga
Catholic Diocese of Tonga (and Niue)
Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

Associate members:

Scripture Union of Tonga
 Tonga Fellowship Union

Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

(Methodist Church in Tonga)

Church Family: Methodist

Membership: 38,692

Congregations: 157

Pastors: 216

Member of: WCC (1975) – PCC – TNCC – WMC

Periodical: *Fakafeangai & Polokalama* (Fellowship with the Lord & Programme, twice a year, in Tongan)

The first Methodist missionaries arrived in Tonga in 1822. After a difficult start the work progressed, and by the middle of the 19th century the whole population was Christianized. There was a split in the church in 1885 which was partially resolved in 1924. Tonga was a conference within the Methodist Church of Australasia until 1977 when the Uniting Church in Australia was formed, and the Free Wesleyan Church gained its autonomy. The word “Free” in the name of the church indicates that the Tonga Conference is completely independent, and the word “Wesleyan” expresses the gratitude of the Tongan people to the missionaries and ministers of the Wesleyan church who evangelized the island. The relation between the king and the Free Wesleyan Church has been strong since the foundation of modern Tonga under Taufa’ahau Tupou I in 1845. The reigning monarch confirms constitutionally the elected president of the church in office.

The church is often seen as the state religion, though this is not so. Yet the influence of the monarch and the hereditary nobility remains strong in the church, and prevents it from exercising a full critical ministry in matters related to politics, society and culture.

Education and evangelism are strong features of the work of the church. While the government is responsible for most primary education, the church has six primary schools and at the secondary level caters to the needs of 60 percent of the students in three middle schools, five senior secondary and three district schools. In addition the church has three agricultural schools and a theological college. For the last decade of the 20th century the church adopted the theme of "Witness 2000", which involved an all-out drive to reach young people. The department of Christian education and evangelism works closely with the women's department in implementing the themes of the church. From the beginning, the Wesleyan Church of Tonga has been involved in carrying the gospel beyond Tonga. At present, missionaries are working in Northern Australia, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Hawaii and the west coast of the USA. The Tongan Church Mission Board oversees numerous Tongan congregations in other countries, notably Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

TUVALU

Population: 10,851

Surface area: 26 sq.km

Capital: Funafuti

GDP per capita: 1,100 US\$

Classification: Least developed country

Languages: Tuvaluan, English

Religions: Christian 95%; Baha'i 1%

Christianity: Protestants 10,080; Catholics 110; Independent 200

Tuvalu, the former Ellice Islands, consists of a group of nine atolls in the Pacific, south of the former Gilbert Islands with which it formed a British colony (see Kiribati). Tuvaluans are a Polynesian people who probably settled in the islands some 2000 years ago. In 1974 the population voted for separation from the Micronesians living in the Gilbert Islands, and in 1978 Tuvalu became independent and joined the British Commonwealth. The economy is mainly based on subsistence farming and fishing. Other sources of income are licence fees from the use of Tuvalu's "tv" internet domain name and its telecommunication area code, and remittances from Tuvaluan workers overseas. Tuvalu benefits also from an international trust fund, established by Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Climate change and its effects on the sea level are of particular concern for Tuvalu, because the islands are very low-lying. The Church of Tuvalu (Protestant) is by far the largest church. Besides the small Catholic Church there are two other small churches, Pentecostal and Seventh-day Adventist.

Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 9,715

Congregations: 13

Pastors: 29

Member of : WCC (1980) – PCC – CWM
 Periodical: *Lama* (monthly, in Tuvaluan)

The Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu traces its origins back to 1861. The London Missionary Society began working in the island in 1864. Tuvalu was also a mission field of the Samoa Congregational Christian Church. The church became autonomous in 1968. Its doctrinal bases are the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds. About 96 percent of the population of Tuvalu belongs to the church, which plays an important role in the cultural, socio-political and religious development of the society. The primary schools and one of the two secondary schools established by the LMS have been taken over by the government. The church has kept and revived the other secondary school, and celebrated its centenary in 2005.

The church is concerned with the effects of global warming on Tuvalu, issues of violence and morality, the prevention of AIDS and problems of transport and communication affecting the country. The church seeks to enrich the faith of its members, to enhance the use of the Tuvaluan language and musical tradition, and to promote the full participation of women. There is as yet no ordained woman pastor. Women are very active in organizing church and community events, and celebrations. Other priorities are the development of island communities' churches in the capital for Christians who have migrated from the smaller islands, and the publication of a new hymnal and of the first study Bible in Tuvaluan. The church has appointed a full-time chaplain to the hospital and the prison, and hopes to establish also a chaplaincy for seamen. With the help of a consultant from the Church of South India and a local coordinator, a review of the curriculum for Sunday schools has been undertaken. Youth activities are organized by the Boys' Brigade and island youth groups. One of the major projects of the church is to establish a theological institution, to train people for the ministry and to provide refresher courses for pastors.

The church has fraternal relations with the Methodist Church in Fiji, the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa and in American Samoa, the Protestant Church in Kiribati, the Uniting Church in Australia and the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand.

VANUATU

Population: 222,237
 Surface area: 12,190 sq.km
 Capital: Port Vila
 GNI per capita: 1,340 US\$
 Classification: Least developed country
 Languages: Bislama, English, French, other
 Religions: Christian 93%; Baha'i 3%
 Christianity: Protestants 114,740; Anglicans 38,000; Catholics 32,000;
 Independent 18,150

The Pacific island group of Vanuatu is part of Melanesia. The islands were settled some four thousand years ago. In 1906, France and Britain agreed on a condominium over the New Hebrides, as they were called then. In the 1960s, the people of Vanuatu began to press for self-governance and independence; the latter was achieved in 1980. Its first prime minister was an Anglican priest, who tried to give the new nation a politically progressive profile in the region. Economically,

Vanuatu lives from subsistence farming and fishing. Tourism is an important source of income. There are no known mineral resources. Christianity came to Vanuatu in the 19th century. The largest church is the Presbyterian Church. The Anglican community is part of the Church of Melanesia, which has its headquarters in the Solomon Islands and is a WCC member church. These two churches, together with the Catholic Church, have formed the Vanuatu Christian Council. Two other large churches are the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) and the Seventh-day Adventists, which are associated with the Christian Council. Some smaller Evangelical and Charismatic groups are also present, and growing.

Vanuatu Christian Council

Founded in 1967 (as the New Hebrides Christian Council, which became the Vanuatu Christian Council in 1980).

Basis of membership: The Vanuatu Christian Council is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Member churches:

Apostolic Church
Catholic Church
Church of Melanesia
Churches of Christ
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Observer members:

Assemblies of God
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Ministries:

Bible Society
Scripture Union
Summer International Linguistics
World Vision

Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Church Family: Reformed

Membership: 78,000

Presbyteries: 6

Sessions: 76

Congregations: 400

Pastors: 200

Member of: WCC (1961) – PCC – VCC – WARC

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu was inaugurated in 1948. At that time the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission Synod marked the mission's centenary by handing over the responsibilities to indigenous leadership. The Presbyterian Churches of Nova Scotia, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, and the Free and Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, all contributed to the Presbyterian mission in the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu. The PCV is a stable and still growing church, despite the challenges it is facing. A recent development is the decentralization of leadership, in order to strengthen the presbyteries and sessions. The church is also doing a national review of its work, and establishing a national development plan. Other activities include a school of evangelism, Presbytery

Bible colleges, mission training, and a refocus on outward mission to neglected areas in Vanuatu as well as mission outside Vanuatu. The church operates three secondary schools and three rural vocational training centres. An average of six pastors graduate every year from the Talua Ministry Training Centre, which the PCV agreed to develop as an ecumenical institution. The Church of Melanesia and the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu signed an agreement to provide training together for the future leaders of Vanuatu. The PCV treasures the long ecumenical partnership with the WCC and other ecumenical bodies and partners in the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Alphabetical Index of Part I

Anglican churches	20
Anglican Communion	21
Anglican Consultative Council.	21
Baptist churches.	23
Baptist World Alliance	23
The Catholic Church	29
Cevaa.	82
Christian Holiness Partnership.	42
Christian World Communions	17
Churches of Christ	32
Community of Churches in Mission – Cevaa	82
Council for World Mission	84
Comparative table I CWCs/WCC.	80
Comparative table II CWCs/WCC	81
Disciples of Christ.	32
Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council.	33
Ecumenical Patriarchate	59
Evangelical churches	34
Friends.	39
Friends World Committee for Consultation.	40
Global Christian Forum.	15
Global Mission Communions	82
Holiness churches.	41
International Lutheran Council	45
International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference	58
Lutheran churches	43
Lutheran World Federation.	44
Mennonite churches	49
Mennonite World Conference	50
Methodist churches	53
Moravian churches	56
Moravian Unity Board	56
Old-Catholic churches	57
Orthodox Church (Eastern)	59
Orthodox churches (Oriental)	61
Pentecostal churches	63
Pentecostal World Conference	64
Quakers	39
Reformed churches	65
Reformed Ecumenical Council.	66
The Salvation Army	73
Seventh-day Adventist Church.	75
United and Uniting churches.	76
United Evangelical Mission	86
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	66
World Convention of Churches of Christ	33
World Council of Churches.	3
World Council of Churches – member churches	6
World Council of Churches – member churches by church family	14
World Council of Churches – member churches by region.	14
World Evangelical Alliance.	35
World Methodist Council.	53

Countries and Territories

Africa

Algeria	110
Angola	112
Benin	115
Botswana	117
Burkina Faso	117
Burundi	119
Cameroon	120
Congo, Republic of	126
Congo, Democratic Rep. of	127
Equatorial Guinea	137
Eritrea	139
Ethiopia	140
Gabon	143
Gambia, The	144
Ghana	145
Guinea	150
Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)	152
Kenya	154
Lesotho	162
Liberia	163
Madagascar	166
Malawi	170
Morocco	172
Mozambique	172
Namibia	175
Nigeria	177
Rwanda	185
Sierra Leone	188
South Africa	191
Sudan	202
Swaziland	205
Tanzania	206
Togo	210
Uganda	212
Zambia	214
Zimbabwe	217

Asia

Aotearoa New Zealand	228
Australia	234
Bangladesh	238
Cambodia	241
China	241
Hong Kong SAR	243
India	248
Indonesia	256
Japan	279
Korea	283
Malaysia	287
Myanmar	290

Nepal	294
New Zealand	228
Pakistan	295
Philippines	298
Singapore	303
Sri Lanka	306
Taiwan	245
Thailand	309
Timor Lorosa'e	310

Caribbean

Antigua & Barbuda	317
Bahamas	319
Barbados	321
Belize	321
Cuba	322
Dominica	325
Guyana	325
Haiti	326
Jamaica	328
Netherlands Antilles	332
Puerto Rico	333
Saint Kitts & Nevis	335
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	335
Suriname	335
Trinidad & Tobago	337

Europe

Albania	352
Armenia	354
Austria	356
Belgium	359
Croatia	361
Czech Republic	361
Denmark	366
Estonia	369
Finland	371
France	375
Germany	381
Greece	401
Hungary	403
Iceland	408
Ireland	409
Italy	412
Latvia	417
Lithuania	419
Malta	419
Netherlands	419
Norway	426
Poland	429
Portugal	434
Romania	437

Russian Federation	442	Egypt	530
Serbia & Montenegro.	444	Iran	534
Slovakia	448	Israel / Palestine	535
Slovenia	452	Lebanon	537
Spain.	452	Syria	541
Sweden	455		
Switzerland	459	North America	
Turkey.	463	Canada.	547
United Kingdom	465	USA	553
Latin America		Pacific	
Argentina	489	American Samoa	585
Bolivia	497	Cook Islands	587
Brazil	499	Fiji	588
Chile	505	French Polynesia	590
Colombia	510	Kiribati	591
El Salvador	511	Marshall Islands	593
Mexico.	513	New Caledonia	594
Nicaragua	514	Niue	595
Panama	517	Papua New Guinea	597
Peru	517	Samoa	600
Uruguay	520	Solomon Islands	602
Middle East		Tonga	605
Cyprus.	528	Tuvalu	607
		Vanuatu	608

Index of National / Christian / Ecumenical Councils / Federations of Churches

Africa

*Council of Christian Churches in Angola	112
*Botswana Council of Churches	117
*National Council of Churches of Burundi.	119
*Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon.	121
*Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches of Congo	126
*Council of Evangelical Churches of Equatorial Guinea	137
*The Gambia Christian Council.	144
*Christian Council of Ghana	145
Christian Council of Guinea.	151
National Council of Churches of Kenya	155
Christian Council of Lesotho	162
*Liberian Council of Churches	164
*Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar	167
Federation of Protestant Churches in Madagascar.	167
*Malawi Council of Churches.	170
Council of Christian Churches in Morocco.	172
Christian Council of Mozambique	173
*Council of Churches in Namibia.	175
*Christian Council of Nigeria	178
Christian Association of Nigeria	179
*Protestant Council of Rwanda	185
*Council of Churches in Sierra Leone	189
*South African Council of Churches	192
*Sudan Council of Churches	202
New Sudan Council of Churches	203
*Council of Swaziland Churches	205
*Christian Council of Tanzania	206
Christian Council of Togo	210
*Uganda Joint Christian Council	213
*Council of Churches in Zambia	214
*Zimbabwe Council of Churches	217

Asia

*Maori Council of Churches in Aotearoa.	229
*National Council of Churches in Australia	234
National Council of Churches - Bangladesh	239
Kampuchea Christian Council.	241
*Hong Kong Christian Council	244
*National Council of Churches in India	248
*Communion of Churches in Indonesia	258
*National Christian Council in Japan	279
*National Council of Churches in Korea	283
*Council of Churches of Malaysia.	288
Christian Federation of Malaysia	289
*Myanmar Council of Churches	291
National Council of Churches of Nepal.	294
National Council of Churches in Pakistan	295
*National Council of Churches in the Philippines.	298
*National Council of Churches of Singapore.	304

*National Christian Council of Sri Lanka	306
National Council of Churches of Taiwan	126

Caribbean

Antigua Christian Council	317
Bahamas Christian Council	319
Barbados Christian Council	321
Belize Council of Churches	321
*Cuban Council of Churches	322
Dominica Christian Council	325
Guyana Council of Churches	325
Protestant Federation of Haiti	326
*Jamaica Council of Churches	328
Curaçao Council of Churches	332
*Council of Churches of Porto Rico	334
St Kitts Christian Council	335
*StVincent & the Grenadines Christian Council	335
Committee of Christian Churches in Suriname	336
Christian Council of Trinidad & Tobago	338

Europe

*Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria	356
Consultation of Christian Churches in Belgium	360
Ecumenical Coordinating Committee of Churches in Croatia	361
*Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic	362
*National Council of Churches in Denmark	366
Estonian Council of Churches	370
*Finnish Ecumenical Council	372
*French Protestant Federation	376
Council of Christian Churches in France	377
*Council of Christian Churches in Germany	381
*Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary	404
Irish Council of Churches	410
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	411
Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy	413
Ecumenical Council of Churches of Lithuania	419
Malta Ecumenical Council	419
*Council of Churches in the Netherlands	420
SKIN – Together Church in the Netherlands	420
*Christian Council of Norway	426
Council of Free Churches in Norway	427
*Polish Ecumenical Council	429
Portuguese Council of Christian Churches	434
Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania – AIDRom	437
*Ecumenical Council of Churches in Serbia & Montenegro	445
*Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Slovak Republic	448
Council of Christian Churches in Slovenia	452
Spanish Committee of Cooperation between the Churches	453
*Christian Council of Sweden	456
Swedish Free Church Council	456
*Council of Christian Churches in Switzerland	460
*Churches Together in Britain and Ireland	465
*Churches Together in England	467

Free Churches Group (England and Wales)	468
*Cytun, Churches Together in Wales	474
Covenanted Churches within Cytun	475
*Action by Churches Together in Scotland.	477

Latin America

Argentine Federation of Evangelical Churches.	490
Ecumenical Commission of Christian Churches in Argentina	490
Pentecostal Evangelical Confederation	491
*National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil	500
Christian Fellowship of Churches in Chile	505
Ecumenical Fellowship of Chile	506
Ecumenical Network of Colombia	510
Ecumenical Committee of Panama	517
National Evangelical Council of Peru.	518
Federation of Evangelical Churches of Uruguay.	520
Council of Christian Churches of Uruguay.	521

North America

*Canadian Council of Churches.	547
Christian Churches Together in the USA.	555
*National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA	554

Pacific

*National Council of Churches in American Samoa	585
Cook Islands Religious Advisory Council.	587
Fiji Council of Churches	589
Kiribati National Council of Churches	592
Niune National council of Churches	596
*Papua New Guinea Council of Churches	597
*Samoa Council of Churches	600
Solomon Islands Christian Association.	603
*Tonga National Council of Churches	606
Vanuatu Christian Council	609

Sub-regional Fellowships / Conferences / Councils**Africa**

Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches of Central Africa	109
Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa.	109
Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa.	109
Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa	110

Asia

South Asian Council of Churches.	228
--	-----

Europe

Conference of Protestant Churches in Latin Countries of Europe	351
Conference of Churches on the Rhine	351

Regional Ecumenical Organizations / Regional Church Bodies**Africa**

All Africa Conference of Churches	99
Organization of African Instituted Churches	103

Asia

Christian Conference of Asia	225
--	-----

Caribbean

Caribbean Conference of Churches	315
--	-----

Europe

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - Leuenberg Fellowship .	345
Conference of European Churches	341
Council of Christian Churches of an African Approach in Europe. . . .	348

Latin America

Latin American Council of Churches	483
Latin American Evangelical Pentecostal Commission.	487

Middle East

Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches	527
Middle East Council of Churches	525

Pacific

Pacific Conference of Churches	583
--	-----

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AABF	All Africa Baptist Fellowship
AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ABF	Asian Baptist Federation
ACC	Anglican Consultative Council Antigua Christian Council
ACCF	Assembly of Christian Churches in Fiji
ACK	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland (Council of Christian Churches in Germany)
ACTS	Action of Churches Together in Scotland
AGCK	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in der Schweiz (Council of Christian Churches in Switzerland)
AIDROM	Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania
AIPRAL	Alianza de Iglesias Presbiterianas en America Latina (Alliance of Presbyterian Churches in Latin America) (of WARC)
ARCA	Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (of WARC)
BWA	Baptist World Alliance
BCC	Bahamas Christian Council Barbados Christian Council Belize Council of Churches Botswana Council of Churches
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CANAAC	Caribbean and North America Area Council (of WARC)
CAPA	Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa
CBF	Caribbean Baptist Fellowship
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CCC	Canadian Council of Churches Caribbean Conference of Churches Committee of Christian Churches (Suriname) Cuban Council of Churches Curaçao Council of Churches
CCCAAE	Council of Christian Churches of an African Approach in Europe
CCCM	Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar
CCG	Christian Council of Ghana Conseil chrétien de Guinée (Christian Council of Guinea)
CCI	Confraternidad Cristiana de Iglesias (Christian Fellowship of Churches, Chile) Communion of Churches in Indonesia
CCL	Christian Council of Lesotho
CCM	Council of Churches of Malaysia Christian Council of Mozambique
CCN	Council of Churches in Namibia Council of Churches in the Netherlands

CCN	Christian Council of Nigeria Christian Council of Norway
CCS	Christian Council of Sweden
CCSL	Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
CCT	Christian Council of Tanzania Conseil chrétien du Togo (Christian Council of Togo)
CCT USA	Christian Churches Together in the USA
CCTT	Christian Council of Trinidad & Tobago
CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CECB	Concertation des Eglises chrétiennes en Belgique (Consultation of Christian Churches in Belgium)
CECEF	Conseil d'Eglises chrétiennes en France (Council of Christian Churches in France)
CECI	Comité Español de Cooperación entre las Iglesias (Spanish Committee of Cooperation between the Churches)
CECM	Conseil des Eglises chrétiennes au Maroc (Council of Christian Churches in Morocco)
CEICA	Comisión Ecuménica de Iglesias Cristianas en la Argentina (Ecumenical Commission of Christian Churches in Argentina)
CEP	Confederación Evangélica Pentecostal (Pentecostal Evangelical Confederation, Argentina)
CEPC	Conseil des Eglises protestantes du Cameroun (Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon)
CEPLA	Comisión Evangélica Pentecostal Latinoamericana (Latin American Evangelical Pentecostal Commission)
CEPPLE	Conférence des Eglises protestantes des Pays latins d'Europe (Conference of Protestant Churches in Latin Countries of Europe)
CERR	Conférence des Eglises riveraines du Rhin (Conference of Churches on the Rhine)
Cevaa	Communauté évangélique d'action apostolique (Community of Churches in Mission)
CFM	Christian Federation of Malaysia
CHP	Christian Holiness Partnership
CIC	Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba (Cuban Council of Churches)
CICA	Council of Christian Churches in Angola (acronym of name in Portuguese)
CICU	Consejo de Iglesias Cristianas del Uruguay (Council of Christian Churches of Uruguay)
CIEGE	Consejo de Iglesias Evangélicas de Guinea Equatorial (Council of Evangelical Churches of Equatorial Guinea)
CIEMAL	Concilio de Iglesias Evangélicas Metodistas en America Latina y el Caribe (Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean)

CIPR	Concilio de Iglesias de Puerto Rico (Council of Churches of Porto Rico)
CIRAC	Cook Islands Religious Advisory Council
CLAI	Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (Latin American Council of Churches)
CNEB	Conseil national des Eglises du Burundi (National Council of Churches of Burundi)
COECC	Conseil œcuménique des Eglises chrétiennes du Congo (Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches of Congo)
COEPA	Comité Ecuménico de Panamá (Ecumenical Committee of Panama)
COFCEAC	Communauté fraternelle des Conseils chrétiens des Eglises et Eglises d'Afrique centrale (Fellowship of Christians Councils and Churches of Central Africa)
CONEP	Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú (National Evangelical Council of Peru)
CONIC	National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil (acronym of name in Portuguese)
COPIC	Portuguese Council of Christian Churches (acronym of name in Portuguese)
CPCE	Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship)
CPR	Conseil protestant du Rwanda (Protestant Council of Rwanda)
CSC	Council of Swaziland Churches
CTBI	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
CTE	Churches Together in England
CTEC	Communauté de travail des Eglises chrétiennes en Suisse (Council of Christian Churches in Switzerland)
CWC	Christian World Communion (plural: CWCs)
CWM	Council for World Mission
CYTUN	Churches Together in Wales
DCC	Dominica Christian Council
DECC	Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council
EAC	European Area Council (of WARC)
EBF	European Baptist Federation
ECC	Estonian Council of Churches
ECCCC	Ecumenical Coordination Committee of Churches in Croatia
ECCCR	Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic
ECCH	Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary
ECCL	Ecumenical Council of Churches of Lithuania
ECCSM	Ecumenical Council of Churches in Serbia & Montenegro
ECCSR	Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Slovak Republic
FAIE	Federación Argentina de Iglesias Evangélicas (Argentine Federation of Evangelical Churches)

FCC	Fiji Council of Churches
FCEI	Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (acronym of name in Italian)
FEC	Finnish Ecumenical Council
FECCIWA	Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa
FECCLAHA	Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa
FIEU	Federación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Uruguay (Federation of Evangelical Churches of Uruguay)
FMEEC	Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches
FOCCISA	Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa
FOCCOCA	Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches of Central Africa
FPF	Fédération protestante de France (French Protestant Federation)
FPM	Fédération protestante d'Haïti (Protestant Federation of Haiti)
FRAECH	Fraternidad Ecuénica de Chile (Ecumenical Fellowship of Chile)
FWCC	Friends World Committee for Consultation
GCC	Guyana Council of Churches The Gambia Christian Council
HKCC	Hong Kong Christian Council
ICC	Irish Council of Churches
ICF	International Congregational Fellowship
IICM	Irish Inter-Church Meeting
ILC	International Lutheran Council
JCC	Jamaica Council of Churches
KEK	Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen (Conference of European Churches)
KNCC	Kiribati National Council of Churches
LCC	Liberia Council of Churches
LUCCEA	Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa
LUCSA	Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
KCC	Kampuchea Christian Council
KKR	Konferenz der Kirchen am Rhein (Conference of Churches on the Rhine)
MCC	Malawi Council of Churches Myanmar Council of Churches
MEC	Malta Ecumenical Council
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
MUB	Moravian Unity Board
MWC	Mennonite World Conference

NCC	National Council of Churches (plural: NCCs)
NCCA	National Council of Churches in Australia
NCCAS	National Council of Churches in American Samoa
NCCB	National Council of Churches, Bangladesh
NCCD	National Council of Churches in Denmark
NCCI	National Council of Churches in India
NCCJ	National Christian Council in Japan
NCKK	National Council of Churches of Kenya National Council of Churches in Korea
NCCP	National Council of Churches in Pakistan National Council of Churches in the Philippines
NCCS	National Council of Churches of Singapore
NCCSL	National Council of Churches of Sri Lanka
NCCT	National Council of Churches of Taiwan
NEAAC	North East Asia Area Council (of WARC)
NNCC	Niue National Council of Churches
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
OAIC	Organization of African Instituted Churches
ÖRKÖ	Ökumenischer Rat der Kirchen in Österreich (Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria)
PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches
PCPCU	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
PEC	Polish Ecumenical Council
PGI	Communion of Churches in Indonesia (acronym of name in Indonesian)
PNGCC	Papua New Guinea Council of Churches
PWF	Pentecostal World Fellowship
REC	Red Ecuménica de Colombia (Ecumenical Network of Colombia) Reformed Ecumenical Council
REO	Regional Ecumenical Organization (plural: REOs)
SACC	South African Council of Churches South Asian Council of Churches
SCC	Samoan Council of Churches Sudan Council of Churches
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SICA	Solomon Islands Christian Association
TNCC	Tonga National Council of Churches
UBLA	Union of Baptists in Latin America
UEM	United Evangelical Mission
UJCC	Uganda Joint Christian Council
VCC	Vanuatu Christian Council
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCCC	World Convention of Churches of Christ

WEA	World Evangelical Alliance
WCC	World Council of Churches
WMC	World Methodist Council
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches