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RC/WCC WOMEN'S ECUMENICAL LIAISON GROUP

M I N U T E S

of the

Meeting held at Cartigny, Geneva

December 8th-12th, 1969

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RC/WCC WOMEN'S ECUMENICAL LIAISON GROUP

GENEVA : 8th-12th December, 1969

Place: Centre de Rencontres, Cartigny, near Geneva

Co-Chairmen: Dr. Marga BUHRIG (WCC) and Miss Maria VENDRIK (RCC)

P R O G R A M M EMonday, December 8th

- 3.30 p.m. Opening Session: Welcome and Introductions;  
SHARING OF EXPERIENCES
- 8.15 p.m. REACTIONS TO THE CIRCULAR LETTER (of October 1969)

Tuesday, December 9th

- 9.00 a.m. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT  
by Dr. Lukas Vischer
- 11.00 a.m. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TAIZE PARTICIPANTS
- 2.30 p.m. DIALOGUE BETWEEN PEOPLE OF LIVING FAITHS  
by Dr. Stanley J. Samartha
- 4.45 p.m. THE FUNCTIONS AND TASKS OF THE GROUP
- 8.15 p.m. WORK GROUPS on PROPOSALS FOR PROJECTS

Wednesday, December 10th

- 9.00 a.m. Discussion on Paper "CONSCIENTIOUS LIVING IN A WORLD OF CHANGE"  
Presentation by Dr. Ian Fraser
- 11.00 a.m. PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE WORK OF THE GROUP  
Presentation of proposals by the Work Groups
- Report on THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN  
by Mrs. Rathie Selvaratnam
- Report on THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER  
by Dr. Margaret Shannon
- 4.00 p.m. WORK GROUPS on ADMINISTRATION
- 8.00 p.m. Dinner and social evening with special guests.

Thursday, December 11th

- 9.00 a.m. Reports from Groups on PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE WORK
- 11.00 a.m. ADMINISTRATION - General discussion
- 2.30 p.m. Final decisions regarding PROJECTS TO BE ADOPTED
- 4.00 p.m. ADMINISTRATION - Final recommendations and decisions  
(Closing of Session)

PARTICIPANTSRoman Catholic Church - Members of Group

Miss Pilar BELLOSILLO, President of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.

Mrs. Marianne DIRKS, President, Zentralverband der Kath. Frauen- und Mütter-gemeinschaften.

Miss Maria MEERSMAN, World Movement of Christian Workers.

Mother Marie de St. Charles HENAFF, representing Women Religious Orders.

Council on the Laity

Miss Maria VENDRIK )  
 ( Members of the Council  
 Miss Rosemary GOLDIE )

Apologies were received from:

Miss Maria de Lourdes PINTASILGO (Portugal), Vice-President of the International Grail.

World Council of Churches - Members of Group

Dr. Marga BUHRIG - Swiss Protestant Church Federation

Dr. Margaret SHANNON - Executive Director, Church Women United, USA; United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

Miss Ruth WALKER - Secretary, Council for Women's Ministry in the Church; Church of England, U.K.

WCC Staff

Miss Brigalia BAM - Associate Secretary, WCC Dept. on Cooperation of Men & Women; Anglican Church of the Province of South Africa.

Dr. Madeleine BAROT - Secretary for Development Education, Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service;

Apologies were received from :

Mrs. Athena ATHANASSIOU-TSOUDEROS (Greece) - Greek Orthodox Church

Frau Liselotte NOLD (Germany) - Evangelical Church in Germany (Lutheran)

Observers

Mrs. Beatriz MELANO DE COUCH (Argentina) - Waldensian Church

Mrs. Rathie SELVARATNAM (Ceylon) - Chairman, Asian Church Women's Conference and Fellowship of the Least Coin; Anglican Church in Ceylon

Mrs. Kitty STRONG (USA) - representing the World Y.W.C.A.; United Church of Christ

Interpreters

Mme Tomoko EVDOKIMOFF

Mlle Lucille KRASSILNIKOFF

Mlle Marie-Hélène TAWIL

Administrative Assistant

Miss Ellen BOGLE

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

M I N U T E S

The Chairman (Dr. Bührig) welcomed the participants, including especially two newcomers to the Group: Mother Marie de St. Charles HENAFF, representing the Women's Religious Orders in the Roman Catholic Church, and Miss Ruth WALKER, representing the Church of England Council for Women's Ministry in the Church (who has become an official member of the Group, in replacement of Deaconess Elizabeth Souttar, retiring member). The Chairman also warmly welcomed the Observers and asked them to participate fully in the discussions.

Prayers were then led by Mother de St. Charles Henaff.

The business session started and some introductory remarks were made by the Chairman, who stated that this was the second official meeting of the new Group, the first having taken place the preceding year in Rome. As frustration had been felt by many participants at the end of that first meeting, because of lack of clarity in the aim and purpose of the WELG, the question in most minds was: what might this Group do and become. This would be the main subject of the ensuing days' discussions, and a strategy would have to be evolved. The proposed agenda for the meeting was submitted and complementary explanations given, including the reason why the two presentations by Dr. L. Vischer and Dr. Stanley J. Samartha were being given on the same day. The programme was duly accepted.

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## I. SHARING OF EXPERIENCES

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, stated Miss Bellosillo, was planning to hold a large conference in the Netherlands in January 1970, to discuss the role of countries with a Roman Catholic majority with regard to the ecumenical movement. This would entail preparations for the national councils of the different large Roman Catholic organizations. Invitations would of course be sent out to women of other Churches to attend as observers. The WUCWO was having to review its identity, in these days of transition, and it had been suggested that a general Christian world organization be set up, which would englobe all present organizations in the Roman Catholic Church. However, the WUCWO saw its action at the heart of the mission of the Church and wondered if a women's world organization did not still have a role to play.

Regarding the Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group and its objectives, reflection was needed on all the points and questions raised in the minds of the members, before definitions could be formulated. There seemed to be an inclination for regional groupings and work. The RC members saw the following as important areas of concern:

1. The promotion of women in the Church, i.e. their status
2. The need for a revision of Canon Law
3. The need to abolish discrimination against women in the Church.

Miss Bellosillo added some words of explanation on the status of women in the RC Church, and referred to the paper she had circulated, which was a special request presented by WUCWO to the Pontifical Commission for the revision of Canon Law. Mother de St. Charles Henaff mentioned that the Association of Women's Religious Orders had presented a similar paper to the Commission.

Dr. Barot enquired whom the RC members were thinking of as "men of other faiths" - did these include atheists, communists? Miss Bellosillo thought it meant more people of other religions, e.g. Muslims, Buddhists, etc.

Dr. Margaret Shannon then shared her news on the situation in the United States:

- The Civil Rights Movement - the non-violent stage led by Martin Luther King was being taken over by a more radical movement which was making attacks on social institutions. Radical movement in the Church: Black clergymen's conference. Caucuses formulate statements and re-enter main body in order to push forward their ideas.
  - Hispanic crisis - led now by an organisation headed by Mexicans, was trying to make plans to obtain economic rights for Spanish-speaking persons, mostly originating from Latin American countries
  - Youth movements - influence on university campuses and off, critical of the government and of institutional policy.
  - There are women's movements in all the radical movements, but in many instances they have had to take second place, doing the subordinate or serving jobs, providing comfort for the men, etc. (e.g. leader of one movement saying: "The only place for women in our movement is prone"). This has made the women mad. So a WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT HAS appeared on all the campuses, which is taking a very radical stand. There is deep resentment at women being included just to play minor roles. Against commercialisation of beauty and sex, beauty contests, etc. Protest against all man-dominated fields: Big Business, Government, Church. Setting up of Women's Research Centres - just to study the "women issue". Courses at universities on subject of "Women in social ferment". United Student Christian Movement - the only group left is the women-members' group.
- Only just recently has this Women's Liberation Movement been taken seriously in society and only a week or so ago by the Church. This puts Church Women United and similar groups on the spot: Are they for women? Or are they for the Church?
- At National Council of Churches' meeting lately in USA, each of these movements sent representatives to meet the delegates (except the RCs). The Black movements came first, then the Hispano movement, the American Indians, and the Women's Liberation Movement. A statement was drawn up by the women's caucus (read by Dr. Shannon to the Group). Church Women United has 2300 local ecumenical communities. Channels through the churches, too.

Dr. Madeleine Barot referred to the influence of Marcuse on youth in several countries, which had resulted in certain events (e.g. events in Paris and other places in France in May 1968). There had also been born a new kind of feminism.

Mrs. Melano de Couch stressed that it was a question of loss of identity. The Jews know who they are, the Blacks know who they are. But the youth are seeking to know what their identity is in practice. She hoped that it would be possible to go deeper into this, to implement biblical insights.

#### RC Consultation on "Cooperation of Men and Women", held in the Netherlands

Miss Maria Vendrik spoke about the Roman Catholic conference that had been held in the Netherlands in the autumn 1969 on the theme "Cooperation of Men and Women". It was organized by a RC group in the Netherlands which has as its aim the cooperation of men and women in Church and society. Mrs. Govaart-Halkes (one of the leaders responsible at the Third Congress on the Laity for working group on Cooperation, e.g. together with Miss Pintasilgo) is the Chairman of the group. Those invited to meeting, mainly Europeans, a few from USA, some from Mexico, one from South America; the majority were women, although they tried to get some men to participate. At the meeting, lasting 4 days, each participant

was asked to explain the work she (or he) was doing. There was a contribution by Mme Pellé-Douel, of France, who has written a book on this question. There were several working groups and general meetings in the evenings. The study of Co-operation of men and women was made in the light of a renewal of ecclesiology; the question of "identity" was also discussed and the image men and women have of themselves. Some of the questions raised were: Is the behaviour of men and women the result of their nature or of their conditioning? What is sexuality? What has been the influence of a false judgment of this relation between men and women? What is the influence of the mass media? The participants tried to avoid "isolating" women and seeing them rather in the whole context of society. It was concluded that the Church should find the proper initiative, essentially because of the message of the Gospel itself; also that articles and studies should be made use of with a view to strategy and action. There was a need to use scientific knowledge to influence and educate, in order to change the mentality of people.

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(Evening session: not minuted)

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## II. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT - Dr. Lukas Vischer (summary)

The first stage of development of the ecumenical movement has come to an end. At the present time, there is danger of a wrong polarisation: some people urge to go forward, others accused of going back. It would seem important to push the analysis further, to see whether polarisation in two groups is really the deepest issue at stake. It is interesting to note that the period behind us has produced a number of formal concepts, e.g. "dialogue", "renewal", and others. Possibility of a change, but concepts do not point to content. Many people fight about the terms and categories of these concepts, e.g. for "renewal" or against, etc. But one is forced to ask what are the deepest issues at stake as far as Christian existence is concerned. One wonders whether in these last years the ecumenical discovery was really the the decisive item of these last years. What was the deepest motive that made that, suddenly, Christians felt they had to come together? Why did it not happen sooner? There must be reasons for it. One could say that in fact the walls between confessions had already become 'paper' walls, and things happened quickly during the last years because there were only 'paper' walls. Word of Martin Luther King when he spoke of his famous three "paper walls". If this is true, then at the beginning of Vatican II we lived already in an artificial situation. The main issue is to discover what was the reality which made the differences into mere 'paper' walls. It does not seem that we know it yet, but we are beginning to sense that our ecumenical discovery is not the principal issue, and that we are all led together to face the deeper issue. Here is one way of describing it.

The principal, main issue we face as Christians, as the Church, is the unsolved question of the relationship between Christ and the world. We live today in a time when horizons become wider and wider, and we begin to see the world as a whole. We realise more and more that we cannot proceed with suppositions of a closed humanity, we have to consider humanity as a belonging together, as a whole. And we have to see how we can live together while holding different convictions. There is need for a constant adaptation to this new situation.

Here one must answer another question: what does it mean to hold a faith which is rooted in a very particular event, the event of Christ in a given moment of history in a given place of geography? How to become universally open when you are based on an event which is deliberately particular? There is pressure in this present world to be universally open, and this puts to the Christian faith the very serious question: are we not being particularist in a world which tends to be universalist? Therefore, as soon as we measure the weight of this



question, all the issues which divide the Christian Churches become relatively irrelevant. Is it not this issue which made clear that we live in an artificial world of 'paper' walls? Relation of People of God - the whole of humanity. One of the questions which constantly preoccupy people is: are there limits, clear border-lines between the People of God and the world? In the past it seemed clear that there were. With the idea of dialogue these border-lines have become more fluid.

It is not accidental that we have all through the Churches a very lively discussion of the Church as a communion, a community, a relationship between human persons. Compared to the past, we put the emphasis on the realisation of true unity and communion, and that the Church should be the realisation of such a communion. We ask then how this Church relates to the rest of the world.

So it seems clear that it is because of these issues that more and more the problems between confessions are put on a level of second-rate importance. It is interesting to observe the development of the discussion on intercommunion, which is clearly an issue which divides the confessions. A few years ago there were still many people who said that intercommunion was not an item to be put on the agenda of a discussion. It is quite different today, on the contrary those who contend that intercommunion cannot be realised are already on the defensive. The same applies to the question of mixed marriage. Our main concern now is to build up the communion and we seek to eliminate those obstacles which prevent this. It is the same with the questions of the Apostolic succession and of the Ordination of women: people who are conservative on these points are now on the defensive. In all these fields it is important that we begin to discover and formulate, envision what the communion of the future should really be like. It is not a great victory if we just succeed in abolishing rules about ordination, Apostolic succession, etc. It is necessary and will be a victory if at the same time we are able to give shape, expression to the "koinonia" in Christ.

The Joint Working Group and its Programme : What can be the relationship between it and the Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group?

What are the main issues in discussion? The Joint Working Group has recently been re-organized. It is interesting to notice that in its new composition it is proving possible to make more rapid progress than before. The fact that one could remember earlier difficulties helped a lot. After the last meeting it was possible to formulate a short text known under the name of Drafted Minute. Membership of the Roman Catholic Church to the WCC has to be studied: it has become clear that we need to go into this question. Soon after the last meeting there was the visit of Pope Paul VI to Geneva. In his address he followed the line of the Drafted Minute and even quoted from it. He took the following line: at present membership cannot be envisaged, giving as reason that the question was not yet mature and therefore needed study, but he didn't say it could never be envisaged. Dr. Vischer thought that in the Joint Working Group they would all interpret this as more positive in the sense of non-exclusion. This will be the main issue at the next meeting of the Joint Working Group; it has been discussed extensively in the Secretariat for Unity, and all the Bishops are aware of the question, it will not come to them as a new problem. Of course, it is not an issue question. However, there are a number of issues which must be kept in mind: for example, all the member Churches of the WCC, or almost all, are national Churches, and there is no world Church. It is a little strange to think of the Roman Catholic Church as the 243rd member Church alongside some small Protestant or minority Church. Incompatibility between these; question whether the Roman Catholic Church would come in as several members. Another issue, which relates to the above: how do statements of the World Council of Churches relate to the Roman Catholic Church as a whole? Present member-Churches make statements on the national level, but the RC Church operates on a world level. This can be overcome, but it has to be faced. There is also the problem of size.

The RC Church is bigger than the whole of the WCC. What would that imply, in view of the fact that they would have the absolute majority? The small minority Churches would not be very happy in such a situation. An arrangement would certainly have to be found, e.g. a smaller representation of the large member Churches and a bigger representation of the small Churches. It will also be interesting to observe how those member Churches which are at present in the WCC will adapt to becoming "smaller" groups.

All this is a long and slow process, needing much consultation. But the very fact that the issue has become discussable, even more so, is exciting.

On the agenda of the next meeting of the Joint Working Group, there will also be for discussion a text on Apostolicity and catholicity, an attempt to define the main issues. It is clear that the ecclesiological discussion in the ecumenical movement is changing in the new situation. All theological texts need to be revised, and when this is done the texts will be of great importance to the work of the Faith and Order Commission, which now includes some Roman Catholic members. The Joint Working Group will also consider the whole RC/WCC programme, which has become a common programme.

Another item on the agenda will be a text jointly prepared on Proselytism. Again, one can observe a characteristic process. The Joint Working Group started by considering the problem of Religious Liberty, and discovered that all held the same views; but it was felt that proselytism was worthwhile studying in common. Very soon it was felt that this was not the real issue, but rather the basis for witnessing together. It became clear that the real solution to tensions is common witness - then tensions disappear. So, "Our Common Witness and Proselytism" is the title of the new study.

We are beginning to reach a stage where certain fruits of the work in common begin to show, we are now starting to produce certain results. A fourth issue to be mentioned is the collaboration in the field of Development: SODEPAX. Collaboration has been set up for three years as an experiment; one now needs to think about the continuation. Therefore, the Joint Working Group will have to give some time to this as well as to the question of collaboration in similar fields. It is interesting to note how the whole concern for the Development issue has become a common concern and has been made visible as such. We have not succeeded for any other concern to make it as visible a common concern. Yet the same could be done for the racial issue, for example, as well as for others one could think of. It is a matter for imaginative thinking and the right structure.

A final remark, with a view to the work of the WEIG. The structural problem seems a serious one. In one way, there are complicated structures in the ecumenical movement: the old structures in the individual Churches are kept and new ones are added, thus greatly increasing the total number of structures. At the same time, there is a danger that, although we say we are concerned with the world, through these many committees we are much more concerned with ourselves and our own channels. The transformation which is needed brings us closer to ourselves and there is danger in this. We need to think of the possibility of diminishing or simplifying the structures. There is an additional problem: not only must we consider how to build up structures, but we must be aware that most of them are provisional. The Joint Working Group is not permanent, and doubtless all the structures around it are equally provisional. They are of an exploratory nature and should disappear as soon as a new solution has been found. There is the difficulty that we never quite know where to start. It would be ideal if one could start from the issues. What are the issues of collaboration? Then build up the common agenda: what binds us together? But you need the existing organizations to take the initiative. What the Joint Working Group has done in the past is to ask various organizations to get together and see what could be done together and report to the Joint Working Group. But it is not intended to

build up various organisms between the Vatican and the WCC. They can initiate collaboration at whatever level the issue seems to be at stake. This should be reviewed from time to time to see what new organisms are needed. At the national level there already exist several such organisms, e.g. joint working groups, Sodepaxes, etc. What will be their relationship with the Christian Councils? It would seem best to strengthen the existing Christian Councils, otherwise we might get a structural "jungle". What must be found is a framework within which the Christian communion can best grow.

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#### Comments from members of the Liaison Group

Mrs. Dirks stressed the fact of the necessity for the existence of the WELG, to represent the women.

Miss Meersman wondered about the questions in the minds of people at the "grass-roots" concerning the usefulness of such a group.

Dr. Shannon asked whether or not there was a better way to structure than talk about strengthening the present Christian Councils, which were so very Protestant in nature, and mentioned the transformations recently effected in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

Dr. Bührig thought that the challenge of the new situation required quick changes and that Dr. Vischer had mentioned that it would be "a slow process" of coming together because of the structures. What was the solution? Also, Dr. Vischer had mentioned organisms such as SODEPAX, which worked on common concerns. How then could one make the concern of the Emancipation of Women a common concern of the Churches?

#### Response from Dr. Vischer

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Dr. Vischer thought there was quite certainly a need for the existence of a group like the WELG, but first the questions had to be formulated and defined, and afterwards the means of action must be found. For example, the question of the Emancipation of Women could be a subject to be recommended to the Joint Working Group for study. But the latter was a "liaison group" and there were numerous subjects to be considered with comparatively few hours in which to discuss them, without even thinking of action. It might be a good idea to try and find discussion and action groups or centres which were doing interesting things and which might take up some issues proposed to them. The WELG could not undertake the realisation of programmes, it could only receive information, make suggestions, take contacts, act as a catalyser, put people and groups in touch with each other. It could not compete with the international organizations. After a certain time, it would be necessary to ask the question: should the Group continue as it was or make a change? The need was to find the people who could undertake action and carry out the programmes.

With regard to the Christian Councils, these could not of course remain what they were now, but by being put on a larger basis they would be able to change and deepen their intention.

Replying to the question regarding the paradox of the situation.- pressure of events in the world and slowness due to existing structures- one might ask the question: Is a revolution required? It all depended on what was meant by a revolution and how it was carried out. A counter-revolution of the new structures? It was evident that the conception of "authority" was no longer what it used to be.

In reply to a remark from Mrs. de Couch, what we had as universal structures was coloured by a whole history. These structures were universal for Europe and North America, but Latin America happened to be outside. But there was a deeper imperative for universal communion than universal history. Was it not in the Bible itself that was found the compulsion to live in a communion? A reaction

to established structures was normal nowadays, and one must be aware that what claimed to be universal was not fully universal, a new awareness was now growing of what could be a full participation of the world. It was one of the exciting tasks of the ecumenical movement now to see how the difficulty Mrs. de Couch had pointed out could be overcome.

In reply to Miss Meersman, it was true to say that ecumenism was not just uniting persons as they lived at present but to include all the history that was behind them. Was it not so that, still at present, the ecumenical encounter took place mainly where there was a mixed population, and not so much where the population was uniform? For example, Protestant Christians had not yet discovered what it meant to be a Christian in Spain, or Italy; the same was true of Sandinavia, etc. The Protestants and Roman Catholics had not yet got deeply into each other. The main line was where Christians met as different. There was a certain task of "consciousness" to be accomplished. To bring in history was certainly a slower process than just to meet on the surface.

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### III. REACTIONS TO THE CIRCULAR LETTER OF OCTOBER 1969

Miss Bam reported that the Department had sent out over one hundred letters to the various Protestant women's groups and to the WCC participants of the Taizé Conference, 1967. Replies had been received from 13 countries, one from the World YWCA, and one from the YWCA of Italy. She pointed out that it had been difficult to draw up a summary because of the variety of reactions.

Generally speaking, most of the groups had said something about the composition of the WELG: *Fundação Cuidar o Futuro*

- Group composed exclusively of Westerners cannot be called a Liaison Group (England).
- No representatives from the third world - composition of the group one-sided (Argentina).
- No representatives of a "united" Church such as the Church of South India. The group is indeed composed of persons with real ecumenical understanding, but it is another thing to be a member of a Church which is committed to union and has experienced the adjustments (Canada).
- This appears to be an international commission looking for a job. It would seem that a national organization was needed only when local efforts are so vibrant that they need coordination, information-channelling, or some such service.

Secondly, the reaction from most countries about regional groups was very positive. One of the issues that had been pointed out was the problem of information. The information gap between ecumenical planners and just plain Christians is enormous. The WELG ought to give priority to this.

Miss Bam then read in detail all the replies that had come in from the different countries. (Paper available, if desired).

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#### Roman Catholic reactions to the Circular Letter of October 1969

Due to Miss M. de Lourdes Pintasilgo's illness, the statement of reactions to the circular letter from the RCC side was not available.

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IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TAIZE PARTICIPANTS (Reactions to the Circular Letter of November 1968)

After the Taizé Conference held in June 1967, explained Dr. Barot, a printed report in French and in English was published. It was thought it might be useful to have some information for this present meeting of the WELG and to discover what, if anything, had happened since. For this purpose a questionnaire had been sent out in November 1968 to all the Taizé participants, and a number of replies had been received, of which a general summary had now been made. In the 1968 circular letter four main questions were raised:

1. What changes have occurred in your organizations since Taizé?
2. Do you know of some concrete examples of ecumenical programmes? (there is not much interest in replies to this point now, because out-of-date).
3. The man-woman relation, i.e. what is the specific task to be done with regard to this question of the emancipation of women and of the cooperation of men and women?

To the above many replies were received giving suggestions of subjects to be studied. Maybe these could be incorporated in a programme of studies to be undertaken. Several replies indicated interest in women's questions and in taking advantage of the differences existing between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. Some Protestants suggested the study of the RC notion of apostolate (the Protestants call it service or witness): how can we speak to the world together? Some people wondered also what was the role of Mariology in the RC thinking on women - this is a difficult thing for Protestants to gauge. They would like to gain the enrichment of understanding this. The questions raised by "Humanum vitae" were put forward, with the whole area of family planning, with the problems posed in the developing regions of the world.

Another group of people would like the WELG to take up the study of all that concerns the image of women in the mind of the general public at the present time, and of how children visualise women. How can we give children an image of men and women that would bring about change? Out-dated image of women: in what way can teaching methods be employed to give a better image to children? A special study of methods to influence patterns of thinking. Public opinion can also be influenced to change its way of considering women (mass media, press, TV, etc.) There was something definite to say about that. Could the WELG do something in this field?

Still another group was concerned with the "new feminism" being manifested among the younger women (cf. Dr. Shannon's report). Since May 1968 in France the feminist point of view had greatly changed from what it used to be.

Some people thought it would be interesting to study the image of the couple (man-woman relation, in marriage) and sexuality. What do women think about it? What is new in this area?

Replies from France expressed the conviction that, with regard to the emancipation of women, it was necessary to envisage fundamental changes in the structure of society (power structures) and aim at destroying those that are used against women. People no longer believe in structures, not even in the Church. Comparisons are made between the racial question and that of the emancipation of women - a revolutionary attitude.

Other points made referred to the patterns or methods to be used with a view to genuine ecumenical action, suggestions made of studies, of ecumenical action together.

4. Convictions about the value of the work begun at Taizé.

In reply to this, people on the national level find it difficult to see what can be done on the international level. However, a conviction was expressed

that a follow-up is needed and suggestion that regional conferences should be set up.

Educational conferences are also recommended, such as gathering together the representatives of organizations on the national level, so that they can inform the "grass-roots". Exchanges on the personal level are strongly recommended.

It was stressed that it was very necessary to reach the masses via the press, radio, TV, etc, for example to give a common witness on such or such an event. Common action was good, undertaken in a practical way.

Many replies showed interest in Christian women meeting with women of other faiths (dialogue with other religions on the feminine plane); the same with women in political life.

On the level of Development, many things are happening, and it would be good to see similar things on the feminine level.

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Miss Maria Meersman then gave a brief summary of the gist of replies to the same Circular letter from the Roman Catholic side.

In reply to Questions 1 and 2, there was nothing special to report, but one or two points worth mentioning:

- Most ecumenical experience stems from the fact that people want to face problems and solve them in common.
- Meeting each other in daily life.
- Workers are not interested in ecumenical problems as such, but in the vital problems of their daily life.
- On the institutional level, the creation of a Commission for Ecumenism on the national level (Belgium).

In reply to Question 3 regarding the cooperation of men and women:

- One organization declared that it is not an ecumenical question in the first place and should not be studied in an ecumenical context, but perhaps on the more human level. Protestants think that the Roman Catholic point of view would not be helpful. Stress that the question should be discussed, not among women only, but in mixed groups of men and women.

Other points: A study of specificity; myths that men hold about women; socio-cultural relations of mother-father-child, and image presented to the child.

With regard to women in the Church, much support was given to the views held and expressed by Pastor André Dumas (France).

- Continuation or follow-up of Taizé: One organization stressed very much that such a follow-up should be on the level of life itself **With** regard to methods of work, list the different realisations already made and make an analysis of these; study what steps have already been taken, what is the commitment which comes out of these. A deepening of living faith in daily life; question ourselves on the collective witness we give in that way. Another group suggests that if another conference like Taizé is held, it should be rather an experience of living together than a presentation of talks, and there should be no obligation of coming to any formal resolutions. Two other subjects proposed were: "The role of women as educators" and "Study of the Single Woman". It was also suggested that regional conferences be held, because of differences of conditions and circumstances.

A long discussion ensued on the best use to make of the information thus received, and stress was put on the request for regional conferences. It was thought good to encourage the women at regional level to organize such meetings and thus face their problems together, without the WELG being practically involved in the process, but close contact would be maintained. The old Taizé "nucleus group" proposed that such a conference might be set up by them on the European level. It was also pointed out that regional should not mean "continental", as the latter (apart from Europe) would involve too large an area.

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V. THE CHRISTIAN CONCERN IN DIALOGUE BETWEEN PEOPLE OF LIVING FAITHS

(Text available in due course)

- Dr. Stanley J. Samartha

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VI. THE FUNCTIONS AND TASKS OF THE W.E.L.G.

In presenting the working paper which she had prepared, Dr. Bührig recalled that Dr. Vischer that morning had asked the WELG to begin with action rather than structure. She suggested that the group split up into several work groups, each of them taking up one or more of the points raised in the paper and trying to find possible solutions. She stressed that she thought the questions referring to Administration were also very important and could not be left to the "Staff" who had to do the job. Dr. Bührig stressed a few points:

- 1) Seeing this was a "Liaison Group", she was always worried about the fact of relating only to the laity, for she felt that the WELG should also relate to women in the religious orders, etc. With regard to the composition of the group, it was a fact that the Taizé meeting was mainly European with a sprinkling of North Americans. When the "nucleus group" of 4 became incorporated into the larger one, it could no longer take the initiative. Regarding the suggestion for a correspondents-network, she thought that such networks already existed - would it be worthwhile setting up a new one? She did not think so.
- 2) Dr. Bührig wondered what was meant exactly by "Ecumenical Education". Taking as an example the problem of Mixed marriage, would it not be the role of the WELG to give its Church authorities an 'ecumenical education' on the significance of the human reality? There was a theology of lay people that the group might help to articulate.
- 3) With regard to Administration, Dr. Bührig hoped that some concrete decisions about the work would be taken.

General Discussion

With regard to the issues which the WELG might take up, Dr. Barot added one or two points, in the hope that this might help the group to see more concretely the consequences with regard to structure. From the talk given by Dr. Samartha came the idea that maybe the group, as women, could try to help a little these attempts to establish a dialogue with people of other faiths, to see how they could on the women's level come into dialogue with Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu women, etc. The Secretariat for Unity in Rome did not seem opposed to use women to establish such contacts, and the WCC was also quite open to it. In the cities there were many women of diverse religions; a study could be made of these possibilities and conclusions drawn as to what kind of issues to study, etc. Could be done in Geneva, and Rome. After that, the national correspondents might be consulted if they were interested in this dialogue - at least, offering them the possibility.

Dr. Bührig approved the idea and suggested contacts might be found through the large international women's organizations, the link to be found being the interest in women's questions and concern for the status of women.

Miss Bam also supported the idea, but had a few questions: What were the motivations for taking up this issue? Was this an issue all over the world? or would it be taken up because the world bodies represented were concerned? or must it be taken up because this was a women's group?

Mrs. Selvaratnam indicated that, in Ceylon, Christian women often met together, but not with women of other faiths; this seemed to be one of their difficulties.

Dr. Barot thought that dialogue with people of other faiths would be one subject on which the different regions of the world might be able to contribute something very specific, e.g. Asian women could contribute much; in Africa, too, where Muslims and Christians live side by side.

Miss Bellosillo felt that, from various reactions given by diverse regions, this question of dialogue seemed to bring a new dimension. It appeared that the stage of simple ecumenism between Protestants and Roman Catholics was already passed by; there was much interest, therefore, for the WELG to take up this question of dialogue with other faiths, for it required renewed efforts.

Mrs. Strong found Dr. Barot's suggestion very interesting. Listening to Dr. Samartha one realized how delicate this dialogue was, and with her experience of women's groups she was delighted at the thought of getting them thrown into such a dialogue. Could diagrams be drawn up by some experts where areas were very sensitive and see what kind of studies to make as one went along? Some guidance was needed as to what was involved, material provided by authorities which would highlight the issues. The WELG might choose certain issues and try to give guidelines.

Miss Meersman stated that, in the countries where the question came up with greater force, a series of actions and studies had already been started. She felt the WELG ought especially to encourage initiatives which were already being manifested and stimulate similar action in other regions. In this light, she wondered about the role of Christian men and women in the problems of daily life: there, too, Christian action was necessary. There were different levels of men's lives and their particular problems which could be studied. The WELG would not undertake such studies, but could encourage the formation of liaison groups, as well as study and action groups.

Mrs. Melano de Couch took up the question of strategy and drew a diagram of what she saw as the role of WELG: a corresponding "committee" in each region (e.g. Asia, Africa, South Pacific, Latin America, North America, Europe) which would constitute the "mosaic" of information. In Latin America, they had a committee called UNELAM, which could be a contact. She felt that such groups could give valuable information and would help with priorities. With regard to content, she stated that, at least as far as Latin America was concerned, the gap between the world and the Church was getting wider and wider. There were distinct life problems and certain definite priorities.

Miss Goldie stressed the necessity to know what was happening, to have contacts with key people who could give information. A method was needed to collect this and circulate it, not only among members of the group, but to others, including the authorities. The Secretariat for Unity had a special desk for relations with the Jews; but for other non-Christian religions it was another Secretariat, which had not so far worked with women; it was beginning to work more regionally, and it was at that level, she thought, that the WELG could bring information to them. Miss Goldie thought it might be helpful to clarify the definition between different kinds of dialogue. With regard to practical organization, each member of the WELG might be asked for information about her own constituency, and things



worked out between them all; one person, however, would have to put the information together. Miss Vendrik (Chairman) felt that a responsible point of reference was certainly needed and would have to be decided on.

Dr. Shannon pointed out that what had been said that afternoon was that women were more important than words. What we were trying to do was to develop a style of life, about Christian faith and our life. Had we not better wait until we had the results before planning on whom to "plant" them? Miss Meersman also issued a warning about the premature setting-up of directives by the WELG.

Coming back to the question of correspondents for the WELG, Dr. Bührig wondered whether material was required, and of what kind? Miss Goldie thought that the group surely wanted to know what was happening and where. Citing the example of a staff member of the Laity Council sent recently to attend the AACC Women's Consultation in Abidjan to discover information about RC/Protestant collaboration in Africa, she thought this kind of evidence gave one a much stronger hand, with precise information gathered by attendance at various conferences. It was one of the things the WELG could do: give information about women available as experts or representatives for one purpose or another. A way should be found of putting all this together. Miss Bam warned about over-simplifying the practical problem. Certain contacts, of course, were always the same. A kind of structure, however, had to be found, some way in which the group could be of service to some women's groups in the world, who thought they could be inspired by the WELG, even if it meant only a few hundreds. If the group dealt with structures and issues, it must decide on priorities, and then these would have to be checked to see that they were priorities to those being served.

Dr. Shannon feared that the information obtained would be so miscellaneous, it would probably be better to have something to say first. One could allocate task forces in every area, to the experimental list. But that would require a RC counterpart in every continent. The aim had to be limited, to begin with. The liaison problem would be from the point of view of action to do something or other. Concerning the groups that would be contacted, that would depend on the project.

Miss Meersman did not know whether it was necessary to have every information about what was happening, but surely information about different kinds of experiments in various fields, and different ways of getting the information would have to be found, though this was not an easy thing. Miss Vendrik saw the need for the various responsibilities to be "shared out".

Dr. Shannon stated that recent surveys in the USA indicated that the greatest gap was in the Churches themselves. Was there the same parallelism in the Roman Catholic Church? Maybe the women could help bridge this - one possible task. Also, the issue of "Woman in the Modern Context".

Miss Bellosillo saw two major questions that concerned the WELG:

- a) Ecumenical education (a priority). Experiments based on the demands of faith. Question of the crisis of faith at the present time. There are questions to which women are more sensitive. Tensions regarding unity and renewal of the Church. Cases of typical situations.
- b) The emancipation and status of women in our Churches. There was a role of encouragement and a role of relationships for the group to play. Concrete studies to be made: the notion of "womanhood" in the churches; what were the responsibilities the churches could grant to women.

Mrs. Dirks referred to the relation between renewal and ecumenism. A kind of polarisation had taken place in the RC Church since Vatican II. In Germany, the women were the most open to renewal, and RC women and Protestant women had common aspirations.

Mrs. Melano de Couch spoke of the deep split occurring in the Roman Catholic

and in the Protestant Churches in Latin America: a progressive group, RC and Protestant combined, very much involved; but even this group is divided, however, between those who advocate violent revolution and those who are for non-violent means. The progressive groups are feeling increasingly close to one another and see themselves as becoming more and more one Church. This was a deeper, more genuine kind of ecumenicity, on the part of people facing problems in their various situations, who were reflecting together and ready to act according to their thinking.

Miss Meersman remarked that ecumenism did not mean only acting together in common, but also thinking and praying together.

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## VII. "CONSCIENTIOUS LIVING IN A WORLD OF CHANGE"

Comments on the paper were presented by the spokesmen of the two groups formed to study and discuss it:

On behalf of the first group, Dr. Barot said that they had found the paper remarkable, containing much matter for thinking and meditation, certain passages or paragraphs on their own would deserve particular study. It contained many new, advanced ideas. The group had realised that, in the women's organizations, reflection was still going on about the professional life of women, whereas it might be good to think now a little on the participation of women in the life of leisure which was awaiting humanity. They asked themselves: how the WEIG could, as a group, contribute to this study, and how could one best enable the women's groups to benefit from the richness and depth of its thinking. How were the "lines" of the document to be prolonged in the direction of women's concerns? It was obvious it was written by a man and that the lines of thinking had not taken in the second half of humanity. So there was something to be done in this connection. One should ask what are the responsibilities of women in the different fields, or on the different planes mentioned in the paper, and what special educational efforts are required from women in this connection. If, for example, one takes the question of education for liberty in face of tradition, there is a special problem for women there and it is probable that women will need a slightly different education from the men in this respect. Women, considered as the guardians of tradition, have always been educated in this sense. If really the whole of humanity, women as well as men, have to be educated in order to abandon tradition, if tradition falls to pieces and it is necessary to educate them for liberty, women will have a bigger 'jump' to make than the men. What special efforts does this imply in the way of education - partly at any rate in the women's organizations? As the spirit of dependence has been developed in women, it does not help them to know how to take decisions, to become adult, to develop a critical mind and the capacity to form one's own judgment in order to take decisions - all of which it is now evident describes the attitude which every human being should henceforth cultivate. But this has not been developed in women and now - the paper indicates this clearly - women and men together should have this attitude. All this implied also (and the paper could stress this more) a deepening of education in the faith, of Christian education. Only thus can this education of our conscience be attained. This does not come out clearly enough in the paper.

Another point noted, which could be elaborated and might deserve special study, was the question of the new movements of liberation to be found for women, with new forms of education (cf. present developments in the USA.) A new conception of the place of women is evolving - so the question should be studied further in the paper.

Practical recommendations: the paper to be widely distributed, as it is, and suggestion that women's organizations might recommend it for group-study, even giving a group the responsibility of studying just one passage, one chapter, worth studying in depth. Also, might be submitted to groups of specialists (educators, etc.) to study aspects touching on education of children or education in general.

On behalf of the second group, Miss Goldie stated that the general impression was that the paper was a valuable starting-point, but that it was not meant to remain as it was, nor that they should try to amend it in order to make it add up to what the group wished to say. There was a certain dissatisfaction with certain particular aspects. The overall approach would be quite a different matter, she thought, and she would ask Mrs. Melano de Couch to say something about her own reaction to what concerned women in the man-woman relationship, which they discussed quite a bit. They found the paper and reactions from the June meeting in Rome unsatisfactory, in the sense that it did not help one in discussing the paper before one. Probably this was due to the fact that the group meeting in Rome had also found that, although the paper was extremely interesting, it left untouched as many things as it touched within the general area; therefore, some of the things discussed were other aspects of that overall vision, which were not sufficiently developed, perhaps, in the paper. Miss Goldie stressed that her group had also felt very much the need for digging deeper into the theological background and mythical foundation of the text in question, and they felt something perhaps of what was felt in June, the difficulty arising from the fact that there was not sufficient integration between the first part of the document, which was deliberately for all mankind and not specifically starting on a Christian basis, and the second part of the document, which mainly linked up with specifically Christian thinking. That is why, if one did not read everything and sorted it out carefully, one could react to the first part in the sense that it was not a Christian document, without understanding that that was perhaps the purpose in the first part of the document.

As regards the question concerned particularly about women, the group felt that there would be a big job to do in going much more thoroughly into the implications and the possibilities of celibacy in the modern world, and worked out in a creative way. Miss Goldie then added one or two personal reactions to points in the paper which she thought were important: one was on the element of "celebration", the sense of joy and of humour, which was very much needed too and which would help to encourage the search for creative liberty and freedom. In relation to the title, she was happy about "Conscientious Living" but not about the subtitle, or about the stress on morality, but this could be limited to one part of the study. If all the accent was on that, it would put people off the study, whereas there is far more to the study than that.

Mrs. Melano de Couch commented on the question of the man-woman relationship. In the paper, she noted, there were only two paragraphs about women, i.e. one referring to the old emancipation movement and the other referring to the sexual/marriage relationship. In Latin America, these were both considered as highly important problems by all the Churches, and they were in fact world problems. Everyone agreed that there was an urgent need for the liberation of man in society, but one always tended to think of it on an economic level and a cultural level of underdevelopment. In the enormous mass of people of the third world, half of it was a feminine mass. The liberation of man, it was often explained, should be a "deconversion", i.e. the transformation of man, of the entire man. Now she and some of the professional and ecclesiastical friends with whom she had consulted thought that there would be no liberation without the conversion of the whole man, and this involved deeply the two poles of humanity, namely men and women together, not just merely the cooperation or collaboration of women. In all the structures of the world and of the Church there was the vice (and she stressed the word vice) of the absence of the feminine. Thus the conversion of man could not take place unless and until the masculine accepted and integrated the feminine pole. In conclusion, therefore, humanity had been working up till now with one half only of its members, women not having been really integrated into the whole. But man was created by God as man-woman, with a hyphen in between, the two words together. Hence, for the society of the future, all the contribution which was specifically feminine was needed, in fact indispensable. Theologically speaking, it seemed evident that this situation of non-acceptance and non-integration of

the feminine constituted one of the situations of sin in which the world found itself. It was a state of institutionalised violence against one half of humanity, of the most dangerous and most subtle structural, institutionalised violence both in the Church and in the world. It resulted in a veritable oppression of women and the use of women, deserving the most stringent and most unequivocal denouncement. All those who made efforts to help the new man, the new humanity, whether distinguished philosophers, psychologists, theologians, etc., would truly be proclaiming non-violence and peace.

Dr. Margaret Shannon advocated a little more adequate study, she thought, of what the future society would be. Most of the generalisations in the paper seemed to be things that one knew were part of the decade of the 60s in terms of changing society. The U.S. futurists working since 1967, however, assumed that the next fifteen years would bring far more radical change than was implied anywhere in the document under discussion. Many of the assumptions on work, on education, on leisure, on the produce of technology, on want, and so on would need to be checked. She knew every projection was different, but the paper did not give the options in terms of morality towards this. Thus, the paper was weak from the point of view of the sociological and political patterns, the living-together patterns, to which one was going to have to find a meaning and settlement in humanization, and also in terms of this "celebration" element. She thought that the theologians (sociologists, at least) had gone beyond the secularization as an era, something which ought to be part of life itself, in terms of this joy that was talked about and also in terms of something which would hold the world together. Now, one child-specialist school in the USA assumed that in the near future at the age of 10 most children would be finished with their necessary education for adult life. If this was true, then all this stuff about going into secondary school, about morality you taught there, and the worry about the next generation was not the problem. The problem was that morality was the younger generation going to be able to teach the old in time to save the situation! Consequently, the logic of the private family and other kinds of things appeared somewhat irrelevant. She just hoped that, as one went deeper into it, the document would have something that would be there in 10 years' time, in fact that could meet something of people's fear and needs, as well as anticipation of the future. Referring to the work-pattern that was assumed, Dr. Shannon quoted the answers of two U.S. groups (one from a Negro group), which assumed that with the control of knowledge power, as replacing economic power, the racial question would become even worse, because machines always give power to those who are programming the machine, and if this got worse in a pluralistic society, then things would be finished in the United States. The second answer assumed that there would be more service staff than at present, and for this reason, if the caste system was cut, which has to be done in a good society, there would have to be a new orientation about service from the point of view of all work classes, in order to find again a community pattern. The whole use even of the biological family had to be taken into consideration, with a new way of arriving at the morality of a family in this world (which was described in the first paragraph), as well as the neighbourhood, which might become more real in community. The whole question of the control patterns, which had something to do with the kind of government, the kind of society, the kind of political and social pattern in the hands of which we were willing to put ourselves, needed to be closely examined, as these matters had not really been touched on or even hinted at in the paper. There was too much talk of the old categories, and if one could find some new categories by which one could take hold of life, then the real examination of the way to become a Christian and a Christian community ought to be in the midst of it. There should be anticipation of insight, rather than review of the old story, and the Church needed this very much. It needed it in order to affirm its own faith that God is in the future as well as in the past.

Regarding the question of work in the chapter on the life of celebration, Miss Meersman asked if it was true that work for many people had been the expression of their creative faculties. She wanted to stress that this was not so for a multitude of workers, and never could be. There were innumerable workers whose work had never been something to enhance their value. Society had never considered work as a value in itself, though work had always been considered in the light of a duty, of an inevitable destiny, even of punishment for some, but rarely as a value, in the same way as other vital values in the life of man. So when it was said that it was not from his work that man's value would be judged in the future, it was nevertheless true that even today one judged very often the value of a man according to his function in the world of work, or his lack of training for the work, his function of worker. She wanted to know in what sense was meant this evolution, when man would no longer be judged by the kind of work he did, in the Church as well as in society. For it was certain that, neither in the Church nor even in theology, had great attention been given to the value of work in the life of human beings, even though she agreed that it had been greatly stressed and even over-estimated in a religious way, but only in the sense of inevitable destiny, of duty, of something which had to be done, but never as a really objective value.

Dr. Bührig remarked there was a basic difference between you and women - both discriminated against - but the only reason why there were women's groups was the bitterness of discrimination. She urged all men of goodwill to help the women to change these factors, which prevented women from being admitted into the decision-making circles in society. Miss Vendrik concurred with Dr. Bührig's remarks, but stressed that she would like to see men and women together study the paper, and not in separate groups - men here, women there - and then the result of their cogitations brought together somehow to fit into one document, but rather that they study together all that concerned humanity, themselves, the future of the world, and the Church. Thus it would be interesting and important to stress the great value of seeing to it that, within the structures of our time, which are masculine-orientated for the most part, a bigger place is given to the contribution of women.

#### Contribution of WELG to the document

In the discussion on this point, it was considered whether there already existed something, some articles, which could be completed if desired, that might be offered as a contribution.

The question was posed whether to set up a writing-group to examine what was in hand and what would be lacking. Several members felt that an editorial group would be preferable, which would have the task of gathering appropriate material from different parts of the world, some sharp contributions which could be shaped and organized together and then offered as a contribution to the document.

IT WAS DECIDED that the following members would be asked to send in contributions as soon as possible:

Dr. Marga Bührig  
Mrs. Melano de Couch  
Mrs. Rathie Selvaratnam  
Dr. Margaret Shannon  
Miss Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo.

Dr. Shannon thought she would rather write a memorandum on women in social and political patterns in the future. Miss Goldie opined that the contributions should be on women on points which the members thought should be considered in the future.

IT WAS DECIDED that the papers would be addressed to Miss Brigalia Bam, c/o WCC, in Geneva, who would submit them to the two chairmen, and then Mrs. Strong would be asked to edit them. The result would then be sent to all the group and to Mr. Lange. The deadline for the receipt of contributions : April 1st, 1970.

It was thought that it could be separate, signed contributions, sent in by the WELG, who could add comments if it wished. It would be very good to have contributions from Asia and Africa, if possible.

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#### VIII. PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE WORK OF THE GROUP

(Presentation of proposals)

- Group I :
  - 1) Case-studies of ecumenical experience around the world.
  - 2) An annexe to Lange's paper on "Conscientious Living"
  - 3) Woman and Mass Media
- Group II :
  - 1) Transmission of the Christian message
  - 2) A study on Development
  - 3) The Man-Woman Relation
- Group III :
  - 1) Study on the Place of Women in the Renewal of the Church
  - 2) The place of Women in the different Churches (Information)
  - 3) Study on Strategy to advance the place of Women in the Church.

#### DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS TAKEN

##### Proposals of GROUP I:

##### 1. Case-studies of ecumenical experience around the world.

Dr. Shannon felt that there must be precision as to what "case-studies" was. It was also necessary to say what one aimed to accomplish by it, because many projects were being developed by various people, but the point really was that one just could not take up the whole lot. Did the group want it to be something that women could do themselves, or have done? To which Dr. Bührig replied that they wanted facts described, which would help others to see what they could do in their turn, things for very ordinary people, and which would inspire them to action too.

Mrs. Strong suggested that someone be appointed to receive the case-studies from as many people as possible, and then that person would coordinate these into a document which would be supplemented by questions and issues. One could make a document which would summarize the resulting impression of all the studies. Miss Meersman thought that certain precise points should be defined beforehand, e.g. referring to the aim to be accomplished, etc. And Miss Bam felt it was very important to see who would screen the case-studies

IT WAS DECIDED to set up a Sub-Committee responsible for this project and to invite Miss Maria Meersman and Mrs. Kitty Strong to be its members. In accepting Mrs. Strong suggested that the members of WELG be asked to send in such case-studies as they might come across, and Miss Meersman and she would see what they would get in this way, and then what could be done with the material to serve as a stimulus.

##### 2. Annexe to the paper on "Conscientious Living": cf. page 19 of Minutes.

##### 3. Woman and Mass Media (entailing women watching radio and TV to gather the necessary material)

Dr. Barot stated it seemed to her a very interesting subject, which could

interest many groups, e.g. quite a number of groups in Europe. But it would only interest if the WELG indicated very clearly a second aspect, namely a kind of Christian answer. She did not mean, necessarily, a criticism of the image given by the mass media, but the Christian image which Christian women would like to have projected. Another question, too, was that of the method of influencing the mass media.

Miss Vendrik thought this was a very interesting proposal, which might be tried in different parts of the world, in different regions, as the image of woman might vary from one to the other. If these studies could be realised, and comparisons made afterwards, it might prove very valuable. She suggested to let the members of one or the other continent start, and one could then see if the others might take it up also. It was evident that there was an ongoing influence of mass media today on what woman should be. Mrs. Strong thought that behind the proposal was the desire to awaken Christian women to their responsibility to combat this image created in public opinion by the mass media.

Miss Bam suggested that, before setting up groups in Asia, Africa, etc, a small study group be set up in Europe and be asked to deal with the study, methodology, etc. It should not be spread out too far.

Dr. Shannon expressed the opinion that the first thing to have was people who knew the profession, it could not be the church people. It was necessary to have the monitoring people and to have pertinent questions - all of which took time.

Mrs. de Couch felt it would be necessary to have the help of a sociologist, who would formulate the kind of questions needed and indicate the kind of things to look out for. For Latin America, she knew all the people who could help for such a study.

Mrs. Strong indicated that the YWCA was holding a meeting in the U.K. in January 1970 on Radio, TV and Press Communication. A request could be presented to that consultation to see if they could do some specific work on such a study.

Miss Bellosillo was of the opinion that this would be a good study to take up in Europe. It was an opportune and pertinent question, which would raise much interest among women.

Miss Meersman wondered whether one could ask a region to undertake the whole study, find the experts, etc. If so, she thought that the members of the WELG might then give the regional group any useful information they might have, but the WELG did not have the time to undertake such studies on its own.

Miss Vendrik wondered what region to choose, and would it be advisable to organise a regional ecumenical consultation which would present this as a subject?

Mrs. Strong suggested that the YWCA consultation mentioned above be asked to advise them as to what kind of standards they ought to follow in making this kind of survey.

Dr. Bührig agreed and thought the idea of asking a region to take the responsibility was a good one; it need not be a European one. It was necessary, however, to be clear as to who was going to take the initiative for this study to be done. Miss Vendrik thought, in Europe for example, that one might say, in principle, the European members of the WELG who were present, but not necessarily only those.

IT WAS DECIDED to appoint a Sub-Committee responsible for this project and to invite Miss Pilar Bellosillo, Dr. Marga Bührig, Dr. Madeleine Barot and Miss Maria Meersman to be the 4 members of it.

#### Proposals of GROUP II:

##### 1. Transmission of the Christian message in today's world

The purpose envisaged is to stimulate local dialogue between Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox women on the general question of "How do we communicate the faith?", and questions such as: "What is the essential message of Christian faith?", "How do we communicate in meaningful terms?", "Whom are we addressing? - Family? Colleagues?", "What are the obstacles?", etc.

This was suggested in light of the fact that most cooperation seemed to be around social issues, and the query was raised as to the possibility of another level of communication.

IT WAS PROPOSED: That this be channelled to the World Day of Prayer Committee in connection with the 1971 theme and the findings be compiled by the regions. It is possible that the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations channels also could be used.

## 2. A Study of Development

Reference was made to women's contribution to development on the level of SODEPAX - although this was not yet extensive. While it was suggested this should be more a project of information about what women are doing in this field, a plea was made for part of the scheme to be action and help to women in the poorer economic areas (e.g. Caribbean, or Negro women over 40 in USA). It was also urged that help be given to inform women about development and what it signifies. It was noted there was a real need for a "strategy" to be evolved with a view to helping women's projects to be taken up and supported financially, and the suggestion made that a strong recommendation on this point be presented to the next SODEPAX conference, Dr. Barot formulating the recommendation.

Several questions were raised as to other concrete means of bringing about this involvement of women in Development. Mrs. Selvaratnam was asked about the possibilities of informing Asian women regarding SODEPAX, and what women were already, or could be involved. The same question was put to Miss Bam for Africa, and to Mrs. Melano de Couch regarding Latin America. Miss Vendrik stressed the need for some efficiency in handling these assignments in order to obtain results, and asked for a formulation of ways and means and personal commitment.

From her experience of international work, Miss Bellosillo advised that a definite strategy be evolved, and warned that this was difficult because too much flexibility brought in poor results. One had to stimulate the national level in a concrete way.

Dr. Barot was asked whether she could give those concerned some information about women already known in these areas, and it was proposed that members of the group send in to her any details they could give and names of women they could recommend. Other information needed was: what were the power structures that determined what was being done, and how to stimulate women to get their needs properly considered.

The Chairman (Dr. Bührig) then drew the following conclusions:

- (i) It was decided to work out some recommendation to go to the SODEPAX conference concerning smaller women's projects;
- (ii) There was a strategy to be worked out, to be studied (cf.
- (iii) A concrete proposal was made to Dr. Barot: if she would take care of getting information;
- (iv) It was agreed that this question of Development was a very important one, but the group had not yet reached any common mind on how to handle it.

## 3. The Man-Woman Relation

For the time being, will be limited to gathering of information (cf. page 23, Group III, Items 2 and 3).



## Proposals of Group III

### 1. Study on the Place of Women in the Renewal of the Church

It was proposed to continue the studies already done or requested concerning this question. In speaking of the renewal of the Church, one spoke of ecumenism (always linked with renewal) and the reaction between the Church and the world. One insisted on the contribution that women could bring to this new life of ecumenicity, to this renewal, this new way of conceiving the service of the Church in the world. The group felt that this was a subject that should be taken up in regional conferences, by the regional leaders, and that in this respect one could apply the suggestion of regional correspondents. In Europe, for example, this question could be given over to the four leaders of the Taizé "nucleus group"; for Africa, Miss Bam could find the appropriate leaders; for Asia, Mrs. Selvaratnam; for North America, Dr. Shannon; for Latin America, Mrs. M. de Couch.

In relation with Asia and Africa, one could see the important and interesting question of "Relations with Women of Other Faiths".

Miss Vendrik felt that, in connection with this whole study, there ought to be concrete suggestions, i.e. a meeting or a conference for such and such a year; regional consultations, in order to get ideas regarding the status of women, etc., down to the grass-roots.

Miss Meersman wondered whether another region outside Europe could undertake this pilot project. In Latin America, stated Mrs. de Couch, they had already had three ecumenical meetings, with Roman Catholic and Protestant women coming together.

Miss Vendrik thought that, of course, this kind of study could be done in different ways, e.g. through the YWCA and the WUCWO, but the idea of the group who had made this suggestion was to promote a concrete contribution towards the full integration of women in the Churches and to their renewal. But the subject regarded the place of women in the Churches: had this not more to do with Point 3, which was about Strategy? Up till now the methods used had not been very successful; maybe new ones were required? One could therefore combine the two points. She felt the study should be done by regions, because it would be too wide on the world level.

Miss Meersman was under the impression that the three proposals made by the group now seemed to become one. Would the material gathered under 1 not be useful for projects 2 and 3?

### 2. The Place of Women in the different Churches

The group did not think new studies should be started in this connection or even consultations held, but simply to make sure that one was keeping abreast with developments. There was need to keep an up-to-date information about what was happening in the Churches with regard to the place of women. The requirement was a collecting-point for this information. The members must let all their respective groups around the world know that WELG was interested in this. It was asked whether Miss Rosemary Goldie would accept to be the collecting-point for this information.

IT WAS DECIDED to make this proposal to Miss Goldie, who accepted the assignment.

### 3. Study on Strategy to advance the Place of Women in the Church

The group thought that someone should be appointed to gather information about observations and experiences already made, as well as new tendencies and new forms of women's emancipation movements, and after a time present a paper for the study of these new strategies. They believed that Dr. Margaret Shannon should be asked

to prepare such a paper, although she should not collect the information alone, but she could be in touch with the other members of WELG who would send her all the information they might have on the subject.

Dr. Bührig enquired whether they were thinking only of the place of women in the Church, or of attempts made to advance the status of women in society, while posing the question: what can be done in the Church? The answer was that they were thinking of examples of strategy in society which might be applicable to the Church.

Dr. Shannon thought that the question of strategy should be very carefully considered in regard to goals within the different Churches, and this could not be done by continent without knowing the specific goal. In every Church there were particular dynamics to apply (e.g. power structures to consider, etc.). On Dr. Bührig's suggestion that a "model strategy" might be evolved which could be useful for consideration, Dr. Shannon felt that it would be better to wait until next year to launch such a study. Miss Goldie agreed it would be better to wait until next year for the question of Renewal and the Role of Women in the Churches, as it would be better to have information first. Strategy was very much linked with the question of study, but the word "strategy" suggested that it was action only from the outside, and not also the responsibility of the women inside. She thought it would be best just to begin by gathering information.

Miss Bellosillo said the group had started by thinking that study was needed. But it then appeared to them that, on the Protestant side, there existed some useful material already. From what they had heard from Dr. Shannon, there was now a new movement in the USA which was bringing in a new kind of strategy. Perhaps it would be better to study that first, and then initiate a study with a more precise aim in view. A number of studies had already been made, but had not brought about many concrete results. She thought it would be good to find somebody who would follow the new tendencies and experiments rather closely.

Dr. Barot, after hearing the discussion, felt that the proposal should be simplified and that, for 1970, one should stick only to the project of gathering information and material, which would be sent to Miss Goldie.

Miss Goldie then asked everybody to send in to her anything of interest on the subject of "Women's Place in the Church", and this included the question of Ordination.

#### Additional Items

Bibliography: Mis Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo was handling this, and copies would be sent to all the members when it became available.

Communication to Church authorities: The need for studying strategy of communication to the Church authorities was expressed. A collection of case-studies would be needed as a basis of evaluation as to whether suggestions could be made out of context of a specific event. Such examples might be sent to the Secretary.

Women and Development: (cf. page 22 of Minutes) Dr. Barot enquired to whom she should send the list of names of women involved in different committees or meetings on Development, and it was suggested she send the list to all the members, who would add proposals. Dr. Barot then went on to point out that she could present a statement to the next SODEPAX meeting and read her proposed statement. But she felt it would perhaps be more useful if a careful examination was made of the handling of the DICAQRS Projects List with a view to helping women in the different countries to obtain official support for their particular projects from their own churches, because that was where such projects often got blocked. Dr. Barot thought that WELG could best help by encouraging and supporting the church-women's groups, just as the World YWCA did for theirs. Pointing out that most of the

church-women's groups did not have the experience or competence and technique for presenting their projects, Miss Bam thought that the WELG might assist women to plan joint RC/WCC projects. Thereupon, Dr. Bührig suggest that Dr. Barot and Miss Bam, together with the corresponding RC members, be asked to look into the matter and make concrete proposals for the next official meeting of the WELG. She felt sure that everybody present would be happy to know of such projects.

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## IX. ADMINISTRATION

### 1. Finance

On the WCC side, Miss Bam stated, they were operating on a very delicate basis, as they depended on the mercies and kindness of the members of the Group. It meant that if somebody else were invited to join the Group, there would be a problem about their travel. Dr. Barot and she used their own budgets for their expenses in this connection. As for the two people co-opted on the WCC side for this meeting, outside funds had been obtained specially for them. So far there was no budget provided on WCC side for this Group, and they were trying to obtain it from the budget for next year. There was no precise system that had been set up in this connection.

On the RCC side, Miss Goldie stated that they were not in a much happier position, for various administrative reasons, and expenses so far had been covered by a special budget at the disposal of the Laity Council. She hoped eventually to get it put on an official basis.

Dr. Barot felt that a budget should be drawn up until 1972 and she thought this should apply to the budget of the Joint Working Group. She RECOMMENDED that for the WCC side a request be presented for an amount of \$5,000 per annum to cover:

- a) Travel expenses of members
- b) Hospitality and programme of meetings
- c) Secretarial assistance for papers, mailings, etc.  
as required, and for the compilation of reports
- d) Experimental projects on this area of work

Mrs. Selvaratnam indicated that the Fellowship of the Least Coin would be prepared to give some funds for projects of the WELG, though not for general expenses.

### 2. Secretariat

IT WAS DECIDED that there should be a Continuing Committee, composed of two Chairmen and two Staff members, to handle the necessary work and maintain the contacts in between official meetings of the Group. Dr. Marga Bührig and Miss Maria Vendrik were invited to be the Co-Chairmen until 1972, and Miss Rosemary Goldie and Miss Brigalia Bam the Staff members, the secretariat being the responsibility of Miss Bam throughout 1970. She would keep Miss Goldie fully informed of what was going on. The official address of the secretariat would be: c/o World Council of Churches, 150 Route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

The Continuing Committee was asked to keep the members of the WELG informed of all important matters, and to ensure the proper liaison and accomplishment of the programme decided on, as well as make preparations for the next official meeting. It was also asked to make suggestions or proposals whenever necessary.

All the members of the WELG would be consulted and reported to; they should also be warned in good time, to allow them to send in ideas and suggestions if they wished. It was hoped that the Continuing Committee (i.e. both Chairmen and Staff members) would meet once between the official meetings of the WELG, in order to draw up the docket, clear the programme and agree upon necessary people to co-opt for that meeting. It was also requested that all the members be notified ahead of the meeting of the Chairmen and Staff members, so that any suggestions members might have for these matters could be in their hands in good time for the meeting. Immediately following this, one or the other Staff member would send to all members of WELG the agreements reached at that meeting.

### 3. Future meetings of the Group

It was suggested that the group have not more than one meeting a year, with the possibility of a wider meeting (including several representatives from the other continents) in 1972.

Dr. Shannon then proposed the following MOTION:

That the WELG set 1972 as the termination of this present Group and request a meeting with the Joint Working Group, to evaluate with them the WELG findings during the period elapsed, determining at that time whether such concerns would require a similar liaison group of women to carry on, and in that case how it should be composed and financed.

The members felt this was a good idea, because the limit of 1972 would reassure the Joint Working Group, also it would help the WELG to plan something concretely and to be definite within that time.

Miss Bellosillo hoped, nonetheless, that the WELG would have something to say about whether it would continue or not, to which Dr. Bührig replied that the decision would be taken by the respective authorities, on the joint recommendation of the Joint Working Group and the Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group.

Dr. Barot thought that the integration of a few women into the Joint Working Group implied in the minds of its members that the WELG might disappear. However, she felt that the projects the WELG had in mind were quite different from the concerns of the Joint Working Group. To maintain the exploratory nature of the WELG was a good idea and would help it to do precise work which, if it proved interesting, might induce the Joint Working Group to take up some joint projects - or perhaps the WELG would have to continue on their own.

Miss Meersman expressed the hope that the WELG would meet 3 times before the proposed final common meeting with the Joint Working Group.

IT WAS DECIDED to adopt Dr. Shannon's motion stated above.

After some deliberation,

IT WAS ALSO DECIDED that the next official meeting of the WELG would be held in Rome from October 26 - 30, 1970, members arriving there in the afternoon of Sunday October 25, so that work could start early on the Monday. Miss Goldie accepted to assume the responsibility of arrangements for this meeting.

### 4. Authorities

To the question: to whom is the WELG answerable, and to whom does it give information about its work? the answers given were as follows:

- for the WCC members, the WCC Executive Committee appointed them to the WELG and therefore it is to that committee they are answerable; in addition, it

had indicated that the administrative responsibility should be that of the Department on Cooperation of Men and Women and its executive work be carried by Miss Brigalia Bam;

- for the RCC members, they were responsible to the Secretariat for Christian Unity and the Laity Council.

The right channels for official reports to the authorities were, respectively, the Division of Ecumenical Action for the WCC, and the Laity Council for the RCC.

With regard to reporting on the work of the WELG as a whole, this would be done to the Joint Working Group, and it appeared that Dr. Vischer had asked for as clear recommendations as possible to be presented to that committee, but this was of course different to making a report. Dr. Barot was under the impression that it would be sufficient for the WELG to inform them about what it was doing and to await any comments or suggestions from them. Miss Bellosillo confirmed that it was Frau Nold and herself who should report to the Joint Working Group, but as far as concrete recommendations were concerned, she thought there was nothing for the present. Perhaps later on the WELG might have some precise requests or proposals to present. It was also confirmed, that information was applied by the Joint Working Group to the WELG as well as vice versa.

#### 5. Enlargement of the Group and Co-option

It was felt that the enlargement of the Group was of interest, and the question was raised how this could be done. Would the group have more closely-linked correspondents in the different regions, or would it be better to have 'co-opted' members at each meeting? One suggestion made was that, insofar as possible, when one side knew there would be absentees at a meeting, one might co-opt replacements; also that it would be good to have the privilege of co-opting representatives from the Third World as well.

Finally, as it was recognized that emergency or substitute suggestions might need to be made in line with current plans,

IT WAS DECIDED that the matter should be left in the hands of the Continuing Committee, who would propose suitable names (in the case of resignation of any member, each side - RCC or WCC - would send in the new name they proposed), and in the case of co-opted or invited observers, it would be decided on each side according to budget possibilities.

The term "invited" was preferred to "co-opted" by some of the members, and it was stressed that, at any rate, they should be participating observers. It was also suggested that variety in geographical locations and general age brackets be considered in the case of replacements.

#### 6. Other Items

Mutual exchange of Calendars : Miss Bam asked to be informed if possible beforehand of important meetings where there might be invitations from the other side, and stressed the need for notification well in advance.

Special Motion on Peace-Building : Dr. Shannon moved that the WELG signify its approval to the next meeting of SODEPAX on Peace next April of a suggestion that would be submitted to that meeting of a group of specially chosen women specialists to explore what particular areas would need special attention in order that the community of nations might in the future live together in peace, and that

an international consultation be set up by SODEPAX to receive and study their findings.

After some discussion,

IT WAS DECIDED to support this motion and explore with SODEPAX the feasibility of calling such a consultation. (Dr. Margaret Shannon undertook to ask U.S. representatives coming to the April SODEPAX conference to define the purposes and plan for such a conference).

It was noted that, in future, any special motions of this kind should be submitted to the members of the WELG well in advance, so that they might have sufficient time for proper reflection and discussion.

Press release for E.P.S. : Mrs. Strong accepted to draft an appropriate press release on the meeting to be sent to the Ecumenical Press Service (cf. attached appendix).

For reference: The final list of Programme Items decided on was the following:

- I. CASE-STUDIES - Sub-committee appointed (Miss M. Meersman/Mrs. R. Strong)
- II. Study on "THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN MASS MEDIA - Our Christian Responsibility" Sub-committee appointed (old "nucleus" group of 4, composed of Miss Bellosillo, Dr. Barot, Dr. Bührig, Miss Meersman)
- III. Documentation on "THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH - RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH" (including ecumenical experience, etc.)  
All members of the Group to send in material to Miss R. Goldie, Rome.
- IV. Questions of "STRATEGY" - Some facts from different parts of the world, to be evaluated at the next official meeting.
- V. Annex to the paper on "CONSCIENTIOUS LIVING" by Ernst Lange -  
Contributions from: Dr. Bührig, Mrs. Melano de Couch, Miss de Lourdes Pintasilgo and Dr. Shannon, to be sent in to Miss Brigalia Bam, who would then forward them in toto to Mrs. K. Strong. After editing them, Mrs. Strong would circulate them to the members of the whole Group.

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After thanks being expressed to some persons for their services and to all members of the Group for their particular contributions, the Chairman called the meeting to a close.

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Press Release in "ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE"

No. 44/36th Year - 18th December, 1969

WCC/ROMAN CATHOLIC WOMEN'S  
GROUP MEETS IN GENEVA

Geneva, (EPS) -- The Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group held its second meeting at Cargigny near here December 8-12.

This group, which was appointed jointly in October 1968 by the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church in consultation with the Laity Council, consists of 10 members plus four ex-officio members. Present as observers were: Mrs. Beatriz Melano de Couch of Union Theological Seminary, Buenos Aires, and Mrs. Rathie Selvaratnam of Colombo, Ceylon, chairman of Asian Church Women's Conference.

As a background for its discussion on woman's role in the Church and the world, the group heard World Council staff members speak on various aspects of the ecumenical movement. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, general secretary, was among the special guests.

The group discussed at length priorities in the area of women's special contributions to the churches and society. Specific projects chosen for study and exploration were:

- case studies of experiences of ecumenical encounter, gathered from various areas of the world, accompanied by questions for discussion;
- a survey to determine the effect of mass media on the image of women;
- the building up of documentation and bibliography on women's role in church renewal;
- contributions from various people relevant to Christian thinking on relations between men and women - within the overall WCC study on "Conscientious Living in a World of Change";
- ecumenical experiences in transmission of the Christian message in a secular age;
- promotion of responsible participation of Christian women in development, both in the developed and developing countries.

Next meeting of the Women's Ecumenical Liaison Group will be held October 25-29, 1970.

EPS