



42nd International Ecumenical Seminar

Institute for Ecumenical Research

Strasbourg, France

July 2 -9, 2008

“Spiritual Ecumenism – Ecumenical Spirituality”

At some levels at least, the ecumenical movement seems to have come to stagnation. There are reasons to speak of a crisis in the ecumenical movement, even if in fact such crises are as old as the movement itself. Many take this current stagnation as an occasion to speak of a spiritual ecumenism. This may give the impression that one is attempting to avoid the demanding task of searching for the visible unity of the Church. The following statement of the Second Vatican Council, however, remains significant: The “change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name ‘spiritual ecumenism’” Still, spiritual ecumenism will today be different from that of the time of the Council – also in view of the extremely diverse and sometimes even dubious interest in spirituality and spiritual experience today. In the course of the last few decades, many Christians and Christian communities have incorporated numerous elements of spirituality that are traditionally associated with different Christian Churches. Thus different kinds of ecumenical spirituality have developed and have shaped what today is understood as spiritual ecumenism.

The Seminar will be divided into two parts. Problems associated with spiritual ecumenism will be addressed by lecturers from different Christian traditions (“What is Spirituality?”, “Spirituality and Experience”, “Orthodox Spirituality and Ecumenism”, “Theological Criticism of Spirituality”, “Spiritual Ecumenism and the Search of the Visible Unity of the Church”). Additionally, we will invite Christian communities who practice ecumenical spirituality to report about how they learn from other Christian traditions and how they bind these traditions together. It is remarkable that over 200 varying spiritual communities belonging to different churches in Europe have already met twice in Stuttgart (meetings called “Miteinander für Europa” – “Together for Europe”). This new and promising form of spiritual ecumenism shall also be presented at our Seminar.

Our seminars are not only about formal theology and scholarship. They are also a chance for personal exchange, for participants to get to know each other and each other’s different backgrounds. The fact that our participants come from such a variety of countries and churches makes these opportunities that much more fascinating. The seminar affords ample space, both in the plenum and in the workshops, for such exchange. Not planned, but all the more important, are the many spontaneous conversations at exquisite French dinners, in the cafeteria or over wine in one of the many restaurants in medieval Strasbourg.

Centre d’Etudes Ocuméniques · Institute for Ecumenical Research · Institut für Ökumenische Forschung

8, rue Gustave Klotz F – 67000 Strasbourg FRANCE

Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 15 25 75 Fax +33 (0)3 88 15 25 70

Email: StrasEcum@ecumenical-institute.org www.ecumenical-institute.org

Languages: English and German are the main languages of the Seminar. Lectures and discussion will be simultaneously translated into and out of these languages. Participants may also express themselves in French in the plenary discussions. A French language discussion group will be set up if there is a sufficient number of French-speaking participants.

Costs: The charge for the seminar, including full pension (i.e., room and meals) in a seminary dormitory (single rooms), is €680. Financial support is often provided by churches of other institutions, so participants are encouraged to apply to their appropriate church offices.

As last year, a smaller part of this amount will be used to assist some participants from Eastern Europe, the South and from Latin America, persons who likely would not be able to participate without our help.

Dates: 2 July (arrival and evening reception) to 9 July (departures after breakfast), 2008 in Strasbourg, France.

Information: Inquiries by email should be directed either to

Theodor Dieter: Theodor.Dieter@yahoo.de
or Elke Leypold: StrasEcum@ecumenical-institute.org

Mailing Address:
Institute for Ecumenical Research
8 rue Gustave Klotz
67000 Strasbourg
FRANCE

Strasbourg, Januar 08