



EVANGELISCHE  
KIRCHE  
IM RHEINLAND

## **„Economy in the Service of Life“**

Memorandum on  
Economic Globalisation and its  
Challenges to the Churches



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## Foreword

The Conciliar Process for Justice Peace and the Integrity of Creation which our Church has committed itself to in its constitution, continues to be highly relevant. Within this framework the challenges of globalisation are taken up and discussed. I am grateful that many congregations, and church districts, offices, departments and institutions are very committed to this and are bringing all their insights and demands into the General Church Process.

The resolution of the General Synod 2008 on Globalisation presented here has the title "Economy in the Service of Life". It makes clear to us that we are facing complex challenges, which go way beyond the fields of ethical questions of opinion or scope. We are talking about central questions of the church and about the persuasive power of our witness.

The Synod has agreed to a multi-dimensional process, which does not allow us to forget the challenge to ourselves, to be ready to change ways and to renew the church. The Synod has given the partner churches a binding commitment that we are a community on the way together, a pilgrim community – in spite of and in our very different situations.

At the Synod, Professor Mark Burrows, representative of the United Church of Christ, USA, preached the biblical message that reached our hearts: the table set in God's kingdom is large enough for everyone. Christ himself invites us in – now. "The urgent question is, whether we really believe that this word is in the making. Whether we are concerned that the truth is not only recognised in Word and Sacrament within our churches, but also in public life. Not only as an old and beautiful memorial in the Bible, but rather as a signpost for us, and for others who are journeying with us towards the kingdom of God." We are, therefore, called to be not observers, but witnesses to the prophetic mercy of Jesus.

Here we present the important documents of the synod process. I hope that the congregations of our church will work with them and in them and so fulfil their responsibility as the church of Jesus Christ.

*Nikolaus Schneider*

Präses Nikolaus Schneider

Excerpt  
from the minutes of the General Synod  
of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland  
from January 11th 2008

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**Economy in the Service of Life**  
**- Memorandum on Economic Globalisation**  
**and its Challenges to the Churches**  
and  
**motions of the Distric Synods**  
**Altenkirchen, Koblenz, Köln-Rechtsrheinisch, Lennep, Oberhausen,**  
**Saarbrücken and Solingen with reference to Globalisation**  
and  
**motions of the District Synods Jülich and Kleve**  
**with reference to an ethics filter for church investment policies**  
and  
**motions of the District Synods Moers and Oberhausen**  
**with reference to social and ecologically responsible public procurement**  
and  
**the motion of the District Synod Wetzlar**  
**with reference to joining the Climate Alliance**

**Resolution 68:**

- 1. The General Synod gives priority to the debate on globalisation and its consequences within the work of the church.*
- 2. The General Synod adopts the Memorandum on Economic Globalisation and its Challenges for the Churches, "Economy in the Service of Life".*
- 3. The General Synod requests the Church Council to distribute the Memorandum in an appropriate way to the congregations, church districts, offices, departments and institutions of the church, together with the overview "Practical Examples from all Church Districts of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland," and recommends the documents as the basis for their own theological and practical work.*

4. *The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland participates in the AGAPE-Process of the World Council of Churches and accepts its challenges.*

*(1) It promotes political, economic and social analysis.*

*(2) The question about the “confession status” of ethical positions on economy in the current debate on economic globalisation will be discussed further with the partner churches of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland.*

5. *The subjects named in the Memorandum*

- labour*
- ethical investment*
- peace, development and security*
- agriculture*
- climate change*
- consumer behaviour*
- migration*
- education*
- health*

*will be worked on further by the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland in a binding way, with the set target of an “Economy in the Service of Life”.*

6. *The General Synod welcomes the extensive work of the Church Districts on the questions and subjects of globalisation (Printed Matter 12.1).*

*The motions brought to the General Synod in 2008 by the District Synods Altenkirchen, Koblenz, Köln-Rechtsrheinisch, Lennep, Oberhausen, Saarbrücken and Solingen with reference to globalisation; Jülich and Kleve with reference to the ethics filter for church investment policies; Moers and Oberhausen with reference to social and ecologically responsible public procurement; and Wetzlar with reference to joining the “Climate Alliance” take up central concerns of this resolution and extend them. These Church District Motions, together with the resolutions Nos. 4.9, 4.13, 4.14, 4.26, and 4.33 from the General Synod in 2007, will be worked on in connection with the subjects named under Number 5.*

7. *A project group “Globalisation” will be set up in the Head Office, whose task is to design the project “Globalisation” of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland in substance and organization all.*

*Its members will be the Chairperson of the Committee for Public Responsibility, the Desk for “Globalisation”, the Department for the field of social ethics, the Director of Studies from the Evangelical Academy in the Rhine-*

*land in charge of the field "Globalisation" and an academic staff member in the Head Office. Further members can be called by the Church Council. The Desk for "Globalisation" will be in charge of administration. The staff positions shall be funded from the existing resources, on the basis of a clear list of priorities of the church's areas of work.*

- 8. The project group shall report to the Church Council in September 2008 and present the General Synod in 2009 an account in connection with resolution motions.*
- 9. The motions of the Church District of Jülich with reference to a resolution on the subject of globalisation and Oberhausen with reference to globalisation submitted to the General Synod in 2006 are herewith settled.*

# Economy in the Service of Life

## Introduction

The General Synod in 2005 resolved to prepare the subject of economic globalisation and its challenges for the churches as the main subject for a General Synod.

A working group was set up consisting of members of the Permanent Committee for Public Responsibility, the Permanent Theological Committee, the Permanent Finance Committee, the Committee for Non-European Ecumenism and Mission and the Committee for Social Ethics. They initiated a working process with many different aspects at different levels.

- Their most important task was the preparation of a draft for the Permanent Committee for Public Responsibility to be presented to the Church Council.
- This process was flanked by three public conferences of the Evangelical Academy, which were documented, and a series of special conferences carried out by the Head Office of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland.
- The resolutions on the subject of globalisation to the General Synod in 2005, 2006 and 2007 enriched the work. A list of examples shows how church districts, congregations and other church groups reacted practically, creatively and alternatively to the phenomenon of globalisation.
- The working group put forward a suggestion how to deal with the main subject at the General Synod in 2008.
- The working group prepared a large packet of preparation material for congregations, church districts, offices, departments and institutions. Because of the material packet it was made available electronically <[www.ekir.de/globalisation](http://www.ekir.de/globalisation)>, and it has been regularly brought up to date.

The complexity and the many facets of the subject just do not allow for simple answers. The challenges of economic globalisation that have been recognized and worked on at all levels of our church, demand a theological and ethical positioning, a clear plan of action and a binding commitment to work with them. Working towards a form of economy in the service of life is one of the basic tasks of our church, which confesses allegiance to the God of life and has committed itself in its church constitution to the Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

After a two year synodal work-process, now a statement is presented that is

directly addressed to the members of the General Synod in 2008. The representation of the ecumenical debate on globalisation and the explanation of two different theological positions are intended to contribute to a clearer theological profile, so as to define possible options for action by the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland in a next step. This concern corresponds to the many activities that are already going on as a result of all the discussions about globalisation or as an alternative reaction to it. Practical examples from the work of every church district prove the productive diversity at all levels of church life.<sup>1</sup>

In this statement there have been additionally defined goals and open questions of our church in seven specific fields of work which suggest an ethical framework and also concrete measures for action to be taken by church leaders in each area.<sup>2</sup> More detailed suggestions for solutions of individual questions can develop out of the work as it continues.

The statement limits the complex subject of globalisation quite consciously. It focuses on theological ethical questions and the options for concrete action by the church.

The statement does not draw a line under the theoretical debate on globalisation, but rather wishes to strengthen a compulsory and systematic work process for our church.

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1 Practical examples from all church districts of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (Appendix 6).

2 Cf. III.4

## I. The challenge of globalisation

### 1. Perceptions and Interpretations

**Globalisation** stands for the dynamics of worldwide markets trading with capital, goods, services and jobs in connection with a dramatic growth of international finance flows and the dissemination of information and communication technologies with real-time effect. It is based on a conception of economy that - beginning with the orientation to the market - takes care both of the privatisation of public goods and services and also a deregulation of the markets, while at the same time creating an international interdependency of economic relations. The activities connected to this distance themselves much more than in former times from state influence and democratic control; national and regional interests often lead to severance from undesired competition.

Some people see globalisation as a chance to increase prosperity for everyone, as an improvement in the standard of living and the quality of life and as the only possibility to solve the global ecological problems efficiently.

For others the results of globalisation have become the nightmare of a neoliberal economy that neither recognises social nor ecological values, that makes the living situation of the people in the poor countries worse, accelerates the destruction of the basic conditions for natural life and whose sole aim is the isolated creation of market values (profit and shareholder value).

The term „**neoliberalism**“ is disputed, both among those who support the neoliberal economy and those who criticise it. The criticism of neoliberalism today uses the term mainly in the sense of de-regulation and liberalisation of the markets (world trade), retreat of the state and handing over of responsibility for the interests of society to the forces of the market.

The transition from Rhenish capitalism to a globalised radical market economy has also become a challenge in Germany.

Even if the term neoliberalism is not exact<sup>3</sup> to characterise the radical market globalisation processes from a historical academic point of view, its usage has become internationally generally accepted.

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3 Criticism is expressed especially in Germany. There the term "neoliberalism" is based on a different understanding on account of its historical development. In a conscious distancing from classic laissez-faire liberalism it was used to describe a continuation and correction of the liberal model of order. This neoliberalism (Freiburg School) became the conceptual basis for the social market economy after the Second World War. The use of the term "neoliberal" to characterize radical market globalisation is then factually incorrect.

**Ulrich Beck** defines globalisation as those processes, „as a consequence of which the national states and their sovereignty have been undermined and interconnected by trans-national protagonists, their grab for power, identity and networks.” The perception behind this he calls globalism: as replacing political action by the world market, as the ideology of the rule of the world market or rather of neoliberalism as "imperialism of economics". This globalism is based on globality, on a world society that has been in existence for some time now, that no longer knows closed rooms any more, but difference and multiplicity even to the collision of different economic, cultural and political forms; Ulrich Beck together with M. Albrow call it a "multiplicity without unity."<sup>4</sup>

**Joseph Stiglitz**, the former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Nobel Prize Winner for Economic Science in 2001, comes to the conclusion:

„Globalisation in its present form is not a success story. It has not improved the fate of most of the poor people in the world. It is ecologically questionable. It has not stabilized the world economy (...) It is not globalisation that is the problem, but rather the manner in which it has been put into practice”<sup>5</sup>.

Weighing up between its advantages - East Asian economic growth as a result of the reduction in trade barriers and better access to markets and technology, improved health care throughout the world, and an active global civil society fighting for more democracy and greater social justice and its disadvantages, Stiglitz demands the reform of the international finance and economic institutions that have all too often served the particular interests of the industrial nations, and an extension of the international debt remission programme. Stiglitz is of the opinion that globalisation can be reformed in the sense of liberating its positive potential.

Quite differently, **Antonio Andreoli**, the Brazilian Social Scientist: „What is happening today does not deserve to be called globalisation. We really do not have what we wish for throughout the world, a globalisation of human rights, a globalisation of environmental protection, a scientific and cultural exchange, but rather we have an extension of world trade, free trade. It is called the solution to the problem, while it is really the problem.”<sup>6</sup>

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4 Ulrich Beck, Was ist Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globalismus - Antworten auf Globalisierung, (1997) 24 ff.

5 Joseph Stiglitz, Die Schatten der Globalisierung, (2004)280 f.; also, Chancen der Globalisierung, (2006)

6 German Evangelical Kirchentag. What can we believe? How do we want to live? How do we want to act? (2005)

## 2. Perspectives for those affected, for example women

The changed economic conditions under globalisation affect the various groups in society in different ways: men differently from women, indigenous or local people differently from migrants, and the population living in cities differently from the population in rural areas.

Thanks to globalisation millions of new jobs indeed have been created in the developing countries. However, they are as a rule badly paid jobs without social security, that produce for export (so-called „offshore-companies“ in special economic zones, where the collective bargaining and labour law regulations are by and large out of force). In these companies more women are employed than on average.

However, the economic effects of globalisation on women have so far not been systematically evaluated. The consequences of globalisation for women in the economy must be differentiated, for it makes a great difference whether one looks at women who have regular employment in the formal sector, pay social security contributions and taxes and experience the incompatibility of professional work and family duties as a special challenge, or one looks at the situation of women who in a subsistence economy secure the reproduction of their family through their work outside the formal sector.<sup>7</sup> On the one hand more and more women find paid work; however their working conditions are frequently worse than those of the men. On the other hand women are still to a large extent self-sufficient in agriculture in rural areas and often have no form of social security whatsoever. The working conditions for women in rural areas have mainly got worse, financial crises have changed the growth perspectives and caused economic instability that hits women particularly, as they are frequently the first to lose their jobs in times of recession.

In the developing countries the so-called Structural Adjustment Programs of the IMF and the World Bank often lead to schools and medical care being privatised so that they cost money. Women - who are often the sole responsible for the survival of the family, particularly in the countries of the South - must increasingly work more in order to be able to pay for social services that were formerly free of charge, and at the same time must organize for themselves

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7 Cf. on this subject: Christa Randzio-Plath (Hg.) Frauen und Globalisierung. Zur Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in der Dritten Welt; (2004); Christa Randzio-Plath, Sind Frauen Verliererinnen oder Gewinnerinnen der Globalisierung? 10 Thesen; Tagung des Fritz-Erler-Forums und des Landesbüros der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Stuttgart, 25.6.2005; Ruth Klingebiel und Shalini Randiera: Globalisierung aus Frauensicht, (1998)

public services that are no longer provided by the state. In addition girls and women are the first to have to do without medical treatment and education. The withholding of education has especially long-term effects, for in this way women and girls lose the chance of getting work other than in the informal sector. Three fifths of the 115 million children in the world who do not go to school, are girls. And two thirds of the 876 million adults, who can neither read nor write, are women.

Privatization and cuts in social services also first affect women in the industrialised countries, for looking after children, care of the aged and other reproductive work is moved back into the families. Ethnically and sexually strictly divided job markets are coming into being around the globe.

### 3. Structural problems

**Throughout the world** the framework of the present world economy is determined less and less by a socially (and ecologically) regulated market economy. Rather the achievements in this direction are being systematically dismantled - by the International Monetary fund (IMF) and the World Bank under the term Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), and at a European and national level under the terms "convergence criteria", "stability pact" and "reforms". For more than 20 years the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) have been forcing the countries of the South to put neoliberal policies into practice<sup>8</sup>. Commitments to servicing international debts together with the protectionism of Europe and the USA contribute towards a continual redistribution of income which results in an ever increasing divide between rich and poor. According to the report of the World Bank (World Development Report 2007) - more than one billion people have less than one US-Dollar a day; a further 1.5 billion people have less than two US-Dollars a day at their disposal<sup>9</sup>. The poverty gap between developed industrial countries and impoverished countries of the South is increasing visibly.

In **Europe** the contrasts are increasing between those economically and socially on the fringe of society and those who profit from the economic growth and have partly amassed tremendous private wealth.

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8 Joseph Stiglitz, a.a.O., 17 ff.

9 Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen (Hg.), Bericht über die menschliche Entwicklung, (2005) 44 ff.

In Eastern Europe the consequences of neoliberal globalisation are much severer than in other European countries.<sup>10</sup>

In **Germany** the effects of the neoliberal economy are also being felt in that step by step all areas of human life and all natural resources are being considered as goods for market. This progressive economisation is both expression and the driving force of globalisation at the same time. The almost complete abolition of national borders and protection laws for traffic with goods, capital and services has meant that many small and medium-sized companies are now in direct global competition and under pressure to reduce costs – for example by using machines, paying (illegal) workers at a reduced rate or dismissals. International groups of companies shift jobs to countries with a low-wage economy. Cuts in social services and growing poverty are the results - even in the industrial nations. The model of a social market economy is up for grabs.

The German political ‘Agenda 2010’ is part of the project of the European Union to make Europe the most strongly competitive economic region within the framework of globalisation by the year 2010. To it belongs a reduction of unemployment benefit, pressure to take on any kind of work, reduction of social expenditure, reduced protection against unfair dismissal, One-Euro-jobs and mini-jobs for a low-wage sector , while at the same time the top rate of income tax has been reduced. Key concepts such as „private initiative“, „self-reliance“ and “self-provision” give the impression that every member of society is quite able to determine his or her own happiness in life to the same extent and under the same conditions.

**“There is no alternative“** is what the advocates for globalisation claim just like the economic editors of the large popular magazines and professional journals. The critics of globalisation counter this, stating that the economy is made by the economy: with its own laws, its own logic and the consequences of market mechanisms passed off as natural developments. Whoever takes up this line of thinking takes away the future of democracy. In contrast, the annual World Social Forums try to create an alternative power structure by promoting criticism against globalisation under the motto **“Another world is possible.”**

The churches are involved in this concern especially through the **Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation**, and through the pro-

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10 Cf. also 14, 3. Europäische Ökumenische Versammlung, and 18, Perspektive der Partnerkirchen

grams of the World Council of Churches (WCC). As part of a worldwide network, whose international structures make it possible to have a relationship of “reconciled diversity” with each other, the churches have learnt to relate the local and global contexts meaningfully to each other. In this way it is possible for them to act together in a binding way, co-operating with each other in spite of great cultural, social and economic differences and distances.

The provocation of the conciliar process is that it understands socio-political questions and questions of peace ethics and ecology both in an ecclesiological and in a political way, and not only manages to maintain interest in the decisive challenge for social justice but also to promote it qualitatively. It is, therefore, the task of the churches to explain the situation of globalisation losers clearly, to confront those who profit from globalisation with it, to show ways of solving the problem or alternative models and to follow them ourselves. What makes it so difficult is that the churches are also affected by globalisation and caught up in it, too.

#### 4. Ecumenical positions

Partner churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America name the precarious situations in their countries. Their experiences are present in the process in which the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland discusses economic globalisation and its consequences.

Reformed churches in southern Africa, who discussed the poverty on their continent in Kitwe in 1995, identified the unjust world economic order as its cause. Theologically they saw it as a case of „**Status Confessionis**“- the confessional status, which according to the Reformed teachings decides on the membership in the church of Jesus Christ.

Within the **World Alliance of Reformed Churches** the theological debate on the assessment and consequences of neoliberal globalisation has been pushed forward convincingly. In 1997 the **Processus Confessionis** was declared, which understands the confessional question as a dynamic process; in 2003 in a „statement of faith on the global crisis of life“, Reformed churches in the South established a Kairos - that is a point in time or a situation that demands decisive action. In London in 2003 a commitment of faith was formulated against economic injustice, and the statement of faith passed at the General Assembly of the WARC in 2004 (Accra Confession) combines the con-

fession of faith with a commitment to economic and ecological justice. Reformed churches identify neoliberal globalisation as a totalitarian system of belief that claims absolute power even over God's sovereignty and the demands of the Gospel; the international finance markets are at the same time Empire and God. In the tradition of the Barmen Theological Declaration and the Confession of Belhar (which identifies racism as sin) they reject a "concentration of economic, cultural, political and military power under the leadership of mighty nations, who wish to protect and defend their own interests"<sup>11</sup> and confess their belief in a God, who stands on the side of the weak, the poor and the disenfranchised and promises the fullness of life to all people.

The **Lutheran World Federation** carried out a study process on economic globalisation from 2001 onwards, whose results were accepted by the 10th General Assembly in 2003. The theological approach is to be found in the central idea of the **Communio as the communion of the body of Christ**, in which all people should share in adequacy and dignity; however the body of Christ is wounded when people find no admission or are excluded. „As a communion we must engage the false ideology of neoliberal economic globalisation by confronting, converting and changing this reality and its effects."<sup>12</sup> The market, based on private property, unrestrained competition and the centrality of contracts is understood as absolute law - this is idolatry. They call for the development of an economy that serves life, and the development of alternatives with emphatic reference to Martin Luther.

The **World Council of Churches (WCC)** recognised globalisation as an „ecumenism of dominance" in contrast to the Christian vision of ecumenism, the unity of humanity and the whole populated earth, to the ecumenism of belief and solidarity.<sup>13</sup>

In 1998, the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Harare called upon the member churches to understand reflection on economic subjects as a matter of faith.<sup>14</sup> Under its appeal to develop alternatives to the present economic system and to develop corrections of the globalisation process, the General Assembly confirmed the Drop the Debt campaign and demanded the remission

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11 Martina Wasserloos-Strunk, *Wirtschaften für das Leben*. In: Jörgen Klußmann (Hrg.), *Ökonomische Folgen der Globalisierung II*, (2006) 27

12 loc. cit. 22

13 *Resisting power - approving life: the challenges of globalisation*. Background text number 16 and Recommendations of the General Assembly on Globalisation number 1, in: Klaus Wilkens (Ed.), *On the way together*. Official Report of the 8th GA of the WCC Harare 1998, (1999) 352

14 loc.cit. Recommendations on Globalisation, number 6, 354

or cancellation of debts for highly indebted countries within the framework of a global economic reform. In face of the globalisation of economy, culture and the means of communication, the indivisibility of human rights was reaffirmed - civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights.<sup>15</sup>

The WCC undertook to link together the ongoing debates on the phenomenon of globalisation in churches and church alliances and to concentrate them together under the title **AGAPE** (Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and Earth). It quickly became clear how very much the church judgement of globalisation is oriented by its own respective situation of life. The churches in the highly developed industrial nations of the north - here called the "Churches of the North" - tended to vote for a transformation process of globalisation, while the churches in the threshold and developing countries of the south - here called the "Churches of the South" - rejected globalisation far more, on account of its negative and exclusive consequences.

In 2002 within the AGAPE Process **the European Soesterberg Consultation** promoted a European social market economy with the key values of dignity, justice, freedom, peace, sustainability, responsibility, solidarity and subsidiarity. They declared that to organize the global market according to a neoliberal economic doctrine that was not be questioned was equivalent to idolatry as it led to exclusion, violence and death.<sup>16</sup> The participants wrote separate letters to the churches in Western Europe, churches in Asia, in the Pacific and in Argentina, as well as to churches in central and Eastern Europe. The "Letter to the Churches in Western Europe" was distributed by the EKD to its member churches with the intention of collecting the answers together and handing them over to the Conference of European Churches.<sup>17</sup>

The **results of the AGAPE Process** were presented to the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre in 2006 in a background document. It takes up the approach of the Churches of the South in that it establishes the exclusion of large parts of the world population from material acquisitions as a result of the neoliberal economic order and comes to the conclusion that orders that do not serve life for all - because they have long given up the criteria of social responsibility and just participation - undermine God's covenant. The

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15 loc. cit., Declaration of Human Rights, espec. numbers 3.3 to 3.5 and 3.8, 380 to 393

16 Brief an die Kirchen in Westeuropa, 11. Absatz, in: KAIROS EUROPA, Wirtschaft(en) im Dienst des Lebens - Kirchen im Prozess für gerechte Globalisierung, 17 ff.

17 Letter from 27.08.2003; Answer on 13.07.2004 with reference to the Main subject of the General Synod.

General Assembly decided to continue the AGAPE process as a theological reflection process, to carry out solid political, economic and social analyses, with the goal of setting up a permanent dialogue between religious, economic and political protagonists and also as a place where the churches could exchange practical, positive innovations.<sup>18</sup> Thus this concept promotes a process of confession (Processus Confessionis) that on the one hand demands a clear NO to the ruling neoliberal economic order, and on the other hand visions for an alternative life in the solidarity of all people. As a transformation process with the aim of “transforming unjust economic structures”, it is in theory diametrically opposed to an approach that considers an improved form of globalisation to be possible within the ruling neoliberal economic order.

The **Commission Church and Society of the Conference of European Churches** (CEC) attempts to mediate between the diverging positions under the title, „European Churches living their faith in the context of globalisation.”<sup>19</sup> On the one hand the ideology of neoliberalism and the „idolatry of the market” are rejected, on the other hand the social market economy is recommended as an economic system that has proved itself a corrective to the existing economic system. The concept of transformative justice taken from the AGAPE document of the WCC is only referred to in the admission that the European Union is one of the driving forces of global liberalisation.<sup>20</sup>

So far the CEC has failed, in view of the negative experiences with state-directed economies in central and Eastern Europe<sup>21</sup> and the failure of the social market economy on account of structural unemployment, cutbacks in state social services and regulating strategies in Western Europe, to present a realistic model for a transformation of the economic system. The 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu in September 2007 organised by the CEC and the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences, when faced with the question how the in Europe strongly developed Conciliar Process for Justice Peace and the Integrity of Creation, is reacting to the demands for comprehensive justice and the overcoming of poverty and inequality that has grown out of the ecumenical discussion on globalisation, replied with a recommendation to begin a consultative process, “that should concern itself with

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18 Klaus Wilkens (Ed), *God in your mercy, transform the world*. Official report of the 9th General Assembly of the WCC Porto Alegre 2006 (2007) 288 ff.

19 *Kommission Kirche und Gesellschaft der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen* (Hg.), *Europäische Kirchen leben ihren Glauben im Kontext der Globalisierung*; (2006)

20 loc.cit. 26

21 loc.cit. 22

Europe's responsibility for ecological justice in view of climate change, for a more just form of globalisation and with the rights of the Roma and other ethnic minorities."<sup>22</sup>

## 5. The Debate within the Evangelical Church in Germany

The **Joint Statement of the EKD Council and the German Bishops' Conference on the Economic and Social Situation in Germany (1997)**,<sup>23</sup> demands, in view of the negative sides of globalisation, the joint responsibility of the community of nations, for "globalisation does not occur as a force of nature, it demands a political form."<sup>24</sup> With the aim of an order that is humane, just and in solidarity<sup>25</sup>, the model of social justice is developed in connection with a paradigm change, namely to take all national decisions with the One World in view<sup>26</sup> and, therefore, to relate national concepts to a system of an international division of labour. The hypothesis of a balance of interests in the free market economy that functions on its own is confronted with solidarity and justice as decisive criteria for sustainable economic and social policies fit for the future. Criterion for the credibility of the churches is their application of their political and economic demands to their own actions.<sup>27</sup>

The Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany passed a declaration in Amberg in 2001 with the title "**Shaping the global economy with responsibility**", which is based on the conviction that we are able to check the negative effects of globalisation and that we have to do so. This position, already disputed in the synod, raises the question which sustainable correctives are possible within the neoliberal economic order, and who should put the concept of "shaping globalisation" in the sense of the declaration into practice.

It was not the Amberg EKD Synod but rather the European Conference in **Soesterberg in 2002** that gave the decisive impetus to the German churches for the debate on economic globalisation.

As an answer to Soesterberg taking up the Joint Statement from 1997, a **Statement of the Evangelical Church in Westphalia from 2004** developed the

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22 Message of the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly, Recommendation VIII;

23 Kirchenamt der EKD and Sekretariat der DBK (Ed), Für eine Zukunft in Solidarität und Gerechtigkeit (1997), Nummer 84 - 90

24 loc.cit. number 88

25 loc.cit. 94

26 loc.cit. number 237 and 242

27 loc.cit. number 243

model of sustainability in connection with an extended concept of justice, leading from distribution justice to participation justice. It directs a whole host of ideas and appeals to the political and economic world; and in order to make the desired dialogue easier the term “economic liberalism” is used, as the term neoliberalism would carry ideological connotations and make discussion more difficult.<sup>28</sup>

In the **field of the Conciliar Process**, the ecumenical networks and action groups pushed forward the debate on economic globalisation under the motto “Economy in the service of life” together with “Kairos Europe”, their most important alliance.

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> consultation between the Church Council of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and groups in the Conciliar Process, a statement of principles was presented by conciliar groups, which was continued under the title “Changing the whole”.<sup>29</sup> Kairos Europe accompanied the ecumenical debate and supported it fundamentally through its own publications.<sup>30</sup>

## **6. The Debate within the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland**

In the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland congregations, church districts and institutions have occupied themselves with the questions of globalisation for years.

The Church Districts of Aachen and Jülich, who have been discussing systematically the effects of economic globalisation on the spot and in their partner churches for many years, directed related resolutions from their district synods to the General Synod in 2006.

The Church District Oberhausen proposed a motion taking up the AGAPE-Process of the WCC.

- The General Synod in 2005 passed a motion on request of the Aachen Church District Synod, to make Globalisation the main subject of a General Synod.<sup>31</sup>

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28 Wirtschaften im Dienst des Lebens - Stellungnahme der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen zum Soesterberg-Brief, Materialien für den Dienst 1/2005, 16

29 Ecumenical network Rhein-Mosel-Saar, „Das Ganze verändern“, in <[www.oekumenisches-netz.de/dgv\\_end\\_layout.rtf](http://www.oekumenisches-netz.de/dgv_end_layout.rtf)>

30 Kairos Europa see [www.ekir.de/globalisierung/42748\\_43440.php](http://www.ekir.de/globalisierung/42748_43440.php)

31 Verhandlungen der Landessynode 2005, 295 f.

- The motion of the Jülich<sup>32</sup> Church District is based on a call for “ A covenant for economic, social and ecological justice”, and calls upon the church leadership of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland to take up the worldwide ecumenical discussion process (Processus Confessionis) and to commit itself to participate in it. It rejects the neoliberal economic order together with any order “that does not serve the life of all and so undermines God’s covenant.” The commitment reads, “To work together with the churches throughout the world for economic, social and ecological justice, both in the global context and also in our regional and local areas”.
- The motion of the Oberhausen<sup>33</sup> Church District refers to the General Assemblies of the WCC, in Harare in 1998 and in Porto Alegre in 2006, and calls for taking up the AGAPE process; whereby “thinking about neoliberal globalisation and putting alternatives into practice should be at the centre of considerations and statements”. To this end the General Synod was requested: to discuss intensely the results and analyses of the WCC; to take over the clear criticism of the neoliberal globalisation system as formulated by the World Council of Churches and to substantiate it with examples from our own context; to take up the alternatives recorded in the AGAPE process and to stimulate an intensive discussion process in the congregations and church districts; to invite a representative from the WCC as a resource person and key-note speaker at the General Synod.

While the Oberhausen Church District proposes that the synod take over the AGAPE approach and introduce the synod debate accordingly, the Jülich proposal follows the Reformed discussion leading to a clear NO to the neoliberal economic order leading to the Covenant from Accra. Behind this is a thorough theological discussion about the church’s answer to globalisation respectively about the question of Confession.<sup>34</sup>

In 2006 the General Synod commissioned the Permanent Theological Committee to prepare a **Statement on theological questions of principle in the context of the globalisation debate**, particularly regarding the question of the Confession in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland. The intention was not to separate theological questions of principle from the complex task on

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32 Verhandlungen der Landessynode 2006, 307 ff.

33 loc.cit. 314

34 Jens Sannig (Hrsg.), Globalisierung – Segen oder Fluch? Entscheiden und Bekennen. Ein Kirchenkreis stellt sich den Herausforderungen der Globalisierung, (2006)  
Klaus Eberl, Jens Sannig (Hrsg.), Das Soziale neu denken? Der Paradigmenwechsel in der Sozialpolitik und die sozialetische Verantwortung der Kirche. Symposiumsbericht, (2005)

“Economic Globalisation and its Challenges for the Churches”, nor to make an isolated statement in anticipation of the synodal theological declaration, but rather to clarify the concept of “confession” for the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland within the framework of the current working process. In particular the debate in the Reformed churches and the repeated demand for a statement of faith with regard to economic injustice have confronted the Churches of the North with the question whether they wish to recognise the Status Confession is declared by the Southern Churches and to respond to it with a confessing. Is a confession only possible and appropriate against false church doctrine? The commitment of faith from Accra, the so-called Accra Confession is based on a dynamic understanding of the term confession: „A commitment of faith can find its form of expression in different ways depending on the regional and theological traditions: as a confession, as a joint act of confessing, as a statement of faith or as an act of faithfulness to God’s covenant.”<sup>35</sup>

The Theological Committee however established that the Status Confessionis and the Processus Confessionis are not central theological challenges for the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland at present; however an ethical statement were required „with seriousness and determination” as a clear witness and as a concrete commitment to justice in accordance with the confession. The witness of the Churches of the South were to be heard, respected in its dignity and taken seriously as a question to us.

In critical appreciation of the idea of the covenant, while distancing itself from the terms Empire and Mammon, the Permanent Theological Committee approved the ecumenical concept “Economy in the service of life” and demanded a realistic evaluation of the possibilities of the church for resolute action.<sup>36</sup>

The **perspectives of the partner churches** determined the discussion and the work process from the beginning. They confronted our church with the question how it reacts to economic globalisation not only ethically, but also with its witness and its confession.

Women theologians in Asia have described globalisation as a form of idolatry: “This critical perspective was taken up by the leaders of some Asian churches, who now connect the term globalisation with that of the Empire.

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35 Martina Wasserloos-Strunk, loc.cit, 29 (s. footnote 12)

36 Landessynode 2007, Drucksache 1, 36-41 vgl. Anhang 5

Far more critical commitment is necessary in order to withstand the force of this new form of idolatry.”<sup>37</sup>

An African theologian states: „Globalisation has brought the world together on an unknown scale. We are on the way to a global consumer culture. But this globalisation is extremely unjust, as it is run by people whose ideology is the law of the jungle - the survival of the fittest.”<sup>38</sup>

Our partners from the South enforce the fundamental criticism of their churches and consider the case for a Confession as given, while representatives from Eastern Europe and the United States mainly share a fundamental criticism of globalisation but do not explicitly raise the question of Confession.<sup>39</sup> The United Church of Christ/USA, a sharp critic of the current globalisation processes, follows the motto and the aim of the World Social Forum “Another World is Possible” without dealing fundamentally with the question of the system. Eastern European representatives describe determinedly the effects of the neoliberal economic system on their countries after the collapse of Socialism and call the economic system of the West into question.

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37 Sophia Lizares-Bodegon (Vereinte Evangelische Mission/VEM), Globalization: Vulnerability and the Erosion of Care in Asia; Globalisierung - Frauen und Kinder tragen die schwerste Last; in: Klußmann, Ökonomische Folgen der Globalisierung I, 76 ff.

38 Fidon R. Mwombeki (VEM), Globalization from an African Point of View

39 Jürgen Klußmann (Hrsg), Ökonomische Folgen der Globalisierung I, (2005)

Ders. Ökonomische Folgen der Globalisierung II, (2006)

Ders. Aktivitäten und Antworten der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland, (2006)

## II. Theological ethical Positions

### 1. How is social justice possible in the global era?

Economic globalisation is a process that constantly gains new strength and can hardly be controlled politically. Ulrich Beck concludes on the basis of his observations that the historic alliance between market economy, welfare state and democracy - the project of western nation-states in modern times - seems to be breaking up: „The economic development is beyond control of the politicians of nation states, while the social problems that stem from it collect in the social safety-nets of the nation-states (...). Yet no one seems to have an answer to the key question of the modern age: How is social justice possible in the global era?“<sup>40</sup>

The ecumenical debate oscillates between the two poles: „reforming globalisation” and “changing and overcoming globalisation through alternatives” - in other words between the conviction that the ruling global market economy is capable of reform on the one hand and the demand for intervention to change the system on the other.

The **reformist position** wants to contribute towards positive change by undertaking a critical examination of globalisation, which includes the possible rejection of certain manifestations of it, while the **alternative position** questions the basis of the neoliberal economic order and tries to outline alternatives to the ruling economic globalisation.

This debate leads to tension: those supporting the reformist approach will accuse the other side of not being able to present a conclusive concept for an economic reorganization of world society. Whoever - as the Churches of the South for example in the Accra Confession - proclaims the Processus Confessionis as the result of a theological judgement of globalisation, challenges the communion of the churches. Churches who do not accept globalisation as a call for Confession, or are of the opinion that it does not concern them, must accept being asked whether they are thus positioning themselves outside this communion.

This tension dominates the ecumenical debate and also has an influence on the dialogue between churches, which always has to include the element of accountability to each other.

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40 Ulrich Beck, Was ist Globalisierung? (Neue Auflage 2007) 256 f.

„A large number of the ethical questions are **matters of discretion**. A rational discourse is necessary to answer them, and can lead to different answers within a church.

The difference between questions of discretion and questions of confession cannot always be defined with absolute clarity. In certain situations, questions of discretion can become questions of confession. Many churches in the South, quite rightly from their perspective, point to the effects of the globalised economy as being an amplified continuation of slavery, imperialism, colonialism and racism. It is, therefore, not just by chance that in this context the first impetus to raise the **question of confession** (or the question of faith) came from them. The Confession must not only correspond to the teachings of the church but also to its practice. Therefore, when the Confession question is raised, the communion of the churches, their common confession and their acting together are affected. For this reason, we in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland are challenged to give an answer to the impetus from the churches in the South<sup>41</sup>.

The wide scope of the ecumenical debate on globalisation can be demonstrated by two positions. Both positions are found in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and discussions have taken place between them: as “a plea for alternatives to the global economic order“ on the one hand, and as a “plea for helping to reform the global economic order” on the other .

These positions must not necessarily be seen as diametrically opposed to each other, rather - starting from biblical witness and its interpretation in confession and theology - they depict different positions and perceptions of reality.

In their concern and aim they have things in common: both wish to share in the analysis of the causes of increasing injustice, poverty and violence, both wish to develop the vision of a more just world, and also to reach a consensus on practical steps towards its realisation.

Both positions are deliberately placed next to each other in this document (II.4. and II.5.). Their theological foundations are not mutually; they do not lead in a straight line to specific social-ethical options, but rather, each from its own perspective, they “translate” their concept of God and their concept of humanity into the challenges of our times.

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41 Permanent Theological Committee of the ECiR cf. footnote 36

## 2. Biblical foundations

The option for the poor and the weak, and the biblical instructions that all people are to share the goods of the earth given to us by God, form the basis for our standards for judgement, action and confession. For this reason the complexity of economic globalisation must be judged, regardless of our own entanglement in neoliberal activities, from the perspective of those who are excluded from its achievements.<sup>42</sup>

**Justice** is a central theme of the Bible. Justice is God's criterion for Israel, it is the criterion for the piety of each individual and for the integrity of the cult in the community. It has to be seen in accord with law and participation, with the satisfying of basic needs and with the chances of survival for all people, regardless of race, sex, class, nation or generation. Justice should guarantee a life in dignity and freedom with a full share in society.<sup>43</sup> The image of a place where justice and peace kiss each other (Psalm 85), marks a state of social, economic and political union and of justice and peace in society.

The fundamental problem of poor and rich is confronted with the economy of „**Enough for all.**“<sup>44</sup> It contradicts this biblical principle to exclude people from the rich goods of the earth. The prophets accuse the rich of social oppression and of depriving the poor of their rights. Lack of moderation, megalomania, exploitation of nature and human beings and the amassing of property are constantly recurring objects of criticism, not only in the Book of the Prophet Amos.

The Torah translates God's option for his oppressed people into a „social legislation“, which knows a charity tax, the daily payment of wages for day-labourers and welfare services for those deprived of their rights. Besides this the Jews were the only society of ancient times that knew a prohibition on charging interest together with the remittance of debts as the “core elements of Biblical Economic Law.”<sup>45</sup>

The priority **option for** the poor and the dispossessed and their liberation is a fundamental part of biblical hermeneutics.

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42 cf. 1.6 on the perspective of the partner churches

43 Declaration of the United Church of Jesus Christ (UCC) in the USA, Christian Faith: Economic Life and Justice (1989) 4. Cf also the UCC study “Christian Faith and Economic Life”(1988)

44 Cf. Ulrich Duchrow, Reinhold Bianchi, René Krüger und Vincenzo Petracca, Solidarisch Mensch werden. Psychische und soziale Destruktion im Neoliberalismus - Wege zu ihrer Überwindung, (2006). cf. e.g.2. Kor. 8 und 9

45 A thorough description of the effects of the prohibition on charging interest in Judaism in Franz Segbers, the Challenges of the Thora (1999) 192-197

In the Book of Exodus God is introduced as a God who has seen the misery and the oppression of the people of Israel in Egypt and has heard their cries for help.

The situation of the dispossessed, the poor and the victims in the eyes of God is an injustice that must not be. The Decalogue (Ex. 20,1 ff.; Dtn. 5,6 ff.), that is founded on the liberation from slavery, is the central biblical witness for this. The Sabbath is a reminder of the liberation from slavery in Egypt. The Sabbath Year brings freedom for the Hebrew slaves in the seventh year. The land shall be tilled for six years and then rest in the seventh year. The Jubilee year, the remission of debts and the right to return to hereditary property reminds the rich and the strong of their duty.

The **New Testament** takes up this tradition again: Jesus himself brings justice to the oppressed and bread to the hungry; he preaches the Gospel to the poor; he frees the prisoners and makes the blind to see (Luke 4,18 ff.); he supports and protects those in distress, the strangers, the orphans and the widows. Jesus promises the fullness of life (John 10,10). The poor and the excluded are put at the centre of human action and care, by calling for justice “with the least among the brethren”. (Mt. 25,40).

In the Reformed tradition the liberating act of God in Jesus Christ has consequences for social and economic action. The persons liberated through Christ do not gain their value through their own purchase, but rather are valuable because they have been “redeemed” by Christ and are his “property” (Heidelberg Catechism, question 34). They are part of the new reality that has dawned in Jesus Christ. This forbids „all covetousness and all abuse and waste” of the gifts of God’s creation (Heidelberg Catechism, 110). It is God’s will that „we should have delight in all righteousness” (Heidelberg 113).

In this sense Christians stand up for a new kind of economy that does not regard human beings as being greedy and egocentric, nor promote this. It is necessary that within the framework of a more just and sustainable world economic order the peoples of the north share with others and those who live in prosperity give up part of it.

Economy only exists because people exist. It is primarily there to serve life. According to the Jewish-Christian tradition, economic activity should be

based on the criterion of justice for everyone (participatory justice)<sup>46</sup> and that demands a life in dignity and without material need for everyone (requirement justice). This criterion of justice is from a Christian point of view the normative foundation, the decisive criterion for a proper form of economic activity.

### 3. Just participation through the realisation of human rights

Christians believe in the biblical promise, that all shall have “the fullness of life”, and orientate themselves towards the **principle of just participation**: every human being should be given access to basic commodities, a basic social security and a qualification to participate in the economic process.<sup>47</sup>

Taking up and continuing the economic memorandum „Public Welfare and Self-Interest“ from 1991 the **Joint Statement** moves solidarity into the immediate vicinity of social justice. „The search for justice is a movement towards those who exist as poor and powerless on the fringe of social and economic life and cannot improve their participation in society by themselves. Social justice has in this respect quite correctly the character of partisanship for all who are dependent on support and assistance. It does not only consist of personal care for the underprivileged, but rather aims at eliminating the structural causes for the lack of participation and sharing in social and economic processes.”<sup>48</sup>

This aim will be achieved through the principle of participatory justice. Concrete expression of this is the commitment to the **realisation of indivisible human rights**, that is for upholding political and civil human rights as of equal importance as also economic, social and cultural human rights.

The principle of human rights, whose basis and central focus is the recognition and guarantee of human dignity as being of the highest value, is the secular expression of the **Christian understanding of humanity**, which on the basis of our faith emphasises human dignity and human rights in a world otherwise marked by death. Every human being is unique and a distinct per-

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46 Participation is for example for Arthur Rich a criterion for humanity, or the basic condition for cooperation in the world economy. Arthur Rich Economic Ethics Volume II espec. 3.3.5: The Humane under the aspect of participation, 144-162 and 7.3: Basic conditions for a participatory cooperation in the world economy, 350-362.

47 Study of the EKD „Gerechte Teilhabe“ (2006)

48 „Gemeinwohl und Eigennutz. Wirtschaftliches Handeln in Verantwortung für die Zukunft. Eine Denkschrift der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, (1991) Ziffer 155

sonality; he or she must, therefore, be loved and respected as a child of God. This means that according to Christian ethics there can be no justification for exploitation, injustice or other life-threatening circumstances that people expose others to. Rather, it is a consequence of a confession to the triune God to demand the upholding of human rights in their broadest understanding for all people. They form - universally recognised - a fitting basis and authorisation for Christians and churches to speak up and act, together with institutions in politics, economy and civil society, and also with people of other faiths. In a world influenced by so many different views of the world and different religions, a common set of values shared not only by Christians but also by members of other religions and by non-religious people of good will is essential.

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10th December 1948**<sup>49</sup> as a resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations is not a legally binding document; but many other declarations and conventions of human rights are based on it. This is particularly the case with the two human rights pacts of the United Nations from 1966:<sup>50</sup> the International Pact on Civil and Political rights (civil pact) and the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (social pact).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not limit itself to emphasising the personal rights and liberties of individuals, but has also from the beginning been a reminder of the social rights of all people in the **world community**. Society should be so ordered that every person is guaranteed the „economic, social and cultural rights essential for his or her dignity and the free development of his or her personality.“<sup>51</sup> To these belong the right to social security, to work, a free choice of occupation, equal pay for equal work, medical care, education and participation in the cultural life of the community.<sup>52</sup> It is, therefore, not just a question of protecting an individual's development from illegal interference, but also providing the basic conditions for integrating all people into the **development of a world community in solidarity**. At the same time the fruit of progress should be for the benefit of all people and make it possible for all people to have a share in the achievements of the world community.

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49 See [www.unhchr.ch/udhr/](http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/)

50 19th December 1966

51 Article 22

52 Article 23-27

“Regarding the economic order, the maxim of „what does justice to human kind” means that all economic activity should do justice to the human right to life. As a general criterion for what is a human right and as a general answer to the ethical demand for justice, many declarations point to the human rights laid down and made binding in the International Pacts for Civil and Political Rights as well as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.( ... ) Thus the “preferential option for the poor “emphasised in the Conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation is not only underlined as an ethical criterion but also as a legal title for the persons concerned.<sup>53</sup>

The demand for upholding and realising human rights throughout the world is the wider context for all efforts to reform the process of globalisation in a just way. All acts of law and frameworks of regulations must be examined as to whether they take the universal and indivisible rights sufficiently into consideration.

#### **4. Plea for alternatives to the global economic order**

##### **4.1 God’s claim to the world**

The neoliberal economic system has traits of a totalitarian power and an ideological system. It counteracts God’s claim to the world. A balance of interests is no longer the aim in an economic system that does not serve the interests of everyone.

The Processus Confessionis characterises this phenomenon with the terms **mammon and idolatry**. It makes reference specifically to **Martin Luther**. For him greed, which expresses itself in meanness and profiteering, is a cardinal sin; for it takes away the basis of some people’s lives. In 1539 he demands that church discipline be applied against profiteers<sup>54</sup>, implicitly making greed for profit an ethically based matter of confession.<sup>55</sup> Luther concludes for the office of preacher, which he understands as part of God’s spiritual regiment and a guardian’s office, that he must urgently warn against the capitalist

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53 Konrad Raiser: Wie leben wir unseren Glauben im Kontext der Globalisierung? Lecture at the ECiR Synod, Bad Neuenahr, 8.1.2008

54 “An die Pfarrherrn, wider den Wucher zu predigen; Vermahnung” in Weimarer Ausgabe 51,331 - 424

55 according to Hans-Jürgen Prien, Luther’s Economic Ethics (1992) 221 f.

spirit<sup>56</sup>. Economic practice and attitudes can be in conflict with what according to biblical understanding God desires for mankind.

In his Major Catechism Luther writes in interpretation of the 1st commandment: „For the two belong together, faith and God. That which you hang your heart on, I say, and that which you rely on, that is really your God.<sup>57</sup>” He identifies mammon as an idol or false god: „Mammon is also a god; i.e. is honoured by the people as God and sometimes even helps them.”<sup>58</sup>

**Michael Welker** warns that it could lead to an „anti-economic Manichaeism and an economic illiteracy”<sup>59</sup> if one were to reduce the rise in criticism of the economic consequences of globalisation in neoliberalism to the formula “God or Mammon”. Nevertheless the confrontation God or Mammon could function “as an alarming prelude for the formulation of really urgent questions about work on social-ethics and political tasks for the future”<sup>60</sup>.

## 4.2 Contradictory assessments

The churches, as part of the worldwide and national globalisation processes, find themselves in a tension-field of contradictory assessments. The Reformed **Churches of the South** claim that the neoliberal economic concepts and their mechanisms mean that the Gospel itself - the good news for the poor - is at stake, for its credibility is damaged and God’s sovereignty is under attack.<sup>61</sup> They see the communion of the churches and their acting together endangered. They question their partner churches’ self-image when they challenge them to make a clear confession to Jesus Christ’s claim to power.

The **9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the WCC** identified the neoliberal model of world order as a fundamental theological problem and began to work on it.<sup>62</sup> Besides the ethical challenge, the WCC recognises above all an ecclesiological challenge, and claims that the confession of its member churches, their will-

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56 loc.cit 123

57 Luther’s explanation of the first commandment in his „Large Catechism”

58 Weimar edition 40 III 57. 24-25

59 Manichaeism is understood as a revelation religion, with the conflict between two opposite forces at its centre - the divine realm of light and the realm of darkness. manichaestic positions insist on a clear division between good and bad.

60 Michael Welker, Globalisation - from an academic theological point of view. .Dedicated to Rudolf Weth on his 70th birthday. Lecture at a conference of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland 8th March 2007 in Düsseldorf

61 Statement of Faith on the Global Crisis of Life, Buenos Aires 2003

62 WCC General Assembly 2006 Report of the programme guidelines committee number 26

ingness to change their ways and their renewal are required. Confession and practice are real steps on the way to unity: The strength of the churches in the ecumenical movement is to stand up throughout the world against the challenges of neoliberalism and its inhuman consequences. Their own confession is in the „AGAPE Call“. In its 8th self-commitment “Churches and the Power of the Empire” it expressly states: “... from our faith, to steadfastly take up position against hegemonic powers because every power is accountable to God. We acknowledge that the process of transformation requires that we as churches make ourselves accountable to the victims of neoliberal globalisation.”<sup>63</sup>

In his essay „The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement” Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes: „The church only exists as a confessing church, that is a church that confesses its allegiance to its Lord and against his enemies ( ... ). It would be prudent, if the western Christian churches did not overlook this experience of the Confessing Church, that a church without confession is a defenceless and lost church, and that in its confession a church has the only weapon that does not break.”<sup>64</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s understanding of a church united in its confession is to be found again in the **Accra Confession in 2004**. This „Confession of faith in view of economic injustice and ecological destruction” from the Alliance of Reformed Churches understands itself as a common witness of the different member churches from all over the world. They are in agreement: that the question of justice, raised from the perspective of suffering people deprived of their rights and a profaned creation, affects our faith and our confession of faith.

However in Accra neither a Status Confessionis was declared nor a classical confession of faith resolved, but rather a “covenant for ecological and economic justice” was declared, which in the belief that God is sovereign over all creation rejects the present world economic order with a resounding NO. This reaction is fed by the life and daily experiences of the people of the South.

This **Covenant** understands itself as a current and necessary step on the road of discipleship, as an expression of a **Processus Confessionis**. It calls upon

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63 Klaus Wilkens (ed) *Lord, in your mercy, transform the world*, (2007) 293

64 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical movement Collected Works* 1

churches and congregations to name injustice and to overcome it - with reference to Isaiah 58 - to break the chains of oppression and injustice. Where this is taken seriously, declarations of justice will lead not just to appeals, but to real plans for action. The question of our own personal complicity in the globalisation process is raised, just as the question of the participation of the church respectively ecclesial "complicity".

When the **Churches of the North** concern themselves with the problems of a confession of faith, they must face not only the ecumenical theological debate but also inquiries into the actions of their church leadership and their own personal economic practice. The concept of a critical discussion on globalisation - including their own role in it - is accepted as an ecclesiological challenge.

„It is undisputed that the confession of faith of global Christianity to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church demands a clear witness in word and a practical involvement for justice. The extremely anti-social effects of economic globalisation are irreconcilable with the confession of faith. 'If one member of the body of Christ suffers, then all suffer with it' (1.Corinth.12,26).

The common confession of faith demands justice and solidarity beside peace and the integrity of creation. In other words this means acting in accordance with the confession of faith. What is disputed is how acting in accordance with the confession of faith can be realised. Undisputed is that we as the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (and thereby a church of the North) have to listen to the witness of the churches of the South, and to the questions and demands raised by them, respect the dignity of their witness and take the challenges seriously as questions directed at us. All the more so as these are the voices of those sisters and brothers, who are hardest hit by the consequences of globalisation.”<sup>65</sup>

### 4.3 Consequences for the Church and the Ecumenical Movement

The **Church** must answer the question of its own complicity and guilt. It has to advocate for a participation of all people in material worldly goods so that no-one need suffer any want (Acts 4, 32).<sup>66</sup>

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65 Permanent Theological Committee; cf. Appendix 5 and FN 36

66 Wolfgang Schrage, Ethik des neuen Testaments, (1982) 154

In listening to the witness of the churches of the South the spiritual dimension of the debate on the consequences of economic globalisation becomes apparent. "We also acknowledge that we were not capable of looking after creation in the way God gave us the task (Gen. 1,27 ff.). We ask God for forgiveness, for we have not followed his call faithfully ... We find ourselves in an economic system that oppresses our people and creates unequal conditions between brothers and sisters and also damages creation. This system is based on violence and corruption, spreads illusions; it tells us what we need for life - as a consequence leading us into blind consumerism. (The market rules today as a new idol). It also tells us that the magic formulas from the north of our countries will make us richer and richer in this way. We ask God to forgive us, that we have fallen into the trap of a system that causes suffering, and that we have succumbed to it.

We know that opposition against it is difficult and dangerous and can even bring us into mortal danger. Perhaps it seems to us that we have even lost already. But as it says in the Book of Esther (4, 12-17) we are called to stand up for our people, and to stand up in the name of God, to achieve life in fullness for the whole of creation (John 10,10). Our silence and lack of action are sin. We pray to our Lord, that we may be helped to understand the signs of these hard times and be given courage to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world."(Matt. 5, 13 - 16)"<sup>67</sup>

As a church in the North we live and profit from a system that creates injustice and suffering throughout the world. In times when people in our church are increasingly also among the losers of globalisation, we are being questioned about the spiritual sources from where we draw our strength, and about which orientation we offer people, who, disappointed by the material promises of salvation through the market, now seek for a truly fulfilled life here today. The distorted one-dimensional image of humankind in our society, shaped through and through by the economy, presents us with the challenge of spelling out in a quite new way what life in fullness for all, which Christ promises us, can really look like. Our road together with the churches in the South begins in our hearts and in our heads, in our faith and our Christian hope, where the quality of life is not defined by the rules of buying and possessing. It is a question of winning back this spiritual dimension in order as a church in the North to be really willing to share. We often

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67 The Gospel confronts the unfair economy and the destruction of the earth. AIRPAL (Conference of Bishops and Presidents and the Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches). Cooperation and testimony department. Santiago de Chile, November 4 to 6, 2005

start off with hesitation and uncertainty on this road, and in the fact that they are our sisters and brothers from the churches in the South who can be our companions and show us the way lies the transforming and liberating power of the worldwide ecumenical movement and a sign of God's goodness and mercy.

If the church is to question the claim to absolute truth of other doctrines of salvation - even that of economic neoliberalism - then it is called upon to take up the debate about it with representatives of the state and the economy. The **State** must be reminded that it is its task, in the „not yet redeemed world, to which the church also belongs, to see that there is justice and peace according to the measure of human reason and as far as humanly possible.” (Barmen V). In view of the consequences of globalisation and neoliberalism the state must be questioned about the legitimacy of its actions (Barmen III).

Based on the decisions taken at the last two General Assemblies, in Harare in 1998 and in Porto Alegre in 2006, the **ecumenical movement** pleads for a deliberate and self-critical change of course. It sees the churches as called by God's will to live out alternatives to economic globalisation. „The logic of globalisation must be called in question by an alternative concept for life, namely that of the community in diversity.”<sup>68</sup>

Its criteria are respect for people and empowerment to act in a way directed to what is essential to our life and our world:

- from a focus on individual wishes to what is socially essential;
- from what brings profit to individuals to what enriches everyone;
- from interests of the wealthy to the needs of the weakest;
- from using nature to participating in nature;
- from the dictation of economic growth to sustainability;
- from exclusion to participation.

The Covenant of Accra and the AGAPE concept also demand specifically from the Churches of the North that they do not act at other people's cost, but rather together with the churches of the South realise a life-spending spirituality of opposition against the “spirit” of economic globalisation.

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68 8th GA of the WCC 1998

#### 4.4 Conclusions

Both the covenant concept of the Reformed Churches and the AGAPE concept of the WCC include **reforming measures** with regard to economic globalisation, without expecting from that an achievement of a paradigm change of the neoliberal economic order. In addition more far-reaching suggestions are being developed for an **alternative globalisation**.

The AGAPE concept aims on the one hand at **a transformation of the global market economy** - it wants an economy, which integrates into economic life the love of God and solidarity with our neighbours. The capability for spiritual discernment and the changing of our ways to create a “truly ecumenical earth” challenge our confession of faith.<sup>69</sup> This concept is also to be found in the paper on the “Catholicism of the Church” (Harare 1998), that emphasises the community of the local churches in an eschatological perspective, bound in space and time; according to this, we should develop solidarity as a world-encompassing category, marked by diversity and plurality and relating both the local and the universal principles constructively to each other. Specifically this refers for example to the implementation of co-operative concepts in the regional context.

On the other hand the AGAPE concept is directed as a transformative concept to the churches themselves. Their **understanding of church and ecumenism** is challenged in the debate on the different manifestations of Christianity. These include the critical debate with strongly growing new Christian movements, who have other ideas of values and other interpretations of the world.

The acceptance of the Covenant of Accra in the AGAPE concept of the WCC contributes towards understanding globalisation as a many faceted historic process with far-reaching economic, cultural, political, ecological and ethical consequences.

The dualism of the Eighties „think globally - act locally” has been overcome in favour of a strong dovetailing of both dimensions. The plea for transformation (metanoia) of the churches and the world goes beyond all efforts for coherence: it also binds the political task to the realisation of the will of God (cf. 9. GA of the WCC 2006).

For the ecumenical movement as a community the diversity of the churches also has a special quality, in that it enables us to share the experience of dif-

ference, asymmetry and plurality - not as a threat to unity, but rather as a corrective to a feigned unity as expressed in the phenomenon of globalisation.

## 5. Plea for participation in shaping the global economic order

### 5.1 Social reforming of globalisation

All churches are interwoven and caught up in the processes of globalisation. The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, as a church in a wealthy country of the Western world, must critically reconsider its role, admit to having a share of guilt, take sides, but also use all possible opportunities to help reform economic processes. Its activities will be directed towards a political, social and ecological directing of the global market; through analysis, advocacy and good practice it will work together with others to further develop the **model of a social market economy** at national level and to introduce it at international level.

The perspective of this approach means, not to look for alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation, but rather to look for an **alternative shaping of globalisation**,<sup>70</sup> by drawing up outlines for a global economy with people in mind and for a fair world economy that does justice to the interests of all people. Christians are called upon to discover possibilities for a social shaping of globalisation and to promote uncompromisingly a humane global economy and fair world economic trade. They are to be active so that not only a few, but an increasing number of people can share in the advantages resulting from the globalisation process.

### 5.2 Discussion about a new economic order after 1945

The Evangelical Church in Germany has developed a constructive relationship to the order of a social market economy. This is the basis for a convincing criticism of the current global market that is losing sight of the social and ethical dimensions more and more.

In the **Freiburg Circle**, even during the time of the NS dictatorship, an economic order for the time of a new beginning was being prepared and economically thought through, based on a Christian understanding of personality and the responsibility of every person before God.

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69 Document Common Understanding and Vision, 8th General Assembly of the WCC Harare 1998

70 Andreoli, loc.cit.

The **social market economy** that proceeded from these considerations meant the rejection not only of a boundlessly raging capitalism, but also of any planned economy that left no room for self-initiative and responsibility of the people, and, therefore, of necessity lagged far behind any possibility of creating prosperity for everyone.

However the representatives of **Ordo-liberalism** are at the same time convinced that it is the task of the state to create a just social order, to prevent misuse of economic power, to hinder monopolies, and to provide a just wage policy, protection against unemployment through no fault of one's own, and security of private property.

At present under quite different circumstances these questions are relevant again today in a global perspective, for the excesses of the neoliberal economic order are made possible mainly through the fact that there is no globally accepted regulatory power or regulatory policies, that could make it possible to sustainably guarantee the truly understandable rules of a just economic order and an appropriate social obligation scheme for global capital.

In continuing this common heritage and the insights present in it, it is a question of reforming the process of globalisation as regards the dignity of every human being and his or her own personality, and the capability for responsibility both here and in the countries of the South.

### 5.3 Consequences for the Church and the Ecumenical Movement

The founding assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 reacted to the impending Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the **Model of “Responsible Society”**. This explains the distribution of power, the creation of manageable areas of responsibility, the unhindered access to sources of information and the promotion of the creation of wealth as the basis for people living together in respect for the dignity of each person. Under the present conditions of globalisation it should be examined whether a further development of this model of a “responsible society“ could be helpful for the challenges that face us.

The human rights laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human rights and in the two human rights pacts, are from the point of view of the churches an appropriate secular expression and standard for an order, which can be considered just from a Christian point of view, with regard to the understanding of a person, his or her dignity, freedom and ties to the social communities.

It is, therefore, the task of the churches to promote a comprehensive awareness of human rights, to advocate globally valid standards for human rights at all levels, and to develop methods of verifying that they are being kept.<sup>71</sup>

Under the **aspect of participatory justice** the churches can develop maxims for the formation of globalisation, in which they orientate themselves to civil and political, economic, social and cultural human rights, and understand the work of the church’s congregations, social welfare and development organisations also as work for the realisation of human rights. In doing this they proclaim the importance of the dignity of human life that no power can call into question, and witness to the inalienable human rights derived from this. Their faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ gives them the strength and vitality to stand up for a humane globalisation, even against outside opposition.

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71 The term „globalisation of human rights“ is also used for this purpose in the ecumenical movement and in the international human rights discussions.

## 5.4 Conclusions

Right into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the churches and their theology were critical of human rights, among other things on account of their suspicion of a materialistic anthropology that rejected justification by faith. Against the attempt to justify human rights theologically and against the rejection of their theological derivation, it was the analogy-difference model that championed the **promotion of human rights** from a Christian point of view: “because in them something flashes forth that is in analogy to that which faith as the gift of God is able to decipher for all people, but that at the same time allows us to recognise quite clearly the difference between any human-historical community and the participation in the glory of God and our being in the body of Christ.”<sup>72</sup>

The belief that all people are made in the image of God puts Christians on the side of all the poor and deprived, it demands that they stand up for respect for the inalienable human dignity and for the recognition of the universality and indivisibility of human rights. However, whether a global ethic orientated on human rights is realistic and capable of being put into practice, will not least to be proven in the **context of inter-religious dialogue**. Here it is the special duty of the churches to critically examine the way other religions formulate human rights and to respect them.

The priority of civil and liberal rights in the Civil Pact must be seen in the context of the enhancement of rights in the Social Pact, which NGOs mainly champion, and with the so-called **rights of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation**, which as a collective right relates particularly to the access and use of resources, hence as political demands are an equivalent to human rights standards. They are being discussed as framework conditions for a more humane form of globalisation; however as universal criteria they are in danger of their contours and contents becoming blurred.<sup>73</sup> Here a fundamental dilemma becomes apparent: an ethical concept for a more humane form of globalisation derived from human rights would have to prove itself both globally and in local contexts, and be translated into categories capable of defining economic processes within a model of “responsible society”.

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72 Wolfgang Huber, Heinz Eduard Tödt, Menschenrechte. Perspektiven einer menschlichen Welt.(1977)

73 Jörg Hübner, Globalisation - challenge for Church and Theology, (2003) 173

The **demand for the global realisation of human rights** - including economic, social and cultural rights - represents an important approach to the biblical concepts of just relations in society. The United Nations and the General Assembly of the WCC declare unanimously that the goals of peace and security, as well as development and social and economic justice cannot be achieved without the realisation of human rights. But they consider the confirmation of human rights to be meaningless if there is no basic security for the people and the chance to satisfy their basic needs.

For this reason **the concept of human security**, which has been developed within the United Nations, with its call for the protection of essential freedoms (freedom from bodily harm, economic and social welfare, respect for the value and dignity of human beings, protection of human rights and basic freedoms) forms a comprehensive framework to measure the effects of economic globalisation and alternative concepts.

Biblically and theologically it corresponds to an understanding of security that is oriented towards a just order of society. Biblically, the result of justice is understood to be peace on the one hand and quiet and security on the other.<sup>74</sup>

## 6. Evaluation of the two positions

The position „Plea for active participation in the formation of the global economic order“ is directed at institutions, states, political alliances and the economic world.

The demand for the implementation of human rights is in the meantime a classic demand of the churches.

The position “Plea for alternatives to the global economic order” goes beyond this and aims directly at the churches and Christianity as a whole, calling upon them to accept globalisation as a theological and ethical challenge, and to do their best to contribute to a “truly ecumenical earth”.

Both positions diverge with regard to the question how economic globalisation can be curbed or reformed.

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74 Isaiah 32,17

## **6.1 Plea for alternatives to the global economic order**

These considerations show how ethical challenges can become a question of confession. The Processus Confessionis begun in the churches of the South has been taken up positively as a justifiable calling-in-question of the churches of the North. In accepting this as a question of confession, they follow both the ecumenical theological debate (AGAPE concept of the WCC) and also the questions relating to action of the church leadership and the churches' own economic context.

The aspect of an alternative globalisation must be discussed within the framework of its ecclesiological challenge and worked on under the mission of the Conciliar Process, to which the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland has committed itself in its church constitution.

The challenges of the Processus Confessionis must be worked on particularly in dialogue with the partner churches. Specific questions should be tackled in joint projects.

## **6.2 Plea for active participation in the formation of the global economic order**

This approach starts with the premise that the present neoliberal economic order will determine global action for the foreseeable future. However it considers this order to be in need of and capable of change. Here the question remains how an economic order oriented towards - ultimately private - profit maximisation should carry out a paradigm-change to implementing human rights and orienting itself primarily towards the poor and those deprived of their rights. To this end a concept of focussed dialogue must be started that encourages states and the protagonists in the fields of economics and politics to take up ethical ideas and factors and to realise them. The model of a „responsible society“ could be developed in connection with a model of church. It must be fundamentally considered how such a far-reaching social demand and subject can be taken up and reflected in the organisation and areas of church work.

### 6.3 Orientation points

The ecumenical discussion is marked by the question how Christian faith can be lived in the context of globalisation. As in the *Processus Confessionis* the AGAPE process takes up the idea of accountability: as an obligation of the churches towards the victims of globalisation respectively towards the other churches, and also as the accountability of every power to God.<sup>75</sup> This perspective, which consciously does without apocalyptic or demonizing categories, aims at transformation: leaving unjust structures behind, towards a sustainable, participatory economic model in solidarity. It is founded in the binding commitment of the churches to justice and solidarity.

Orientation points that can be derived from the above mentioned positions are:

- the socio-ethical principle of human rights (Arthur Rich) in all aspects of life,
- the validity of indivisible human rights and their implementation under the conditions of globalisation
- the principle of sustainability including the protection of resources and intergenerational justice, which excludes endless growth,
- the model of a just society in solidarity with each other as orientation for economic activity,
- mutual accountability of the churches.

These orientation points give concrete form to commitments already made by the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland. As established criteria for the assessment of action fields of the church they are not new, but they must also prove their workability in dialogue with the partner churches.

The open question is whether and how different or even diverging strategic options for church action can result from the two positions.

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75 AGAPE- Call No. 8

## 6.4 Self-Commitments of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland

The mandatory perspective that the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland has resolved for its statements and action refers to the maxims of the Joint Statement, to scale all actions and decisions taken in society, politics and the economic world, as to how they affect the poor and whether they are of use to them and empower them to self-reliant action.<sup>76</sup> As a church that reckons with its own renewal through and according to God's word, the church has passed three resolutions as self commitments.

- The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland has committed itself to the option for the poor, the weak and those denied their rights, and has made striving for justice its task.<sup>77</sup>
- In our church constitution<sup>78</sup> we refer specifically to the Conciliar Process that defines the interdependence of justice, peace and the integrity of creation and understands itself as a renewal movement to change our ways. Alternatives to destructive competition and violence, to injustice and lack of freedom should be developed from an synopsis of justice and peace; this involves the debate on structural violence including the dimension of economic violence.
- The Decade for Overcoming Violence<sup>79</sup> tackles the question of personal and structural violence, meaning also the conditions of economic violence in the sense that such structures lead to a permanent impairment of people's living conditions. It takes up the insights and results of the 1st decade "Churches in Solidarity with Women" (1988 - 1998).

These self-commitments are the basis on which also our debates on economic globalisation will be carried out. Consequences are the question as to the credibility of church action and as to the communication of this basis in the world of society, economy and politics. On the other hand these self-commitments contribute towards strengthening our fundamental ethical decisions and to sharpening the criteria for our action.

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76 Joint Statement 1997 number 107

77 51st Rhenish General Synod 2002. Resolution 47, 187ff.

78 Church constitution Art. 1,6

79 49th Rhenish General Synod 2000, Resolution 60, 219 ff.

### **III. Commission to act**

Our responsibility before God and the people commits us to act in accordance with the proclamation of the Gospel and a practice appropriate to it. From our confession of faith in God the creator, redeemer and reconciler of humanity we seek for opportunities to make valid the Word of God in the economic context. Shrinking back, opportunism and fear are no options for Christians. Silence is sin, it is our duty to act. However, the question is, how silence can be overcome in each case and what form action must take in order to have sustainable consequences.

#### **1. Church Action**

We experience that the influence of individuals on the globalisation process is in the end marginal. There are narrow limits to intervening positively and changing things, and these are confined essentially to one's own direct sphere of influence. However, experience teaches us that in acting together we develop strength and carry weight, and this can make an essential contribution to joint success. Synod declarations and decisions, Church Council statements, sermons, declarations, announcements and interviews are essential, valuable, important and right, even if they frequently only seem to have a partial and temporary effect. It is necessary however to go beyond this to a form of communication that is structured, strategically-planned, concretely addressed and clearly directed, in order that we can make ourselves heard permanently and be perceived as relevant protagonists, gaining influence and contributing to changes in thinking and action.

We do not fail in our description and evaluation of economic globalisation and its many forms and effects. It is not difficult to declare unanimously what developments and consequences of economic globalisation are not acceptable from a Christian point of view.

But it is the task of the churches to enter into comprehensive debate with individuals and institutions and protagonists of globalisation who have influence and carry responsibility, to confront them - again or for the first time - with the postulates of Christian conviction and to urge them to a new orientation and a change of direction. It is also important in this context to bring the partner churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America and their concerns to their attention.

In the past few years many forms of activity have been developed at all levels of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, with the common aim to “confront what is not easily understandable with something that is easily understandable. In the uncertainty of global developments the assurance of individual life must take place.”<sup>80</sup> Church departments, organisations and alliances such as the Diakonisches Werk, the Evangelical Development Service, SÜDWIND, the United Evangelical Mission, the Education for Mission Desk, the Kindernothilfe, Bread for the World and others are devoting themselves to practical assistance and care, but also to the development and establishment of the basis for a humane economic and societal order.

Congregations and church districts support projects and programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America, extensive educational work on development policies, work on HIV/Aids, the Decade on Overcoming Violence, the Drop the Debt campaign aimed at remittance of the debts of the poor and most highly indebted countries of the earth, initiatives for human rights, peace and reconciliation, for the development of social standards, for fair trade, for ethically responsible financial investments, and against child labour and child prostitution, poverty, exclusion and oppression.

The church is committed to bringing its weight and competence into the process in civil society. Not least the Joint Statement of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the German Bishops’ Conference<sup>81</sup> on the Social and Economic Situation has shown that the church has influence when it makes itself heard with clear positions and in ecumenical unity.

A decision of the General Church Synod 2008 on economic globalisation is, therefore, neither just a stock-taking nor the result or even conclusion of an internal church debate, but rather a further step in a process that will be characterised by permanent analysis, continual consideration and recurrent communicative action. The work is not finished by just passing a resolution. Action must follow. The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland is committed to

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80 Jörg Hübner, *Globalisation - Challenge for Church and Theology* (2003), 294

81 cf. the *Gemeinsamen Worte des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz zur wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Lage* (1997), zur *Woche der ausländischen Mitbürger „Rassismus erkennen - Farbe bekennen“* (2001, gemeinsam mit der Griechisch-Orthodoxen Metropolie in Deutschland, zur *Zukunft unseres demokratischen Gemeinwesens „Demokratie braucht Tugenden“* (2006)

accounting for what it can do to change and improve the present situation, and it is committed to act accordingly.

A clear problem definition evolves from this: as it is the task of the church to promote attitudes that serve life in all fields, it cannot help but see it as its task to exert a positive influence on the field of economic activity. The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland will, therefore, push forward steps on the way to an economy in the service of life as a process of the whole church, with informatory preparation, clear programmes, thematic focussing and comprehensive debate with those responsible and those who take the decisions.

We want to contribute to reforming globalisation so that the economy is in the service of life. This demands actions both within and outside the church. For this reason we intend to examine and clarify our own attitudes and conclusions in the various fields of action and critically ask ourselves, what consequences and limitations we are prepared to accept as a church and as individuals in order to come closer to our aims. At the same time we intend to confront the business world, politics and society once more and more intensely with the ethical postulate that follows from our commitment to peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

## **2. Influence of individual states and state alliances**

Individual states and their governments and parliaments are less and less able to influence what is happening throughout the world. The authority to fix norms and to implement them is being moved more and more to the level of supra-national alliances and international institutions and organisations. This means that the importance of international institutions and organisations has grown enormously. However, on the other hand it is apparent that even supranational alliances in no way offer a guarantee that they observe and recognise urgent problems and actually come closer to an effective and sustainable solution in time. In this context the growing influence of the international finance markets (loan markets, currency markets, stock markets) is seen as being increasingly problematic.

Responsible for the problematic development of the financial markets are among other things the collapse of the International Monetary System, the abandonment of capital traffic controls and high balance of payment deficits respectively surpluses.

The concentration of capital in fewer and fewer multinational concerns, the tax havens and the worldwide hunt for ever higher short-term gains have contributed decisively to this. This has led on the one hand to a lack of capital for meaningful, long-term investment. On the other hand it means that even healthy business companies are at the mercy of international capital speculation and made bankrupt just for short-term gains, which has grave social consequences.

- International Institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF enforce their, in many cases, highly disputed goals and interests undeterred and with determination, although they not only do not solve the social and economic problems connected to them but often rather make them worse.
- The European Union finds it recognisably difficult to also define social standards as a necessary and essential part of their community understanding, to codify and in the end to implement them. This has recently become very clear in the context of the discussions taking place in connection with the constitutional process.
- The United Nations find themselves only very limitedly in a position to implement efficiently the decisions and resolutions passed by the world community. In September 2000 for example, the so-called Millennium Summit passed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>82</sup> with the collaboration and participation of the highest representatives of almost all the states of the world. In this summit the community of nations committed themselves to achieve eight specific goals by the year 2015, including halving the percentage of the world population that has to survive on an income of 1\$ per day, to reduce the infant mortality rate by  $\frac{2}{3}$  and mortality in childbirth by  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Progress in achieving these goals is not recognisable, or not sufficiently. It is already now apparent that some goals, for example the guarantee of full primary education for all children in the world<sup>83</sup> cannot be achieved on time.

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82 see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

83 Goal No.2 „Achieve universal primary education: ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling“

### 3. Global Governance

In view of the clearly recognisable discontinuity in the international battle against destitution, poverty and deprivation of the right of decision-making, it is not surprising that the wishful call for a functioning global government<sup>84</sup> is regularly heard, i.e. an institution to establish and guarantee a generally accepted and recognised global mandatory order of values, which can be effectively and sustainably enforced in cases of refusal or if need be.

The United Nations do not have such a mandate. Nor are the national states and supranational confederations willing to relinquish their original sovereignty rights in favour of such an institution. Complex questions on the problems of creating and maintaining sufficient democratic authorisation would only add to the difficulties, which could hardly be solved globally by mutual agreement anyway. Consequently there is no global government.

The bi-lateral and multi-lateral international contracts and agreements, summarised together under the term global governance<sup>85</sup> remain the only political legal framework for global commitments. To the so-called „pillars of the global governance architecture“ belong the many agreements under international law passed by the United Nations and also contracts and agreements such as the World Trade Order, the International Competition Order and the International Monetary and Financial Orders. This is the architecture on which the corresponding organisations such as the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF and all their tasks and responsibilities are built. The Millennium Development Goals on the other hand are merely a declaration of the General Assembly of the United Nations and as such, unfortunately, have no binding relevance under international law.

This system of many global agreements, contracts, understandings, decisions and resolutions is on the one hand essential but on the other hand characterised by conflicting interests of the participating states and confederations, organisations and institutions. Different understandings of democracy, human rights and the necessity to direct national, international and global economic processes and developments, different economic interests and power and geo-political interests, the wide divergence of economic and military strength in the nation-states, the (to a large extent uncontrolled) independent existence of important international organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF, but also the WTO, which are influenced and directed by

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84 The concept means more or less the same as the German term „Weltregierung“.

85 global political forms of steering politics

the industrial nations, and in addition, in the case of the United Nations an obvious institutional crisis, huge financing problems and openly disputed lack of acceptance by important contributors and member states - all this has negative effects and consequences.

For one, the functioning and efficiency of the global governance architecture is permanently called into question. Secondly, extremely conflicting interests and national sensitivities inevitably lead to forms of consensus politics that finally only look for a compromise and no longer have either its contents or its consequences in mind. Unfortunately, this often results in fruitless compromise formulas or weak agreements of the lowest common denominator.

But knowing this can only mean that in all rationality we must be aware of the level of difficulty and the complexity of the task, but must not lead us to complain loudly and bitterly about the situation on the one hand, but otherwise to resign or even to remain inactive.

#### **4. Areas of action**

We must articulate well-founded assessments and make clear demands formulated on the basis of surveys and analyses.

First of all this requires reflection on what is required, before the church can speak out or act within the complex problematic field of globalisation.

In this context the following questions (among others) must be answered:

- What professional competence does the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland have or can obtain from a third party?
- What possibilities has the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland to talk to people and influence them at the three levels of the church? Who are the specific contact partners in politics and the economic world at these three levels?
- Which allies from civil society can be won over for church action in the sense of the “orientation points” (cf. II.6.3)?
- What opportunities for political action are available to the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland at the communal, federal state nationwide and European level?

- What significance does the subject of globalisation have for the common goal of the Protestant Churches in Europe to actively participate in the European unification process?
- How can common action be coordinated within the global ecumenical relations of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland ?

In the following, seven fields of action will be presented in an exemplary way that have been acknowledged and worked on in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland for many years. The presentation follows the ecumenical three-step, “see - judge - act”, developed in the conciliar process, which challenges us to take up clear positions and aims at action and a clear catalogue of tasks.

Beyond these selected fields of action there are further areas which are important for the work of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, but which still require more in-depth work in the context of the challenges of globalisation. Health and education shall be named here as examples.

#### **4.1 Labour**

##### **See**

Outsourcing, rationalisation, relocation of jobs, more flexibility, subcontracted employment, temporary jobs, reduction of employee protection rights, reduction in wage levels, single person companies (Ich-AG's), these are the facts that are radically changing the labour reality and the life situation of millions of people. In Germany it is not only permanent unemployment that is a social and political problem. A characteristic sign of the division in the established labour society of the Federal Republic of Germany is also the increase in insecure and even precarious employment,<sup>86</sup> which especially affects women.

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<sup>86</sup> The working conditions of those employed in normal jobs are also changing. Those relatively materially well-secured complain of more work, stress, longer working hours and a lot of pressure in their daily work.

## Judge

At various levels of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland many people<sup>87</sup> are highly committed to working with jobless people in a remarkable and accepted way. Through public relations work and informative action they make the scandalous working conditions in the developing countries the subject of discussion - in connection with the relocation of production but also our own consumer behaviour. The insidious changes in the structure of wage-employment and working conditions also require perception and positioning.

It is, therefore, particularly important to take a clear unambiguous position on the urgent and distressing problem of “poverty in spite of employment”<sup>88</sup> also with regard to our own behaviour. In the debate on general principles being carried out under the emotive word “minimum wage”, the political positions and suggestions for action<sup>89</sup> are just as controversial as the academic discussion on economics.<sup>90</sup> From a socio-ethical point of view it is important to state that full-time employment must pay enough for a secure livelihood. All recommended measures must be judged by this criterion. The latest legal decisions argue in a similar way, pointing to the enshrined principle of human dignity of a person in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany: „The human dignity of an individual would be violated, if he or she could only just ensure physical survival or not even that from an average full-time job. ”<sup>91</sup>

Precarious positions of employment are not only to be judged from a material point of view. A Christian understanding of human labour includes the

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87 Both male and female

88 The working poor, i.e. the number of those who, in spite of having a full-time job, are dependent on additional social benefits, is growing continuously. At present 600,000 people. Over 3 million employees have a net income of less than 940 Euros and according to EU criteria live below the poverty line. 4.6 million employees have a gross hourly wage of less than 7.50 euros and are thus under the monthly net income that is exempt from seizure.

89 Legal and branch-specific regulations under the collective wage agreement, extension of the worker-posting law (Entsendegesetz), combi-wages, “Bürgergeld” etc.

90 Representatives of the neoclassic-oriented schools of theory generally reject a minimum wage. They expect a negative effect on the job market from it. In contrast Keynes supporters expect positive effects on the economy as a whole. Nor do empirical studies offer a unanimous picture. For example a comparative examination of the effects on employment in nine countries in 2003 led to the following results: in 24 cases loss of jobs were established, in 7 cases there was a contradictory picture, in 15 examinations no loss of jobs, and even a positive effect on employment were registered. (Ragacs, Christian. Mindestlöhne und Beschäftigung. Ein Überblick über die neuere empirische Literatur, Working Paper 25, Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, 2003)

91 Social Welfare Tribunal Berlin, Judgement from 27th Feb.2006, Ref: S77 AL 742/05, with cross reference to similar judgements from the Industrial Tribunal in Bremen and the Social Welfare Tribunal in Fulda.

right and the obligation that it be carried out in a humane way, on account of the fact that employment is essential and possibly also arduous. That is why for example, flexible family-unfriendly working hours, changing subcontracted employment and pseudo-self employment are not humane instruments of a socially acceptable long-term employment policy.

## **Act**

In view of these developments in the labour world, which as a national adjustment to the intrinsic dynamics of globalisation is unavoidable according to a neoliberal understanding, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland must exercise its admonishing and prophetic role in society in a distinctive way. As a Territorial Church it can also introduce or support alternative concepts of action in the political decision-making process.<sup>92</sup>

But first of all the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland must examine its own patterns of behaviour and options for action, and correct them if need be. At all levels, in all institutions, departments and associations there is always direct scope for self-reliant action, which can be modeled on best-practice experience. The following orientation aids and guidelines should serve this end, and are proposed as resolutions to be passed as recommendations for action by the General Synod.

- For a full-time job and average performance, every employer in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland shall pay a wage that is not below the socio-cultural subsistence level of social welfare.
- When giving contracts to a third party (e.g. tradesmen, services, catering) and their subcontractors, this criterion shall be applied when awarding the contract.
- Building project contracts must expressly forbid the employment of illegal workers, and should the opposite be proven take legal recourse against it.
- One-Euro jobs (for persons receiving social welfare benefits) should not be made available without mandatory task supervision and a personal contact partner on the spot to offer social pedagogic assistance.

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92 z.B. das Konzept zum Passiv-Aktiv-Transfer (PAT) des Diakonischen Werkes in Deutschland

The uncompromising implementation of these suggestions can lead to collisions of interest and dilemmatic situations. This concerns for one the church diaconal institutions that are in competition on the market with their services. This can also affect church institutions applying for funds and being put under pressure to reduce costs and financing. Decision must always be reviewed considering which borders responsible Christian action must not cross with regard to humane working conditions.

## **4.2 Ethical investment**

### **See**

The greatest part of the capital available throughout the world is finance capital, to a large extent speculative and invested with the expectation of high short-term profit.

The margin of profits on the financial markets also sets the standard for profits expected from the companies listed on the stock exchange. This brings with it the danger that social and ecological standards are limited or avoided in favour of maximum profit.

Experience with “ethical funds” however, shows that innovative companies that apply such standards in their company policies are economically quite competitive and achieve above-average profits.<sup>93</sup>

Institutional investors such as pension funds, insurances, foundations and also churches can move companies to do business in a sustainable way through their investment policies.

For example, the 230 Million US\$ Norwegian Petroleum-Fund sold its shares in the US company „Wal Mart“ in 2006, because the Ethics Council of the Fund saw it as proven that „Wal Mart“ was responsible for violations of human rights. The fund also made this decision public on its web site.

### **Judge**

Making capital available for public and private businesses is not an ethically neutral action.<sup>94</sup> It makes it possible to stabilise or also to extend the eco-

conomic action radius. In this way a growth in power is also connected with a growth in political power in times of dwindling state sovereignty.

This power must be used according to ethical principles, if economy in the service of life is to mean more than just the satisfaction of the needs of those who are able to stand their own ground on the market.

Against the criteria of economic efficiency and purely quantitative growth expectations stand ethical standards for working conditions, for the use of natural resources, for the usage and spreading of academic and technological expertise and for the reform of trade and financial relations. These criteria are legally suable only to a limited degree. That is why ethical investment is an important steering instrument for creating fair trade and finance relations, and for the promotion of social and ecological standards in production and marketing.

## **Act**

The possibilities for action to be taken by the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland must be well-coordinated with its investment strategy. As an institutional investor, requiring on the one hand a high security for its investments and at the same time regular dividends, the Territorial Church has around 70 % of its investments in fixed-interest securities that often stem from state issuers (Federal Republic, Federal States, communal bonds, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau). However, the church also purchases fixed-interest securities from large companies, here mainly from banks and from other states. Only up to 30% of the capital assets can be invested in mixed funds. Here large European companies play a dominant role.

At the Territorial Church level, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland does not participate in currency speculation, does not invest in bonds that have been issued in tax havens, and only uses derivatives to secure capital. It

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93 The development of one of the most important share indexes -MSCI (Morgan Stanley Capital Index World) - kept comparatively the same level as the DJSI (Dow Jones Sustainability Index) from 8/9/1999 to 31/3/2006. (source: SAM indexes GmbH Zürich, Sept. 2007).

94 The question can be raised for example, whether investing in shares that are not invested long-term is at all compatible with ethical criteria (speculation). Bank shares and bonds are problematic in a number of ways: on the one hand they can finance a company with very questionable business activity, e.g. the production of cluster munitions. On the other hand these companies with their branches in tax havens contribute to tax evasion and avoidance. An analysis of business activities is hardly possible. It is therefore best only to invest in such special institutions or banks that make use of an examinable ethic filter, which includes the criteria of peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

makes sense that all corporate bodies of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland also follow this practice.

The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland has at a Territorial Church level invested some of its capital reserves in funds. These funds take sustainability criteria into account.

Sustainability criteria (ethics filter) can however not prevent that occasionally investments are made in a company that violates social and ecological criteria, because the violations of the criteria by this company are not known, or after the decision to invest in it the company no longer observes them. This gives the bodies investing in it the chance to get into discussion with the company. A discussion with the Board of a company can well lead to a change in attitude.

Church congregations, church districts and the church administration of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland have already taken important steps to invest their money according to social and ecological criteria. There is however still more potential. The established church could invest all its assets according to sustainable criteria and in addition make all the criteria known to the public.

### **4.3 Peace, development and security**

It is absolutely necessary to advance peace, development and security if the challenges of economic globalisation are to be met.

#### **See**

1. Armament swallow resources that are desperately lacking for the implementation of the Millennium goals of the UN for example. Expenditure on armament throughout the world has increased again in 2006.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)<sup>95</sup> points out in its new annual report that the annual expenditure of more than 1200 billion

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95 Eine Übersicht der Rüstungsexporte, ihrer Bewertung und Forderungen zum Gegensteuern enthält der jährliche Rüstungsexportbericht der Gemeinsamen Konferenz Kirche und Entwicklung (GKKE), zuletzt: Rüstungsexportbericht 2006, epd-Dokumentation Nr. 1/2007.

US-\$ has increased by 3.5 percent as against 2005.<sup>96</sup> With almost 37 billion US \$ Germany is sixth among the armament producing states. The international weapons trade has increased by 50 percent since 2002. The USA and Russia were again by far the two biggest exporters. Germany comes third before France in the meantime with an armament export volume of 6.9 billion Euro between 2002 and 2006.

According to the assessment of the Joint Conference Church and Development (GKKE) what is not acceptable in relation to German weapon exports is the disproportionate increase in exports to areas of tension, the armaments supplied to China, to Greece and to Turkey, the participation of German security companies in armed conflicts and the export of small arms.

The failure of the Examination Conference on the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in 2006 has further increased the threat to the world from nuclear weapons.

2. Security and as a consequence peace and development threaten to fail if inner-state conflicts<sup>97</sup> erupt into violence and the states forfeit their ability to act, or even fall apart on account of the loss of the state monopoly of power. The breakdown of states raises the cost for development and threatens the safety of whole regions. The “securing” of the energy supply by armed force also presents in the medium term an extremely great danger.

### 3. Political Scope

Since the acts of terror in the USA on September 11th 2001, the „war on terror“ has led to a loss of democracy and the rule of law, more re-armament and military action in the USA itself, in Europe and throughout the world, and as a consequence has led to a strengthening of terrorist groups in critical areas.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU with its European Security Strategy (ESS) does not follow a clear regulatory policy orientated towards peace. Military efforts, e.g. in the form of the „Defence Agencies“ are still predominant, set up by the Council of Ministers without parliamentary authorisation from the EU Parliament.

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96 The lion's share (528.7 billion US\$) both in total expenditure and in the rate of increase (62%) is from the USA, mainly on account of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The next in the list of the highest armaments expenditure are Great Britain with 59.12 billion US\$, France with 53 billion and China with 49.44 billion US\$.

97 The number of wars in 2006 has remained unchanged at 17 from 2005. All these wars are inner-state conflicts, which however frequently acquire a “trans-national” character, because the UN, the NATO or another international alliance gets involved. (cf. Afghanistan, Middle East and Somalia).

Even the security policies of the German Federal Government do not give priority for non-military strategies when dealing with crises, although the peace missions and civil aims of their action must be appreciated. The Government White Paper (2006) does so far not do justice to the paradigmatic action plan of the Government on civil crisis prevention (2004), which demanded the extension of civil conflict management.

## **Judge**

As the basis on which to judge peace, development and security, including economic globalisation, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, in ecumenical accord, has recognised the model of “just peace”.<sup>98</sup>

This model follows the resolution, „If you want peace, prepare peace.”<sup>99</sup> It results from the „priority option for non-violence“ as a consequence of the Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, which the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland has taken into its constitution.

Peace, development and security can no longer be achieved permanently and sustainably with military means. The so far dominant concepts of „extended security“ and „network security“ do not go far enough for civil measures as they are directed at military reactions. The new standard understanding for the reform of globalisation is today the concept of „human security“. It was first published in 1994 by the development programme of the United Nations (UNDP) and has since been widely discussed. „Human security“ is not aimed at the security of states but rather at the life interests of individuals. „Human Security“ is measured by the indicators for healthy life, appropriate education and standard of living. The concept of human security understands security, development and peace including the economic perspective and the political scope of action as a complementary working together of human societies. As a holistic concept it also takes into account essential aspects of arbitration and reconciliation.

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98 ECiR (Ed) A Just Peace is Possible, Advice on how to present the case for peace, Düsseldorf 2005. The brochure was prepared following the decision of the General Synod in 2004 (resolution 14). Cf. also the new Peace Memorandum of the Evangelical Church in Germany, “Living in God’s peace, caring for just peace“, Gütersloh 2007/ [www.ekd.de/friedensdenkschrift](http://www.ekd.de/friedensdenkschrift).

99 This contrasts with the representation of military violence as ultima ratio.

## Act

The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland will in the light of its argumentation guide “A Just Peace is Possible” and the new ECD peace memorandum “Living from God’s Peace - caring for a just peace” that was passed by the council of the Evangelical Church in Germany in October 2007, continue its consultations with conciliar groups and initiatives and its special conferences on peace politics, in order to work on the ethical and factual questions of economic globalisation and those on peace, development and security, and in order to further develop competence in civil conflict resolution.

Beyond the narrower debate on peace ethics, the commitment of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland to human rights is documented in the declaration of the General Synod 2007 on torture “Nicht einen Spalt breit” (Not even a crack wide).<sup>100</sup>

The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland can only stand up strongly for peace, development and security together with strong allies. To this end it will be necessary to intensify the existing cooperation within the Evangelical Church in Germany and with the ecumenical partner organisations. In future it will be necessary to make concrete agreements on specific projects and joint tasks with further partners. At the centre of activities in Germany<sup>101</sup> is the Government Action Plan for Civil Conflict Resolution, which also requires much more support on the side of the churches.

In the European context it will be a question of continuing the critical debate on European security and defence policies and urging here for them to be directed much more strongly towards civil society. In this context, cooperation with the „EU Peace Building Partnership“, initiated by the European Commission in November 2007, will gain particular importance, as in this way the demand for a European Structure for Civil Conflict Resolution shall be implemented. Präses Nikolaus Schneider has expressed his opinion that the churches must involve themselves more for peace at a European level, and has demanded an institute especially for this.<sup>102</sup>

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100 Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, „Nicht einen Spalt breit! (2007)

101 E.g. other religious communities, political foundations, political parties, important NGOs and also the Armed Forces.

102 Speech made by Präses Nikolaus Schneider at the ecumenical Reception in of the EKD in Brussels on 16/10/2006 „Europe as the signpost for global peace? Europe’s security and defence policies in the light of Christian Peace Ethics”.

The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland will include the congregations, church districts and institutions in a continuing commitment to non-military conflict resolution strategies and continue to point out the problematic situations in the conflict regions. Only a broad basis of the formation of opinion can lead to processes of change in society and a change of mind by those in positions of political responsibility.

#### **4.4 Climate Change**

##### **See**

The climate crisis is a threat on a global scale. The latest UN reports make clear that there is very little time left to avoid or moderate the catastrophic consequences of a climate change. The environmental pollution caused by human beings and especially the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> has been proven to be heating up the atmosphere.<sup>103</sup>

The consequences for the climate change caused by us human beings have long become visible. Record heat waves and „century“ floods, cyclones and the extinction of species are obvious signals that it is high time to act.

It is no longer possible to raise serious doubts about the fact that the current climate change has been caused by human beings.<sup>104</sup> The reasons for concern have been confirmed compared to earlier IPCC reports<sup>105</sup> and even increased.<sup>106</sup>

In order to avert the worst consequences of climate change we have to have halved the emission of carbon dioxide globally by the year 2050, that means reduced them by 80% in industrial nations such as Germany. Only then can fair conditions be secured for human civilisation and the natural basis of life be preserved.

In the area of the Rhenish Church there are the brown coal mining areas Garzweiler, Inden and Hambach. The mining and usage of brown coal has grave negative consequences. Thousands of people are driven from their homeland, the countryside and nature destroyed, the rivers and water bal-

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103 Al Gore, An uncomfortable truth. The threatening climate catastrophe and what we can do about it (2006)

104 EKD Texte 89, Es ist nicht zu spät für einen Klimawandel. (2007) 7

105 International Professional Panel on Climate Change

106 EKD Texte 89, 8

ance damaged, the climate heated up. Nowhere in Europe is the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> emission higher than in the Rhenish brown coal open-cast mining areas.

Brown coal is the energy source that does most damage to the climate. The brown coal power stations are responsible for the emission of 145 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

Climate gases such as CO<sub>2</sub> enrich themselves in the atmosphere and heat up our earth.

The necessary change of direction must be initiated now. Should the average temperature of the earth rise unchecked, it is increasingly unlikely that we will be able to succeed in coping with the difficulties of climate change, as the adjustment capacities of the ecological and social systems will then be overtaxed.

The past twenty years were marked in this regard by serious neglect and grave delays. But a series of changes has come about:

- The awareness of the problem has grown on the whole;
- the technical options in the field of renewable energies have improved considerably;
- political instruments are being tested at present or are already in place.

This process has moved forward in an exemplary way in Germany in comparison to other countries. Today, 2007-2008 around 30 - 40% of collectible energy can be sustainably produced with alternative and renewable energy technology. The remaining 60 - 70 % however is still produced as before with coal, brown coal and nuclear energy.

The potential for saving energy is so large that here, flanked by political action, continuous progress is being made at all levels.

The political basis - the Kyoto Protocol 2008 to 2012 and the G8 resolutions in Heiligendamm 2007 - will keep people aware of the subject.

With these changes, if there is the required political will in the community of states and nations, it is possible that we can limit the climate change to a just about tolerable level. That is why it all depends right now on establishing this political will in order to initiate the necessary change of trend in the development of emissions. The widespread belief that a radical change of direction cannot be realised by 2020, must be decisively countered by getting it going as soon as possible - and that means before 2020.

## **Judge**

New brown coal power stations with only a minimally higher degree of effectiveness will not solve the problem. On the contrary: they will cement the climate-damaging coal priority policies for many more decades and prevent the energy change from taking place.

The concentration on research and technology with the goal of increasing efficiency and saving collectible energy is the challenge for the future and at the same time the chance to profit from the discussion about climate change.

Establishing step by step a mix of solar, wind and hydro power, bio-mass and geothermal power, in connection with developing all energy-saving potential will secure the electricity supply, protect the climate and create new jobs. For the transition period, modern gas power stations with combined heat and power cycles can provide the base load of electricity in a much more environmentally-friendly way.

The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland is aware of its responsibility and its impact to ensure the necessary energy change towards more renewable energies.

With all its congregations and institutions it is responsible for a large percentage of the energy consumption of the Rhineland, and thus has huge responsibility for the climate. This means that the church has a high exemplary function. Through its actions the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland wants to contribute to public awareness building and to drive the energy change forward. At local level many Christians are already working committedly for the protection of the climate.

Some church districts face their responsibility as a whole and have contracts with regional or national energy suppliers to be supplied with the so-called natural or green electricity produced from renewable, regenerative sources of energy.

## **Act**

- As a first step, guidelines on energy-saving and efficiency (for example by alternative heating methods, or with combined heat and power plants

(CHPs)) can be produced for the institutions of the congregations and church districts.<sup>107</sup>

- The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland will strive to reach soon a general agreement for all institutions of the church following the model of the existing contracts.<sup>108</sup> The main criterion must be the use of renewable energy sources and not the price compared to energy from fossil fuels or from nuclear power.
- The General Synod recommends all church districts to sign such general agreements, or to join the General Church general agreement with their institutions and congregations.

A self -commitment of the church districts is necessary, to let action follow insight into the climate change. Successful alternative models already practised in some church district can be returned to.

- The church districts should examine all suitable roof areas, to see whether they can be used for photovoltaic conversion or be made available to other interested parties, analogous to a programme that the Ministry for Agriculture has successfully carried out on farm buildings.
- Church property should be checked for waste of energy in the building evaluation process, and if necessary should be renovated with the goal of wasting less energy and improving energy efficiency.

## 4.5 Consumption

### See

Character and consequence of economic globalisation is the global production of goods based on the division of labour. Innumerable consumer goods are partly or entirely produced in locations where they can be produced cheapest.

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107 Models exist in Essen and in Jülich

108 A motion to this extent from the Jülich Church District was presented at the General Synod in 2004 (resolution 4,16). In a memorandum on 13/09/2004The StAÖV suggested estimating possible energy saving potential parallel to a price comparison of conventional and sustainably produced electricity (ecopower).The Finance Committee (FA) agreed to this decision on 25/ 11/ 2004, stating however that the price comparison should present the basis for the decision. This was to be pointed out to the church districts. From the point of view of the FA the motion of the Jülich church district to the General Synod had then been dealt with.

Global communication and traffic systems make this way of producing goods possible. In this way for example, raw materials, and half-finished or finished products for jeans are often transported a total of around 15000 kilometers.

This form of production does not only have negative ecological effects but also causes global competition for the lowest wage-costs for each product. This competition leads to exploitative working conditions in many production plants, which remain way under the standards recognised and laid down by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). As a result, millions of people do not have an income from their work that guarantees their existence.

Nevertheless, many areas within our church do not participate in critical consumption and the development of alternatives (e.g. fair traded coffee and textiles in hospitals and nursing homes).

## **Judge**

Both individuals and organisations are involved as consumers in the global production and circulation system of goods. The churches also, therefore, share in the responsibility for ecological consequences and social injustices. But they also have possibilities to influence this world-wide market.

Even the church can hardly distance itself from the ideology that „cheaper is better”. Although we know that it is meaningful from a social and ethical point of view to use products that have been produced ecologically, are fair-traded and sustainably usable, this is not standard in our houses and institutions. While we admit this, our own sluggishness that allows us to start doing what is right only tomorrow, we reaffirm at the same time that our confession of faith in Jesus Christ is not compatible with accepting that people are being exploited. As a church that is called to do the will of God we are committed to set signs for an economy of “Enough for All”.

## **Act**

Opportunities for action and areas of action are in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland are obvious in our own habits as consumers.

- Criteria of sustainability must be taken into consideration when buying goods (from fair-traded coffee and recycling paper, the “green computer” to building materials).

- We must take influence through our diaconic institutions, hospitals, homes of the aged, schools etc. with regard to social criteria being recognised when purchasing clothes and textiles and in the use of coffee and tea etc.
- We must enter into discussions with those responsible in the firms supplying us, with the aim of convincing them to recognise their social responsibility according to the CSR approach<sup>109</sup> and to take the appropriate steps to implement changes.

Furthermore the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland should

- continue increasingly to participate in the respective campaigns and actions
- and increase her information and educational work on this subject in adult education, youth work, centers for continuing education, schools and congregations.

## 4.6 Agriculture

### See

European agriculture is commercialised and industrialised to the largest possible extent. Among the reasons for this is particularly the European agricultural policy with its system of export refunds and subsidies. On the global market the products of this industrial form of agriculture are replacing the products of the more traditional forms of agriculture in the countries of the South and also Eastern Europe.

The globally active agro-business, marked by a concentration of capital and high-tech, is permanently taking away the livelihood of traditional farmers everywhere. The use of pesticides, artificial fertilisers and genetically engineered organisms, which reduce biological diversity, belong to this form of industrial production. Another factor of the system is the patenting and licensing of seeds, which make the farmers, who let themselves be drawn into this system, dependent on it. The effects of the global market and of global demand, for example for certain sorts of timber, are being felt directly in the rural regions of the countries of the South. Deforestation projects for agricultural use or for the timber industry, for example, are endangering the valu-

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109 CSR = corporate social responsibility

able “Rain forest” and are also a factor in the climate change taking place throughout the world.

On the other hand in the countries of the north there are attempts to promote organic cultivation again and to consume goods produced in the region. However this development is partly being impeded by the marketing structures of the large chain stores.

## **Judge**

We human beings, as creatures closely connected to the multifarious fabric of God’s creation, are at the same time called upon to share responsibly in God’s creative work. As co-workers in God’s creation we recognise gratefully the fullness and strength of life in the living space entrusted to all people: an indication of the power and the glory of the Creator. At the same time this makes us sensitive to structures that limit and oppress creation and its creatures, because people take destructive possession of creation.

The understanding of creation as a good gift from God leads to us looking at agricultural products in a new way. The fruit of the earth are not just commercial products but gifts of the Creator for all people. The present dominating production structures in agriculture are company oriented, determined by the market, motivated by profit, and they concentrate the land and the means of production in the hands of a few people. With this form of agro-business, agricultural work has been transformed into an industry that endangers the basis of life (food, water, soil, climate); whereas the work of the farmer should be understood as life-promoting cultural groundwork in God's creation.

## **Act**

The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland must commit itself to a „life-giving form of agriculture“ and a sustainable way of life. In all its fields of training it should pass on the appropriate knowledge and promote the ability to judge in a way that is responsible to creation. The commitment to use food from ecological cultivation, from the region and from fair trade in all its sectors and institutions, is a part of this.

As the church has a guardian’s task to fulfil, it must keep an eye on the conditions of production, and publicly criticise any developments that threaten to

destroy the basis for life permanently. It cannot be, that agricultural land and working animals are only seen as capital investments and that on account of the high financial requirements for industrial farming farmers are forced into dependency on the banks. In addition the political system of subsidies in Europe must be critically examined.

The activities of the church for the integrity of creation require cooperation across national borders; existing contacts are to be continued and new contacts made. The recommendation of the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu to celebrate a “time for God’s creation” every year between September 1st and October 4th, is welcomed. Liturgies and rituals that honour the spiritual dimension of God’s creative act, as well as honouring it by taking it into our culture as a service in God’s creation (Agri Culture) should be tried out in worship service practice.

#### **4.7 Migration**

##### **See**

Germany is influenced by migration, as all European states are. Simple facts prove this: more than 7 million foreigners live in Germany and around 25% of the total population have a migration background.

Poverty, threat to the basis of life, persecution, but also the wish to live a better life in other countries, cause millions of people to leave their original homelands.

The consequences of globalisation, which divide the world into rich and poor to a greater extent than ever before, increase the pressure to leave home and - often under risk of their lives - to seek "salvation" in the rich countries (of the North). Nevertheless we must note that only a very small percentage of those people who are on the move throughout the world as refugees ever reach the prosperous industrial countries. The much greater part live, sometimes under conditions unfit for human beings, in the neighbourhood of their home regions.

The longing for the “promised land” - intensified by the global information available - is confronted by the obstacle of the united logistic and financial efforts of a Europe determined to prevent migrants, and especially refugees, from reaching Europe via the EU outer borders.

## **Judge**

What is happening at the outer borders of the EU is in direct contradiction to a common refugee and asylum policy, based on the unrestricted validity of the Geneva Convention.

Whoever tries to cordon off the borders of Europe, makes these international commitments and also the basic guarantees of asylum worth nothing. A united Europe is not only committed to freedom, law and security but also, to the same extent, to humanity.

That includes effectively helping refugees in acute distress. That also includes fighting the causes of migration and flight, which are also triggered by globalisation there on the spot, by the European states working together with the countries of origin and transit states, by giving aid that is not alms but real help for people to help themselves, and particularly through global economic and trade structures that make it possible for the people who are now being forced to migrate and to flee, to live adequately at home.

A globalisation under fair conditions for everyone would also allow countries like Germany that need immigration to offer residency and work opportunities according to their needs. To prevent trained professionals being lured away from countries of origin where they are needed, the model test of a “circular migration” introduced by the EU could provide a sensible alternative.

Independent of this, in future migrants and refugees, among them many victims of the consequences of globalisation, will remain in the European countries of their choice. Most of them have been here for a long time, but have still not really “arrived”. Many of them have no secure residency status, but urgently need integration opportunities and assistance.

## **Act**

For this reason the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, as part of the worldwide church of Jesus Christ, will continue to remind those in positions of political responsibility and action in their region about this, and to call upon them, in cooperation with the countries of origin and transit to fight the causes of migration and flight - including those in connection with the effects of globalisation - and in the medium term do away with them.

In standing up for those in need, it is important for the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland to gain other social groups as allies and to direct its own actions in a transnational and global direction.

The 10-point action plan of the UNHCR from Summer 2006 aims to save human lives, to examine requests for protection fairly and efficiently as well as the role and the responsibility of the states of origin, transit and admission, but also to clarify the role of international organisations and shipping companies in case of a rescue at sea. The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland welcomes and supports this initiative. It will extend its own work with migrants, which has for ten years supported a European network of NGOs and ecclesial partnership organisations that promotes an exchange of information and projects and speaks out for regular ways of immigration in Europe.

To support people who have come to Germany as migrants or as refugees and are able to stay here permanently, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland will speak out for effective integration assistance. It is committed to see that standards such as apply in the regional church and diaconal model projects, e.g. “Congregation and Migrants“ or “Integrative Language Courses” be taken over in the support programmes of the state, federal states and municipalities.

Activities at congregational, church district and regional church level should be concerned with advice and assistance for migrants and refugees, who have no entitlement to residency, who suffer from traumatisation, are the victims of human trafficking and prostitution or were a minor when they entered the country. Assistance can extend from personal involvement and hospitality to partnerships and financial assistance in the country of origin.

Standing up for people who have experienced flight and migration remains a task and an area of action that the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland knows itself to be permanently committed to.

## **5. Dialogue, discussion and co-operation**

It would be presumptuous to believe that the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland should and could, so to speak, enter into discussions with all those in the world who play a role in globalisation. That is neither necessary nor imperative. For the Federal Republic of Germany and/or the European Union

have a seat, a vote and influence in all the international organisations and institutions that are or could be of importance. The German and European politicians substantially influence and determine the aims, activities and results of the relevant international organisations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. They carry responsibility there and must be reminded of their responsibility and confronted with our positions. For this reason the church must seek discussions in the globalisation process with politicians at all levels, regional, national and European.

But that on its own is not enough. For the business community has an increasingly strong leverage effect on developments and results. Therefore, the second important and essential discussion partner is the business community.

In both areas, and as a means of church advocacy, we must build up a consciously planned and coordinated network of contacts, encounters and discussions with the aim of setting in motion a sustainable exchange of ideas and opinions between the church, politicians and the business world on the subject of globalisation. To achieve this, we must organise discussion groups, forums, conferences and individual contacts based on sustainability, repetition and continuity.

## **5.1 Talking to the politicians**

Globalisation is a central subject for politicians and a reality they experience daily. International pressure of competition, constant shifts in the geopolitical power structure, growing demands for military presence, “out of area”,<sup>110</sup> bases and tax competition even within Europe; the need to constantly and flexibly adjust the political, economic and social framework conditions valid for the business world and society; more and more problems with achieving an overall economic equilibrium, social fractures and rejection at home and worldwide in attempts to secure a sufficient number of jobs inland, resistance and attempts at economic blackmail by companies and capital owners; constant summit meetings at a European level<sup>111</sup> and within the

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110 outside one's own national territory

111 both at special ministry level and also as meetings of state and government leaders

G7<sup>112</sup> and G8<sup>113</sup>, General Assemblies of the United Nations, annual conferences of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation negotiations:<sup>114</sup> all this occupies the politicians at all levels.

Those in authority in German politics and also in European politics are the influential people responsible for the contents, processes, orientation and results of globalisation in the national context, just as in the supranational and global context. Neither the Federal Republic of Germany nor the European Union are without weight or influence on the global stage. What follows from that is that we as citizens of Germany and Europe have the right to expect that our representatives and our governments and the authorities that represent them should take our demands and concerns into account in what they do and what they do not do. This however presumes that we articulate them.

Therefore, we must communicate with the responsible politicians<sup>115</sup> - in an ordered, coordinated and well-planned way.

## **5.2 Talking to the business world**

Globalisation has opened up new and considerably extended possibilities to the business world to act globally and to sell goods and services throughout the world. At the same time globalisation has changed the competition patterns for companies quite drastically. Today competition is global and this increases the pressure on competitors considerably. Furthermore companies are today no longer only in competition for their products, but in quite a different way than in former times also in competition for staff, capital, determining factors and natural resources.

While the business world is more aware of ethical and moral points of view than in former times, they still very rarely influence business activities. There are a series of initiatives and approaches at local, national, European and global levels in the business world, that are concerned with aspects such as

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112 Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy, USA, Canada and Japan with the EU with permanent guest status

113 G7 plus Russia

114 The current round of talks is the so-called Doha Round, named after the capital city of the Emirate Qatar as it was the first location of the current round of talks

115 see Appendix 2, for names and addresses, and subjects for the dialogue with politicians

human rights, the fight against corruption or the commitment to a greater perception of social responsibility on the part of the companies. However, serious action in this direction is limited to relatively few companies and is all too often something for the PR or the personnel department. Companies often like to show off with their social commitment, without developing tangible consequences in their company culture.

It is somewhat different in the field of so-called Corporate Governance; in as far as publicity and transparency of internal facts and figures relating to the company are concerned. Here there have been initiatives and activities at national, European and even global levels, and with their assistance and support considerable and recognisable progress has been made. Examples of this are the regulations on company reporting that have been tightened several times, and what has most caught the attention of the public, the disclosure of the earnings of the Board members.

The business world is a very significant dialogue partner for the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland. Aspects outside direct economic goals are not seen as being as important to business people as they are from the church point of view. The leverage effect that can be achieved by an increased sensitivity of businesses and those responsible for businesses for ethical and moral aspects of doing business should not be underestimated.<sup>116</sup>

Excellent discussion partners and allies for social and ethical work, besides those on the employers' and company side and politicians, are those on the employees' side, the trade unions and the organs of worker participation. According to the German company constitution and the consensus-oriented culture of participatory branches of industry, the power of influence of the institutions of participation cannot be valued highly enough. HR members of the management boards / chief personnel directors / staff managing directors and employee representation committee members of companies with legal participation are all economic protagonists. They all have very many far-reaching possibilities and experience with regard to economic decisions, determined by the demands of economic globalisation.

The German regulations ruling industrial relations and its regulations for participation have very special significance in times of globalisation.

### **5.3 Talking to civil society**

The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland does not want a “dialogue with an elite”. Church districts and congregations, departments and institutions and also local groups and circles are to participate in the dialogue process. This will be achieved by the participation of all levels and area of work in the conceptual development and contents of the discussion material.

This further requires people to make alliances with suitable partners and carry out joint actions. No-one can do everything, and most certainly no-one can do everything alone. Therefore, cooperation, division of labour and making use of synergy potential are not only relevant but also necessary.

Primary allies for the church are organisations and alliances in civil society, who thematically and strategically follow the same aims, for example the national and international networks and NGOs in the field of development cooperation, social work and social policies, human rights etc.<sup>117</sup>

## **6. Conclusions**

The resulting processes must not just get stuck in declarations of intent, but must rather be structured, organised and carried out in a well-planned way - with appropriate personnel, financial and organisational resources.

This can only be guaranteed if the task is institutionalised in the form of an independent working group that is responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the resulting steps and measures taken. It is, therefore, proposed that a „Project Group Globalisation“ be set up at general church level, whose task will consist of steering and organising the form and content of the project “Globalisation” of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland.<sup>118</sup>

The synod needs to be constantly informed about the methods, activities, aims and achievements of the process. To this end the project group will prepare annually a progress and account report and present it to the Church Council.

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116 see Appendix 3 for names and addresses and subjects for the dialogue with the business world

117 see Appendix 4, 2

118 For task, structure and personnel for the project group see Appendix 1



## **Publisher**

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