

**Address to the
Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order at
Santiago de Compostela
on the
Archbishop Iakovos Endowment Fund
For Faith and Order
August, 1993**

Madam Moderator,
Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Professor Pennybacker and I are pleased to be with you in this place of pilgrimage. Santiago de Compostela is for me my "name-city," as it is also for Archbishop Iakovos. All of us are ecumenical pilgrims.

For good or for ill, Christians find themselves together on the ecumenical road. I think it is for good. By a common reckoning, we are in the ninth decade of the modern movement toward unity. We must succumb neither to fatigue nor boredom nor despair, nor allow our vision to fade as we go forward together.

There is a kind of "destruction that wasteth at noonday" which can overtake even the ecumenical movement. For some, it has not moved fast enough nor far enough. The initial promise of the World Council of Churches and of Vatican II have not been fully realized.

On the other hand, achievements have been impressive. Christians of every tradition have found one another in a new way. Old enmities have largely disappeared. Dialogues at the national and world levels indicate that we are really listening to one another. We are engaged cooperatively in service to human needs everywhere. The ties which unite us far exceed the issues which divide us. Christian unity is already present in an amazing degree. We should be grateful – for we are not sustained by mere euphoria but by the grace of God.

This is seen clearly as you reflect on the theme: *Toward Koinonia/ Communion in Faith, Life and Witness*. How remarkably rich is the Greek word, *koinonia*! To grasp its meaning in English, for example, it must be translated into at least five different words: *fellowship, community, communion, participation* and *sharing*. Sometimes, in English we use fellowship as a verb. It is not a verb; it is a noun. It is not something we do, but it is a gift we receive!

There is one ecumenical movement – with several facets. I myself began to experience this in the missionary sense when I went to India in mission fifty-five years ago. Later I experienced it as Life and Word and as Faith and Order. Even as a teen-ager, I was vaguely aware of Lausanne and Stockholm and the Jerusalem Conferences. In the 'thirties, it was Oxford and Edinburgh and Madras and the World Council in process of formation. My point is: that whatever the ecumenical focus might have been, there was considerable overlap among the participants. The same has been even more evident in recent decades, from Amsterdam to Canberra and in the new relationships which have followed Vatican II.

You are charged with focus on Christian unity as unity. But Faith and Order, together with the other aspects of conciliar unity, suffers from inadequate support. It is precisely to correct this fault that the Ecumenical Development Initiative has been launched.

The World Council of Churches has identified three fundamental needs: the Ecumenical Library in Geneva; the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey; and an endowment fund for Faith and Order.

This is why we are here – in response to these requests. Archbishop Iakovos has graciously consented to lend his name to this endowment effort. He is peculiarly dedicated to Faith and Order. Orthodoxy has for centuries been exemplary in its emphasis on right teaching and right glorying of God. Having known His Eminence for forty years, I could not but consent when I was asked to chair this effort.

We are now engaged in organizing our campaign. As you are aware, three former Presidents of the United States have agreed to be honorary chairpersons. This should not be seen as having political significance but as a mark of their esteem for Archbishop Iakovos and their concern as laity for the cause of Christian unity.

Moreover, we are assembling a panel of distinguished sponsors from among the Christian communion, some of whom are gathered here. I can report to you that so far, nearly every person invited has responded affirmatively.

We anticipate a three-year campaign for this Archbishop Iakovos Endowment for Faith and Order. Early promise is encouraging, and by God's grace and the cooperation of God's people, we anticipate reaching our goal of ten million U.S. dollars. The Ecumenical Development Initiative will also be seeking resources for programs beyond this figure. This is not an American undertaking, but a global one.

What do we expect of you who are participants in this Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order?

1. That you keep informed about the Archbishop Iakovos Fund, beginning from today.
2. That you will seek the fullest possible authentication of this campaign by the communions you represent.
3. That you encourage a positive attitude toward the project.
4. That you help discover possible donors – large and small.
5. That you facilitate approaches to them.
6. That you yourselves consider giving as God has prospered you.
7. That you pray for this enterprise and what it will make possible.

We intend to proceed in dignity and order. We join Archbishop Soderblom in concluding about our common search for visible unity: "God wills it and the world's need requires it."

Yes, our *unity* is what God intends.

It is for *unity* that we join ourselves in the prayer of our Lord that "they all may be one."

It is *unity* that we profess when we confess we "believe one *holy, catholic* and *apostolic* faith."

It is *unity* that the Spirit gives.

—*Bishop James K. Mathews*