

## A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CLOSING CEREMONY

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*due to lack of time, this contribution was not able to be made*

Dear Friends, Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

I thank you for giving me an opportunity to offer you a brief reflection on this historic Edinburgh 2010 Conference. I am also very grateful to God and all of you for giving me a chance to be part of this great experience of Christian unity in mission.

Since I came to Edinburgh a few days ago, I have met so many brothers and sisters in Christ. Some of them are quite different from me. I have heard a variety of voices that came from various parts of the world and from various Christian traditions. I am now full of feelings, ideas and thoughts. I am sure it will take me a while to digest and organise them within myself.

What has amazed me most throughout the Conference was the repeated experience of convergence of ideas and thoughts. While they have their roots in very diverse and different contexts, cultures, and traditions, they have come together through discussions and produced the visions that are mutually similar and that most of us are eager to embrace in spite of the remaining differences and disagreements among us. In our daily lives, we seldom have such an extraordinary experience. In our daily lives, we often experience that even a minor difference could cause people to stay apart from each other. Thus, I could not but sense the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit in the midst of our experiences of convergence here in Edinburgh, .

It is indeed the Holy Spirit that has brought us here to Edinburgh. The Holy Spirit has united us in our common vision. And the Holy Spirit is now sending us back with the common call to a world full of conflicts, hatreds, sufferings, sorrows, despairs, and death. With God's help, I would like to respond to this call to unity and mission.

There is, however, one fact we should never forget nor take for granted. We have prayed together; we have shared together; we have worshipped together. But one important matter has still been missing. There has been no Lord's supper, no Holy Communion, no Eucharist shared in by all together during the Conference. We have celebrated the Eucharist in the confessional observances held every morning. However, we have failed once again to come together to celebrate the One Common Eucharist. We should not leave this sad fact behind in our euphoria over unity. We should remember that we are not truly one as long as we are unable to celebrate this divine sacrament together.

In a country like Japan, where Christians constitute a tiny minority, the disunity around the Lord's Table is nothing but a scandal. While we as Christians invite our people to join us in the acts of love and compassion, we are in fact failing to love and embrace each other in the very presence of Jesus Christ. Isn't it an embarrassing irony that our divisions become most visible around the Lord's Table? How can we explain this grave failure to our people? Are we really qualified to tell them to love? Are we really followers of Christ?

This is the fundamental contradiction that still exists at the heart of our mission. We have to repent seriously and ask God to help us to overcome our own brokenness. Let's hope that we can make it better, with God's help, when we will gather here next time. Thank you!