



Declaration on Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue

Noting that approximately 55% of the world's population is either Christian or Muslim; and that perhaps 80% of the world's population is either Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist or Confucian;

Concerned about the ever-renewed tensions between adherents of different religions and in particular between Christians, Muslims and Jews;

Realizing the impossibility of true peace and harmony in the world without harmonious relations and understanding between adherents of the world's religions;

Mindful of the possibility of misusing, 'cherry-picking' and citing out of context selected quotations from any Scripture to increase religious tension, hatred and violence;

Appreciating the efforts of H.M. King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein of Jordan in launching the historic Amman Message in November 2004 and in particular the unanimous international Islamic Consensus on its 'Three Points' which proved and re-established the fallacy of illegitimate and unqualified *fatwas* calling for hostility and aggression in Islam and, in the words of the late *Grand Imam* and *Sheikh Al-Azhar* Professor Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, constitute:

'The best resource for all those who wish to travel along the straight path in their words and in their actions, and in their spiritual and religious life'.

Acknowledging that despite the many irresolvable and unbridgeable theological and religious differences and disagreements between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, there is nevertheless a central and essential common ground of *faith, hope and love* between these three monotheistic and Abrahamic religions — as proposed by the historic *A Common Word* Open Letter of October 13th 2007 — in the *greatest Two Commandments* of Love of God and Love of the Neighbour (Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:29-31), however differently they be understood;

Echoing the words of H.H. Pope Benedict at the King Al-Hussein bin Talal Mosque in Amman, Jordan on Saturday, 9 May 2009, when His Holiness said:

‘Of great merit too are the numerous initiatives of inter-religious dialogue supported by the Royal Family [of Jordan] ... and the more recent *Common Word* letter which echoed a theme consonant with my first encyclical: the unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor, and the fundamental contradiction of resorting to violence or exclusion in the name of God (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, 16)’.

And likewise the words of His Grace Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2010:

‘The appearance of the *A Common Word* [Open Letter] of 2007 was a landmark in Muslim-Christian relations and it has a unique role in stimulating a discussion at the deepest level across the world.’

Believing, moreover, that all the peoples of the world are bound together not only by their common humanity and their common planet earth, but also by either Love of God and Love of the Neighbour *or* Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour;

Supporting United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/65/PV.34 of October 20th 2010 establishing a voluntary *World Interfaith Harmony Week* as proposed by H.M. King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein of Jordan on September 23rd 2010 at the United Nations General Assembly, and calling for:

'the world's people, in their own places of worship, could express the teachings of their own faiths about tolerance, respect for the other, and peace.'

Hoping that observance of the World Interfaith Harmony Week will prove to be, in the words His Grace Bishop Munib Yunan, President of World Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III:

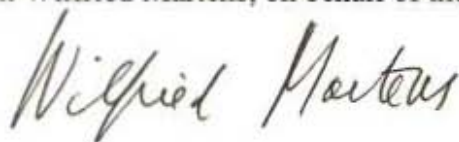
'An integrated international renaissance of spirit and intellect to save the world from the scourge of sectarian tensions, consequent communal violence and hatred.'

Call upon all governments, peoples and religions of the world to — in the words of the *A Common Word* Open Letter:

'let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to one another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill.'

16 December 2010
European People's Party Summit
Castle of Bouchout
Meise
Belgium

EPP President Wilfried Martens, on behalf of the European People's Party Presidency



In the presence of H. M. King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein of Jordan

