

# MORE ABOUT THE JANUARY MEETING

# CCT News - March 2008

## CARDINAL KEELER RESIGNATION

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: POEM - THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD UNITED**

**In a recent news release (*January 2008 Ecumenical Update [WM-1418]*), I stated the following:**

***“What could hinder a CCT drive toward a National Sunday Law from beginning in 2008?—***

In spite of its present massive size, CCT is comparatively young. Its final organization only occurred at last year’s (February 2007) annual meeting. Although its later objectives were finalized, all the member denominations, church organizations, local congregations, and individual members remain a bunch of separate entities. CCT leaders wisely recognize that the next step is to set up coordinating committees to integrate and marshal the forces to work on a specific project. They know that a mandated Sunday Law is not the one to begin with! So they have chosen a simple goal, one on which everyone can be agreed.

“It had earlier been announced that the January 8-11, CCT 2008 Annual Meeting would be held in Washington, D.C. But then it was switched to Baltimore. (Three of the first CCT meetings had been held in Catholic facilities there: Summer 2001; September 7-8, 2001; and September 2002. *See Christian Churches Together: Its History and Organization WM-1386-1389.*) According to their official notice, only a project to work on ‘poverty in America’ will be discussed. This would indicate that no mention of a campaign to urge a National Sunday Law will be publicly announced at this time.

“The leaders at CCT recognize that they must first work out the mechanics of organizing their massive number of churches and members—and get them used to working

together toward a single united goal. ‘Poverty’ has been chosen as the preparatory project. How soon after that a drive to begin pushing through Congress a bill leading to a National Sunday Law cannot be known at this time.”

**With that in mind, here is a more complete CCT public news release on major events at the January 8, 2008 meeting.** Note that the meeting location was switched from a pre-announced Washington, D.C. location, to a Baltimore conference site. **Keep in mind that this news release only discusses meetings by the entire assembly. Private meetings of the steering committee are not mentioned.**

“*CCT News release*—The annual meeting of Christian Churches Together was held Tuesday through Friday, January 8-11 in the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. Cardinal William Keeler of the Archdiocese of Baltimore was one of the featured speakers. He is the individual who, in his Cardinal’s residence in Baltimore, started CCT with three others in 2001, and has been a key person in every major meeting and decision since then. And, from its beginning, he has served on CCT’s steering committee.

“The other speakers at the January 8 meeting were church leaders from the Presbyterian Church, USA, and the Orthodox Church in America, plus two which the CCT had to work hard to get into its ranks: the National Baptist Convention, USA; and the Salvation Army. Music was provided by a 12-piece Salvation Army brass band.

“Seven new churches and organi-

zations were received into CCT participation during the meeting. They include American Bible Society, the Church of the Brethren, Elim Fellowship, Habitat for Humanity, the Mennonite Church, the Polish National Catholic Church, and the Vineyard, USA.

“The Second Annual Meeting of CCT: January 8-11, 2008, Baltimore—On Wednesday, January 9, the participants will join with seminarians for a day of discussion and discernment of CCT’s strategy regarding our domestic poverty initiative. CCT will be taking the next steps in its effort to address the scandal of poverty in the United States. The participants, observers, and visitors will travel by motor coach to Capitol Hill. There they will be joined by up to 45 seminarians and young church leaders who will tour a number of sites—including Bread for The World, a human services center, the offices of Sojourners/Call to Renewal, and World Vision. We will spend the afternoon discerning what the strategy of CCT shall be, in regard to the Poverty Initiative, and engage together in worship.

“On Thursday, January 10, there will be time for the five families to meet together; and we will engage in discernment regarding how CCT will express its commitment to evangelism. Each of the 5 faith families will offer any further insights or questions about evangelism they have growing out of the presentations of the 2007 Annual Meeting; and we will begin to shape a common plan for CCT in this regard. We will close the day with worship and fellowship.

“On Friday, January 11, we will give the morning to business, includ-

ing changes to the bylaws, oversight of finances, decisions about strategy, etc. We will close by Noon.”

“*William Cardinal Keeler, 14th Archbishop of Baltimore, Archdiocese of Baltimore news release*—Cardinal Keeler was appointed to the College of Cardinals by Pope John Paul II on November 28, 1994. The Consistory ceremony took place in the Pope Paul VI Audience Hall, Vatican City State. The Cardinal currently serves on the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

**“An influential participant in a wide range of national and international issues.** Cardinal Keeler was elected President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference in November 1992. He had been elected as the organizations’ Vice President in November of 1989, when he hosted Baltimore’s bicentennial celebration of the founding of America’s first Roman Catholic diocese. He is also Chairman of the Maryland Catholic Conference, Chair of the Board and Chancellor of St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore, as well as of Mount St. Mary’s Seminary, Emmetsburg.

“As part of his work with the NCCB, **Cardinal Keeler developed a reputation for effectively building interfaith bonds.** He is particularly noted for his work in furthering **Catholic-Jewish dialogue** and serves as moderator of **Catholic-Jewish relations** for the USCCB. He has been a member of the International Catholic Orthodox Commission for Theological Dialogue since 1986. As **Chair of the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs** from 1984 to November 1987, **he helped arrange the Pope’s meetings with Jewish leaders in Miami and with Protestant leaders** in Columbia, S.C., during the 1987 papal visit. The Archbishop was **appointed to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity** in the summer of 1994, and to the **Congregation for the Oriental Churches** in November 1994. From 1998-2001 and again from November 2003-2006, he served as Chair for the **Committee on Pro-Life Activities**. He now serves as a consultant to the Committee.”

“*Pope names new Baltimore archbishop, Baltimore, USA Today.*—[Picture caption:] **The pope on Thursday, July 12, 2007, accepted the resignation of Cardinal William Keeler as archbishop of Baltimore** and named Archbishop Edwin O’Brien, who leads the U.S. military archdiocese, as his successor.)

“The pope has appointed the head of the U.S. military archdiocese to succeed retiring Cardinal William Keeler as archbishop of Baltimore, the Vatican said Thursday.

“[News Release:] Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien will

be taking over the nation’s oldest Roman Catholic diocese, which includes the first two Catholic seminaries and the first cathedral in the country. Keeler turned 76 in March, a year past the normal retirement age for bishops . . .

**“The archbishop also coordinated a major evaluation of U.S. seminaries in 2005-2006,** ordered by the Vatican in response to the clergy sex abuse scandal.

“In a 2005 Associated Press interview, O’Brien said that most gay candidates for the priesthood struggle to remain celibate and the church must ‘stay on the safe side’ by restricting their enrollment, in keeping with church policy.

“Keeler, a native of San Antonio, was appointed archbishop in Baltimore, in 1989, and became **a national leader in improving Catholic-Jewish relations.** Pope John Paul II visited the archdiocese in 1994, followed two years later by Mother Theresa.

“The cardinal marked his 50th anniversary in the priesthood in 2005, and oversaw the recently completed \$32 million restoration of the Basilica of the Assumption in downtown Baltimore.

“Keeler submitted his resignation when he turned 75, as required by the church.”

Keeler was present as a featured speaker at the January 8 CCT meeting. He has been the pivotal person at CCT from its inception, and there was no announcement that he was resigning. **So we can expect that he will continue leading the Catholic delegations at both CCT assemblies and on its steering committee meetings. Relieved of his other responsibilities, he will now be able to focus on Pope Benedict’s plans to use CCT for his purposes.**

**I have learned from an obscure, but official, CCT news release that there were two other special CCT steering committee meetings in 2007:** May 15-16 and September 27-28. Location and subject matter was not disclosed. We can expect secret steering committee meetings this year also, but I have no information on dates, locations, or agendas. **The CCT steering committee makes all the decisions as to future CCT activities and when they will begin.** For reasons summarized in *January 2008 Ecumenical Update [WM-1418]*, we know that the steering committee is planning for a major public CCT campaign, to coerce Congress into enactment of a U.S. National Sunday Law. But it can only begin when the Vatican, which pulls the key strings at CCT, decides that American politics and its economy has settled down enough for this advance move.

**You can know this: When I learn additional information, I will release it to you!** According to *Great Controversy*, **enactment of a U.S. National Sunday Law is the special event which will hurl America and the rest of the world into final events.** —vf

# The Church and the World

The Church and the World walked far apart  
On the changing shore of Time;  
The World was singing a giddy song,  
And the Church a hymn sublime.  
“Come, give me your hand,” cried the merry  
World,

“And walk with me this way.”  
But the good Church hid her snowy hands,  
And solemnly answered, “Nay;  
I will not give you my hand at all,  
And I will not walk with you.  
Your way is the way to endless death;  
Your words are all untrue.”

“Nay, walk with me but a little space,”  
Said the World with a kindly air.  
“The road I walk is a pleasant road,  
And the sun shines always there.  
Your path is thorny, and rough, and rude,  
And mine is broad and plain.  
My road is paved with flowers and dews  
And yours with tears and pain.  
The sky above me is always blue;  
No want, no toil, I know.  
The sky above you is always dark;  
Your lot is a lot of woe.  
My path, you see, is a broad, fair one  
And my gate is high and wide;  
There is room enough for you and for me  
To travel side by side.”

Half shyly the Church approached the World,  
And gave him her hand of snow.  
The old World quickly grasped it and walked  
along,  
Saying in accents low,  
“Your dress is too simple to please my taste.  
I will give you pearls to wear,  
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,  
And diamonds to deck your hair.”  
The Church looked down at her plain white robes  
And then at the dazzling World.  
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip  
With a smile contemptuously curled.  
“I will change my dress for a costlier one,”  
Said the Church with a smile of grace.  
Then the pure white garments drifted away.

And the World gave in their place  
Beautiful silks and shining satins,  
And roses and gems and pearls.  
And over her forehead her bright hair fell,  
Crisped in a thousand curls.

“Your house is too plain,” said the proud old  
World;  
“I’ll build you one like mine,—  
Carpets of Brussels, and curtains of lace  
And furniture ever so fine.”  
So he built her a costly and beautiful house,  
Splendid it was to behold.  
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there,  
Gleaming in purple and gold.  
And fairs and shows in the halls were held,  
And the World and his children were there;  
And laughter and music and feasts were heard  
In the place that was meant for prayer.  
She had cushioned pews for the rich and great  
To sit in their pomp and pride.  
While the poor folk clad in their shabby suits,  
Sat meekly down outside.

The Angel of Mercy flew over the Church,  
And whispered, “I know thy sin.”  
The Church looked back with a sigh and longed  
To gather her children in.  
But some were off at the midnight ball,  
And some were off at the play,  
And some were drinking in gay saloons,  
So she quietly went her way.  
Then the sly World gallantly said to her,  
“Your children mean no harm,  
Merely indulging in innocent sports.”  
So she leaned on his proffered arm  
And smiled and chatted and gathered flowers  
As she walked along with the World;  
While millions and millions of sorrowing souls  
To eternal death were hurled.

“Your preachers are all too old and plain,”  
Said the World to the Church with a sneer.  
“They frighten my children with dreadful tales,  
Which I like not for them to hear.  
They talk of brimstone and fire and pain  
And the night of an endless death.

4 They talk of a place which may only be  
 Mentioned with bated breath.  
 I will send you some of the better stamp,—  
 Brilliant and gay and fast,—  
 Who will tell them that people may live as they  
 choose  
 And go to heaven at last.  
 The Father is merciful, great and good,  
 Tender and true and kind;

Do you think He would take one child to heaven,  
 And leave the other behind?"  
 So he filled her house with gay divines,—  
 Gifted and great and learned.—  
 And the plain old men that preached the cross  
 Were out of her pulpits turned.  
 "You give too much to the poor," said the World,  
 "Far more than you ought to do.  
 If the poor need shelter and food and clothes,  
 Why need it trouble you?  
 Go, take your money and buy rich robes,  
 And horses and carriages fine,  
 And pearls and jewels and dainty foods,  
 And the rarest and costliest wine!  
 My children they dote on all such things;  
 And if you their love would win,  
 You must do as they do and walk in the ways  
 That they are walking in."  
 Then the Church held tightly the strings of her  
 purse  
 And gracefully lowered her head,  
 And whispered, "I've given too much away;  
 I'll do, sir, as you have said."  
 So the poor were turned from her door in scorn;  
 And she drew her robes aside  
 As the widows went weeping on their way,  
 With all their needs denied.  
 And the sons of the World and the sons of the  
 Church  
 Walked closely hand and heart,  
 And only the Master who knoweth all  
 Could tell the two apart.

"We may be placed in trying positions, for many cannot have their surroundings what they would; and whenever duty calls us, God will enable us to stand uncorrupted, if we watch and pray, trusting in the grace of Christ. **But we should not needlessly expose ourselves** to influences that are unfavorable to the formation of Christian character. **When we voluntarily place ourselves in an atmosphere of worldliness and unbelief, we displease God and drive holy angels from our homes.**

"Those who secure for their children worldly

Then the Church sat down at her ease, and said,  
 "I am rich, and with goods increased;  
 I have need of nothing, and naught to do  
 But to laugh and dance and feast."  
 And the sly World heard her and laughed up his  
 sleeve,  
 And mockingly said aside,  
 "The Church is fallen, the beautiful Church  
 And her shame is her boast and pride."  
 The angel drew near to the mercy seat,  
 And whispered in sighs her name,  
 And the saints their anthems of rapture hushed,  
 And covered their heads with shame.

Then a voice came down through a hush of  
 heaven  
 From Him who sat on the throne:  
 "I know thy works, and how thou hast said,  
 'I am rich,' and hast not known  
 That thou art naked, and poor, and blind,  
 And wretched before My face.  
 Unless you repent I will cast thee out  
 And blot thy name from its place.  
 I counsel thee to buy of Me  
 The gold that will make you rich;  
 And anoint your eyes with the heavenly salve  
 To discern your Maker's wish."  
 Then awakened the Church with deep regret  
 From her worldly course returned;  
 She opened her heart to the knock of Christ  
 As His love in her bosom burned.  
 And gave her robes and forgave her sins,  
 And together they sat and supped;  
 His proffered throne He shared with her  
 For whom He had suffered much.  
 O Church of Christ, hear the Spirit's voice  
 As He calls through the world today.  
 Would that every church throughout the realm  
 Would turn from the world away.  
 The world will be lost in eternal night,  
 But the penitent saved for aye.

—*Author Unknown*

wealth and honor at the expense of their eternal interests, will find in the end that these advantages are a terrible loss. Like Lot, many see their children ruined, and barely save their own souls. **Their lifework is lost; their life is a sad failure.** Had they exercised true wisdom, their children might have had less of worldly prosperity, but they would have made sure of a title to the immortal inheritance. **The heritage that God has promised to His people is not in this world.**

—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 169*