**New Directions in the Ecumenical Movement:   
Critically Evaluating Challenges for Christian Unity**

The Ecumenical Movement (comprising the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church) is a significant player advocating for Christian unity. After working hard to find a sufficient doctrinal ground, in recent years the EM has majored on “spiritual ecumenism” (e.g. common prayer, local fellowship) and more recently on initiatives like the Global Christian Forum and “Season of Creation”. This session will critically assess the theological basis for “spiritual ecumenism” and will approach issues like: What is at stake when we pray publicly in an ecumenical setting? What message do we send when we participate in ecumenical events, and to what extent should we be part of them?

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1. **Spiritual Ecumenism**
2. A Change in Focus: While we agree to disagree, we can pray together (and eventually do mission together).
3. A Change in Language: Catholics are our “brothers and sisters” and this becomes the standard definition of RCs.
4. The Main Vehicle: the Ecumenical Week of Prayer for Christian Unity where we leave aside our distinctions and concentrate on our unity in the context of common prayer.
5. **Questions Around Spiritual Ecumenism**
6. Once you pray together in an “official” meeting what’s the point of raising theological concerns over RC? You inevitably slip into the “what unites us is greater that what divides us” approach.
7. The long-term consequences of calling RCs “brothers and sisters” are enormous. How can you sustain mission and evangelism in majority RC contexts if the people around you are “brothers and sisters” because they are RC?
8. Catholics always want to bring in the “spiritual” and “ecumenical” dimensions of common action. Evangelicals are drawn into Catholic categories of ecumenism without realizing it .
9. Distinguishing between “alliance” (mission) and “co-belligerence” (cooperation) is vital.
10. **Newer Ecumenical Initiatives and Critical Remarks**
11. Global Christian Forum
12. “Season of Creation”

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