

*For the CSC/CEC Preparatory Meeting for the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Bussan 2013*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia

### **Making Christ Central**

How does the WCC make Christ central in its activities?

According to the WCC mission statement,

“The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

What is that calling referred to in our mission statement? Does it not center on the Great Commission of Mathew 28:19?

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

In the WCC, we focus on many significant activities regarding the human condition. Among them, we address environmental disasters, climate change, the lack of food security, economic injustice, poverty, exclusion, violence, barriers between people, the lack of justice and peace, and violations to the integrity of creation.

We need to ask ourselves how these activities are part of the Great Commission. As worthy as they are, how are they a part of evangelism (“make disciples of all nations”)? As Jesus instructed us, the way of making disciples is twofold: 1) to baptize, and 2) to teach people to obey Christ’s teachings.

How are our activities different from GO and NGOs that are helping to alleviate poverty? What makes us different from any group, organization, or even individual who says: “Oh, those poor people (or some unfortunate situation). We have to do something to help them.”

Our difference is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. He is the one who has commanded us in Matthew 28:19 to “make disciples of all nations.” And as Jesus says, following the Great Commission, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of this age.” It is Jesus who gives us faith in him as God and Savior, who sends the Holy Spirit to enlighten and motivate us. How, then, does the WCC make the Great Commission central in our many activities? How do we differentiate our activities from those of well-meaning non-Christian organizations?

To be true to our mission statement, this must be our task. No matter our diverse traditions, if Christ and his Great commission are not central to the WCC, then we have no unity other than humanism.

We suggest that the WCC evaluate all its activities in this light, so that we as a group, as our mission statement declares, can confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together our common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

As the WCC home page so eloquently states, we are “a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ. (The WCC) seeks to advance towards this unity, as Jesus prayed for his followers, “so that the world may believe.” (John 17:21)

How do our activities reflect this calling, “so the world may believe”?

How do we evaluate our activities in terms of our stated goals?

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