

From: Bishop Porfyrios of Neapolis
<bporfyrios@churchofcypriuseu.com>
Sent: 09 December 2016 09:58
To: Véronique Engels
Subject: THEME OF THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dear f Heikki,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 8 December. Regarding the proposal of the APC for the title and the sub-theme of our next General Assembly I think is very good and I agree with it..

With wishes

†Bishop Porfyrios

†Bishop Porfyrios of Neapolis
Director of the Representation of the
Church of Cyprus to the European Institutions.

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From: Erin Green
Sent: 12 December 2016 13:00
To: Heikki Huttunen
Cc: Véronique Engels
Subject: RE: Important: 15th General Assembly Theme Proposal
Attachments: You shall be my witnesses.docx

Dear Heikki,

Here are my thoughts on the theme. Basically, first part is fine, second part is not.

Peace,
Erin

You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:7-8)
Christian responsibility for a just and hospitable Europe

The first part of the theme is quite fine: You shall be my witnesses. It is simple, short, and evocative. This means that the theme can evolve in meaning as we develop our work toward the assembly. People will identify with the words in different ways and as we work together toward Novi Sad, the broader CEC community can give detail to the richness of this simple phrase. Such a theme also allows for more people and groups to identify with it directly. Leaving it a little bit open and broad in this way will be helpful for CEC. It has the advantage of coming from scripture, and so it will be easier to prepare translations of the theme into CEC working languages and others.

The second part of the theme is not so helpful. There are several clear disadvantages to including it.

- 1) It makes branding and messaging for the Assembly much more difficult. These words cannot all fit onto the plethora of branding materials needed. Think of this text squeezed onto pins, nametags, letterheads, publications, promotional material, brochures, powerpoints and so on. This is only compounded any time CEC has to work multilingually!
- 2) The phrasing of the second part uses a more corporate style of writing and introduces too many new ideas that aren't clearly developed. The theme for the Assembly must be memorable and easy to say. The themes of other major upcoming Assemblies offer good examples of this:

Lutheran World Federation Assembly: **Liberated by God's Grace**

GETI: **Reforming theology, migrating church, transforming society**

WCRC: **Living God, renew and transform us**

World Mission Conference: **Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship**

CPCE: **Liberated, Connected, Committed**

Notice that the longest of these is only 8 words, five less than the proposed CEC theme. If a second, explanatory sentence is deemed absolutely necessary (and it is my professional instinct that it is not), then it should be rewritten in a more attractive and compelling way.

- 3) A third difficulty is the repetitiveness of the second part of the theme. Out of 15 Assembly themes the word Europe or European has appeared 6 times. It is clear from the name CEC who we are in this aspect and there is no need to repeat this in the theme. What is important is that people say "Conference of European Churches" rather than "CEC" as often as possible. These three words say very much about who we are.
- 4) If we are to develop subthemes, it is especially important to have a simple and short theme. Adding this second part is confusing. Is this a subtheme unto itself? How do we then communicate the two-part theme and multiple sub-themes?

In sum, "You shall be my witnesses" is an excellent, evocative, easy-to-communicate, biblically grounded theme that will work best without any further explanation.

From: Silke Tosch <pastorin@friedenskirche-koeln.de>

Sent: 31 December 2016 13:20

To: Véronique Engels

Subject: You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:7-8)

You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:7-8)

Christian responsibility for a just and hospitable Europe

Hallo Veronique,

ich möchte Folgendes zum Vollversammlungsthema anfragen / bemerken:

inwiefern ist es ein Unterschied zwischen shall und will be my witnesses. Im Deutschen klingt mehr das Faktische durch. Wird hier von einer Tatsache in der Zukunft oder einem Befehl/Auftrag gesprochen? Die Bibelstelle sollte auch auf Acts 1:8 beschränkt werden, da hier nur das Zitat steht.

Soweit meine Anmerkungen.

Einen guten Rutsch wünsche ich verbunden mit Gottes Segen

Liebe Grüße

Silke

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From: Andreas Henriksen Aarflot <aa333@kirken.no>
Sent: 03 January 2017 09:05
To: Heikki Huttunen
Cc: Véronique Engels
Subject: RE: Important: 15th General Assembly Theme Proposal

Dear Fr Heikki and Véronique,

I hope this message finds you well, and that you have had a blessed Christmas celebration and holiday.

I give my support to the theme proposal from the Assembly Planning Committee:

You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:7-8)
Christian responsibility for a just and hospitable Europe

Best wishes and greetings from Oslo,
Andreas

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From: Christine Busch <christine.busch@ekir.de>
Sent: 15 January 2017 22:05
To: GenSecretariat; hhu@cec-kek.org
Subject: CEC Assembly Theme

CEC Assembly 2018 Theme

Dear brother Heikki,

First of all, I wish you a happy new year under the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am glad about the biblical quotation of Acts 1,8 as the main theme for the assembly 2018. It has to be understood in the context of Jesus' ascension as well as in the context of Paul, leading on to his sermon on in Rome about the kingdom of God (Acts 28,31). I stress this because I believe that we need to have good and intense bible study on this biblical grounding.

The subtitle indicates a certain interpretation of the biblical verse which is too much limited to ethical aspects.

1. Responsibility is much less than witness; it is an ethical term and has as such no theological connotation.

2. A just and hospitable Europe is an aim which we in CEC hopefully all agree upon. We have the refugee situation in mind. It is crucial how refugees are dealt with in some countries on the Balkans and in countries neighboring Serbia. Also in that sense, Novi Sad is challenging our faith.

3. The vision of a just Europe, as is thought of in the subtitle, leads to the question of economy, social gaps, and poverty.

This is one perspective. It is covered by a number of statements of CSC and also by the assemblies in Lyon and Budapest, if I remember correctly. The actual problems in Europe are manifold. I think that there is also a spiritual, cultural, ecological crisis. Europe is at the crossroads of its future...

4. Witness should be interpreted also in the sense of discipleship and mission and service. The subtitle should take up the biblical term witness. Our answer to Christ's invitation is that we become his disciples and that we follow him.

5. What does witness mean in a Europe of change? The financial and social crisis in Greece, the Brexit, the situation in Ukraine and whatever is going to happen next: this stands for a certain political and social dynamics. We need to discuss this in Novi Sad (eine politische Bestandsaufnahme).

6. If I think about a "message from Novi Sad" I believe it has to go beyond questions of refugees and economy resp. hospitality and justice. CEC's message has to be theological, ethical, political.

Dear Heikki, I suggest we have a subtitle like "Christian discipleship in a Europe of change". That is more open, goes beyond our ethical and economic responsibility and challenges our Christian identity.

I can see different aspects: bible study around Acts 1,8; political analysis about the situation of Europe (not EU); ethical and political and spiritual challenges from the perspectives of the main church families; our Christian response/s. Plus a message about what we resp. the churches want to offer to our common future in a Europe that matters.

Kind regards,
Christine

Von meinem iPad gesendet

From: Christian Krieger <christian.krieger@uepal.fr>

Sent: 25 January 2017 11:43

To: GenSecretariat

Subject: Re: Condoléances

Bonjour Père Heikki

Le sous-titre proposé (Christian responsibility for a just and hospitable Europe) se prête plus à une lecture d'action sociale et politique que spirituelle. Qui plus est, il ne fait pas assez droit à l'analyse de cet Europe à la croisée des chemins mis en évidence par la lettre ouverte. En réfléchissant avec Christine Busch, nous proposerions :

You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:7-8)

Christian discipleship in a Europe of change

Je reste à ta disposition pour évoquer cette question et t'adresse mes très fraternelles salutations

Christian Krieger, pasteur

Président du Conseil Synodal de l'Eglise Protestante Réformée d'Alsace Lorraine

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From: McDonald, Alison <Alison.McDonald@churchofscotland.org.uk>

Sent: 26 January 2017 12:29

To: Véronique Engels

Subject: Re: Important: 15th General Assembly Theme Proposal

Dear Fr Heikki,

I apologise for my late reply to this. It ended up lost in my emails in the run up to Christmas when I had many parish and congregational commitments. I have only just read it again and realised I did not reply. I am happy with the suggested theme and additional sentence. I think it is very good and should help focus our discussion at this critical time for our continent.

kind regards,

Alison