

Conference of European Churches

Governing Board

Brussels, 22-24 November 2014

Suggested themes for 2018-2023

Introduction based on the Strategy & Policy Report

Europe is a wonderful and troubled continent. Narratives thought dead have reappeared; new narratives are sought from new generations. In a complex pluralist society, in which economic growth has become the dominant driver and migration has too often driven fear and uncertainty, CEC needs to challenge the security-driven concerns of society and promote solidarity and mutual justice. CEC should embody prophetic witness in a complex and rapidly-changing world recognising that churches exist for the sake of God's Reign.

In spite of suffering and fear, Christians are drawn by hope. Faith encounters and our spiritual resources strengthen churches to articulate and live out –however hard the circumstances and challenges– a transforming model of relating with the world: loving, living, and learning.

In this respect, CEC should both challenge and inspire Members Churches to engage locally and nationally with politics, economics, and cultures, making use of the gifts of all churches, and incarnating God's hope in the world.

In all three suggested themes, we see word, action, and praise together, as a single task for the work of CEC in the coming years.

Themes

Being Witnesses

The theme responds to the call from Novi Sad "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). As Christians, we are witnesses to Christ and witnesses to what God calls us to be and do. In being Christ's disciples, we are hope in the world; we are transforming the world empowered by the Holy Spirit. Hope is both trust in God's promises for a renewed world, and a practical expression of justice and hospitality towards our fellow human beings and all Creation.

One Hope, Common Witness

Our hope as a fellowship of churches is incarnated in Christ. It is our faith and conviction in Christ rooted in the life of the Church that impels us to bring the good

news to the world. Empowered by the Spirit, we embody hope in the world in our common activities as churches, in our political engagement, in living out justice and practicing hospitality, as we pray and read the Scriptures together.

Enduring Hope, Living Discipleship

The whole creation is being groaning in pain (Rom. 8:22), but as Christians we believe in hope against all hope (Rom. 4:18). As disciples we are called to be signs of hope in the world by exercising justice and offering hospitality, affirming the fullness of life in our word and action, i.e. leading a life of holiness. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called to respond to the challenges of today's world and speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).