



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC9B ECCL AND MISSION
Purpose: To be received

Activity report

Ecclesiology & Mission

1. Thematic Group on Ecclesiology & Mission

The Thematic Group (TG) held its third meeting on 16 June 2020. The main point of discussion was the pandemic and the challenges it brings to churches with regard to worship, and especially the practices around the sharing of the eucharist. Several theological questions were identified and the possibility of cooperating with the TG on Human Rights and CROCEU was discussed. The group decided to study the different theological positions of churches on the eucharist. The objective of such a process is to help churches to better understand the variety of positions and responses to the pandemic. A subgroup was formed to develop a strategy and method to approach eucharistic, liturgical and ecclesiological questions, and gather resources in these areas.

The fourth meeting of the group was held on 25 June 2020. It reviewed and gave direction to the work of the subgroups (Evangelisation, public theology, theological series 'Exploring Church in mission', Communion and Covid-19), which continued to work separately over summer. The group held a fifth meeting to discuss the progress of the subgroups and decided the next steps on certain projects. In the area of evangelisation, it produced a concept paper (see appendix 1) and submitted a relevant panel proposal to the German Ecumenical [Kirchentag](#) scheduled for May 2021 (appendix 2). Concerning the project on baptism, it produced a concept paper and planned a relevant closed webinar, whose aim is to clarify the key questions of the project. It also discussed a letter-questionnaire that was sent to the Member Churches of CEC requesting feedback on the pastoral practice of churches in Europe concerning the mutual recognition of baptism. Further, the TG discussed the programme of the online conference 'The Hope of Communion: From 1920 to 2020' scheduled for 16-17 December 2020 (appendix 3).

2. Assembly Planning Committee meeting – World Council of Churches

The assembly planning committee (APC) convened for its fourth meeting from 22-25 September 2020. The meeting was led by Bishop Staccato Powell, APC vice-moderator. The leadership of the assembly worship planning committee joined the meeting. The interim general secretary, Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca and staff (Geneva and Karlsruhe) were also present. The interim general secretary informed the APC that the WCC decided to discontinue the contract of the



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC9B ECCL AND MISSION
Purpose: To be received

Assembly Coordinator, Ms Beate Fagerli, for financial reasons. The WCC executive committee, meeting in July, affirmed the spirit and vision expressed in the APC report from December 2019. They asked the APC to consider the practical and thematic implications of COVID-19 and growing social unrest as well as how best to shape the thematic coherence of the assembly. (See full APC report, appendix 4)

The Executive Secretary for theological dialogue participates in the planning of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) programme. There have been two meetings of the academic group, which is developing a Reader for the programme, one on 2 September 2020 to discuss the topic of 'healing of memories', and a second one on 3 September on the GETI Reader.

3. European Regional Pre-Assembly

The 11th Assembly of WCC will take place from 31 August-8 September 2022 in Karlsruhe, Germany under the theme 'Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity'. In conversation with the Polish Ecumenical Council, CEC identified new dates for the European Regional Pre-Assembly. The Pre-Assembly will be held from 25-27 February 2022 in Warsaw. The Pre-Assembly planning group will convene next on 18 January 2021.

4. Work on 'migrant & minority ethnic' churches: Cooperation with CCME

CEC worked with CCME in developing the content and programme of the Conference 'Uniting in Diversity – Migration changing churches in Europe,' which was going to be held in April 2020 at the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Leuven, Belgium. The Conference was postponed due to the pandemic and three online events were planned instead: 1. Youth, Faith and Migration: Reflections from young people with a migrant background in Europe Monday, 26 October 2020; 2. Mapping Migration, Mapping Churches' responses: Latest findings and key trends, 27 October 2020; Racism and inequality in the Church, 3 November 2020. The Executive Secretary for theological dialogue participated in the planning committee and facilitated group discussions in two of these events.

5. CEC-CCEE Joint Committee

The Executive Secretary for theological dialogue participated in the online preparatory meetings (10 June and 8 September 2020) for the annual Joint Committee meeting (25 November) that discussed the 20th Anniversary of the *Charta Œcumenica*. She organised two online meetings for the planning group for the ecumenical service in 2021 on 4 November and



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC9B ECCL AND MISSION
Purpose: To be received

16 November 2020. Lastly, she participated in the CCEE meeting of the Interreligious Dialogue Section on 5 November 2020.

6. Cooperation with St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute, Moscow, and the Free University of Amsterdam

CEC is organising a conference on 'Person in a Post-Religious Society' in cooperation with St. Andrew's Biblical and Theological Institute, and the Free University of Amsterdam. The conference will be held from 10-13 December 2020 in Moscow. Some sessions will be made available through Zoom (appendix 5).

7. Cooperation with the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS)

CEC participates in the planning of the Europe Conference of IAMS, which is going to take place from 5-10 September 2022 in Cluj, Romania. The theme of the Conference is 'Missions towards human dignity: Challenges from the Black Sea region'. The intention of the organising committee is to invite participants to reflect on issues relevant to the region, especially the ones that appeal to mission studies scholars/missiologists from all over Europe. While acknowledging that the notion of Black Sea, as any regional notion, is a socio-political construction, the organising committee is also considering the following countries as belonging to the region: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine.

The organising committee met online on 26 October 2020 and discussed two paper presentations related to the region: 'The Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Towards Human Dignity' presented by Rev Prof Cristian Sonea, and 'Questions from the City of Men: the Theological Concept of Dignity and Pluralistic Society', presented by Dimitru Cornel Vilcu. Because of the recent developments in the region, the committee decided to organise two webinars focusing on Belarus and Armenia to listen to experiences from the region and incorporate them in the planning of the 2022 conference.

8. PRO ORIENTE Steering Committee for Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue (POSCOCD)

The meeting of the subgroup of the POSCOCD 'Connecting Dialogues' was held online on 29 September 2020. The project focuses on creating a collection of documents and material related to Orthodox-Catholic dialogues. The outcomes of this project will be connected to the CEC project on mapping bilateral and regional dialogues. The annual Steering Committee meeting took place from 5-6 November 2020 and discussed the Study Document on 'Reception: A Key to Ecumenical Progress' of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC9B ECCL AND MISSION
Purpose: To be received

and the WCC, as well as a paper presentation by Dr Regina Elsner on '*Healing Memories as Theological and Ecumenical Endeavor*'.

9. Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, WCC

CEC participates in the Interfaith Officers' Network of the WCC. On 5 October 2020 the programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation organised an online meeting for members of the network to share news and developments concerning interreligious dialogue in their respective churches or organisations. Attention was given to the recent publication of WCC and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) '*Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity*' that received significant attention in global media.

10. Other meetings attended

- 7th Summer School on Human Rights: Challenges for Human Rights in the time of COVID-19, 7-10 July 2020.
- 24th International Congress Renovabis: Between Slaughterhouse and Brain Drain: Labour Migration and COVID-19, online sessions: **Corona and the People on the Edge of Society: We need to talk!**, 8 September 2020; Livestream from the House of the Lord? **Experiences and Impulses from the Time of the Corona Restrictions**, 9 September 2020; **Europe at the Crossroads: Unity or Dissension – The Corona Crisis and its Consequences for Europe**, 10 September 2020.
- Belarus and the Role of Churches, organised by Oikosnet Europe, 8 October 2020.
- "Fratelli Tutti", the new Encyclical of Pope Francis, EPP Working Group 'Intercultural & Religious Dialogue', 13 October 2020.
- Religion, White Superiority & Aboriginal Peoples, WCC Webinar, 21 October 2020.
- From Lamentation to Transformation: Persons with disabilities in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic Webinar, organised by the Ecumenical Disabilities Network (EDAN) of the WCC, 22 October 2020.
- Faith and Order webinar on ecumenical bilateral dialogues, WCC, 27 October 2020.
- Christian Pastoral Care and Christian Philanthropy in time of pandemic: opportunity, burden or normality in terms of identity, International Symposium organised by the University of Cluj, 2 November 2020.



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name: 2GB2020_DOC9B APPX1 EVANGELISATION
Purpose: For information

Thematic Group Ecclesiology & Mission

Project Description

1. Title

Evangelisation: practice and theological reflection in contemporary European churches

2. Kind of project

Consultation and study process

3. Concept

Evangelisation is concerned with the verbal witness to the gospel with the intention of conversion or deepening of faith commitment. Different variations of the practice are found in Protestant (witness, sharing the gospel), Orthodox (*kerygma*, catechesis, witness), Charismatic (power-healing, prosperity) and Catholic traditions (new evangelisation). At grass root level, there is a sense of necessity and urgency about evangelisation in Southern as well as Northern contexts, although for different reasons - religious pluralism, secularisation, market competition, religious mobility, and spiritual warfare. This also means that the practice on grass root level is informed by theological ideas. However, evangelisation is not a much-discussed topic in systematic theology nor in academic mission theology. The aim of the project is to start academic investigation and missiological reflection on motivations (soteriological, eschatological, anthropological, pneumatological), goal (prosperity, membership, salvation), and practice of evangelisation of grass root level in contemporary Anglican, Protestant, Charismatic, Orthodox and Catholic forms of Christianity in Europe.

1

Background

In the development of a comprehensive understanding of Christian mission, ecclesial practice, and community, the importance of evangelisation as practice and reflection should not be ignored. This is the case not least in a European context, where in many societies Christianity and churches no longer occupy the former fundamental societal role.

The English terms evangelisation and evangelism are often used interchangeably, but in e.g. German only the single term evangelisation exists, covering both English terms. Some scholars have pointed out a distinction between the two terms: evangelism might be said to refer to emphasizing the gospel as thought and value, while evangelisation is the process or action of making society and humans gospel-like. But again, the English terms are often used interchangeably and as a working definition we suggest that evangelisation is *the verbal witness* –



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name: 2GB2020_DOC9B APPX1 EVANGELISATION
Purpose: For information

presentation and representation – to and of the gospel of Christ with intention of conversion or deepening of faith commitment.

The term evangelisation is originally derived from the New Testament Greek noun *euaggelion*, which has several distinct meanings: 1) the proclamation of the gospel; 2) annunciation; 3) demonstration of the content of the gospel. (Kittel et al). Right from the early beginnings of Christianity, evangelisation has been an important practice in giving witness to the gospel. Thus, in his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul urges the congregation 'to proclaim the gospel (Greek: *euangelizesthai*)' (1. Cor. 1:17) in principle and in practice to neighbours.

In Paul's understanding, evangelism is not parallel to his sending but subject to his mission. That is, evangelism is the primary goal of the mission of the apostle and subsequently the Church of Christ. In modern times, the term has been used from the 19th century in Protestant Christianity and was made headline of the Edinburgh 1910 missionary conference by John R. Mott. Mott famously aimed for 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation', meaning giving all humans opportunity to know Jesus Christ as their saviour and becoming his disciples. Since the 1930's a large volume of literature on evangelism has been published in the ecumenical movement, and it was central part of the missionary conferences in Jerusalem (1928) and Tambaram (1938). From the titles of ecumenical publications, a certain development in the thinking on evangelism can be traced: effective evangelism (1950's), in-depth evangelism (1960's), secular evangelism (1970's), cross-cultural evangelism (1970's), incarnational evangelism (1970's), and lifestyle evangelism (1980's) (cf. Jongeneel 2006). In mainline Protestant tradition emphasis has thus been given on witness with the intent of sharing the gospel.

In the vocabulary of the WCC it has been incorporated in its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), and as a concept it has been reaffirmed in the Commission's publications *Mission and Evangelism – an Ecumenical Affirmation* (1982) and *Together Towards Life* (2013). The Faith & Order Commission's study document *The Church – Towards A Common Vision* (2013) is also important to mention as a resource for exploring the nexus between ecclesiology and mission. Finally, the CWME Arusha Conference in March 2018 explored mission in relation to pneumatology and discipleship and offers important perspectives from global Christianity on the European context.

In Catholic theology and following the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the foundational document *Lumen Gentium*, where the affirmation of the 'Church as sent to preach to gospel to every creature' (LG 1), the Roman Catholic Church renamed one of its core institutional pillars *Sacra congregatio pro gentium evangelizatione*, that is, 'sacred congregation for the evangelisation of the peoples'. The term has been taken up by bishop's conferences as well as papal encyclicals, e.g. by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) which states that 'evangelising means bringing the good news into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new" (p. 18). More recently in 2010 Pope Benedict established the *Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelisation* focusing on the transmission of faith in the modern world. According to the statement *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) by Pope Francis, evangelisation is said to take



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name: 2GB2020_DOC9B APPX1 EVANGELISATION
Purpose: For information

place in three settings: 1) ordinary pastoral ministry aiming at 'inflaming the hearts of the faithful'; 2) in relation to the 'baptised whose lives do not reflect the demands of baptism'; 3) in relation to those not knowing or having rejected Christ. In the reception of the statement, special focus has been on traditional Catholic areas influenced by secularisation, that is, Europe and the Americas. Thus, in comparison with mainline Protestantism, Catholic tradition has displayed a more holistic understanding of evangelisation as witness as well as transmission of faith in modern contexts characterised by secularisation.

In Orthodox theology, some of the themes related to evangelism and mission are the following: 1. Preaching the *euangelion* to all humanity is a primary mandate of the Lord. The gospel provides abundant living, sanctifies, and leads to deification and salvation; it is God's truth which God wants humanity to hear and accept (A. Veronis). 2. Christ's teaching about healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for widows and orphans, and other social concerns is seen as part of the complete gospel message. This is demonstrated in the lives of Fathers, preachers, and missionaries who combined their care for social matters with the preaching of the gospel. 3. The use of vernacular. Individual missionaries identified with the nations they evangelised. 'Indigenisation' of the gospel is found in the stories of Orthodox missionaries (A. Veronis). 4. Ecclesiology. Evangelism begins from a sound ecclesiology, from the Church as the focus, means and sign of the regathering of the whole world into fellowship with God – the historical, visible, and institutional Church, which cannot be separated from the event in Christ. Outside the Church, evangelism remains a humanism or a temporary psychological enthusiasm (Nissiotis). 5. Strong relation between evangelism and the liturgy. The gospel is unfolded week by week in the liturgy in the parish context (Stamoolis). 6. Interrelatedness of homeland renewal and evangelism, and foreign missions (Yannoulatos). 7. Proselytism. The notion relates to evangelism of one church within another church's 'canonical territory'.

With the explosive growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic forms of Christianity in the 20th century, Charismatic forms of evangelisation have especially emphasised power and prosperity. Pentecostal forms of Christianity focus on the Spirit in conversion and its manifestation in speaking in tongues, healing, and exorcisms. From a Pentecostal point of view, Pentecostalism itself is a Spirit-driven eschatological form of Christianity, and missionary enterprise and evangelistic zeal have been hallmarks of Pentecostalism from its beginning. Often Evangelical and probably also fundamentalist in interpretation of Scripture, Pentecostalism has often seen itself in somewhat opposition to what is seen as laxer and liberal forms of Christianity in the wider ecumenical Protestant and Catholic landscape.

From the 1960s Charismatic renewals made a large impression on other historical forms of Christianity and among Christians seeking for a more intense personal faith and stricter ethics. In certain forms of Pentecostalism new forms of evangelisation have emerged, e.g. the notion of 'power evangelism' introduced by the American pastor John Wimber in the 1980's. According to this understanding, the Church has a mandate to continue Jesus' ministry in the power of the Spirit in a way that signs and healings become an integral part of the evangelisation of the church. Through a conversion of worldview, the believers are opened up for the Spirit's transcendent



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name: 2GB2020_DOC9B APPX1 EVANGELISATION
Purpose: For information

activity and confront evil spirits. The conflict between the Holy Spirit and evil spirits is central in this understanding – including territorial spirits, holding areas or nations in a spiritual lockdown. As a method evangelisation takes place through exorcisms and ‘prayer breakthroughs’, which breaks the grip of evil spirits manifesting itself in fear, violence, addiction and greed. In contrast, spiritual and material prosperity flourishes and characterises a truly converted Christian.

Ecumenical perspectives

There is an ecumenical perspective to the question about proclamation and witness to the gospel. Not only was it one of the important historical streams of the ecumenical movement, but also missionary experience has had an ecumenical effect. In the missionary communication of Christianity, it became clear that past centuries of European confessional dispute made little sense in new contexts in the Global South. As the former WCC general secretary Philip A. Potter once said “...evangelisation is the test of our ecumenical vocation” (Anderson & Stransky 1975:175). As a test of ecumenical vocation, evangelisation is ecumenical in so far as it is a witness to *gospel* with intention of conversion or deepening of faith commitment. That is, for theological reasons evangelisation cannot be witness with intention to conversion to the Reformed, Lutheran, or Catholic Church – but to the Church of Christ.

Conclusion

At grass root level and across ecclesial traditions, there is a sense of necessity and urgency about evangelisation in Southern as well as Northern contexts, including European. This calls for a contemporary and ecumenical reflection on what evangelisation might mean and the theology or theologies underlying evangelisation as a Christian core practice. Especially there is a need to investigate motivations (soteriological, eschatological, anthropological, pneumatological), goal (prosperity, membership, salvation), and practice of evangelisation at a grass root level in contemporary Anglican, Protestant, Charismatic, Orthodox, and Catholic forms of Christianity in Europe.

4. Aim(s) of the project

The project will explore the following areas:

- Relation between mission and evangelisation: Presenting and representing the gospel
- Motives for evangelisation: Soteriology, eschatology, and pneumatology
- Theologies of evangelisation: anthropology and ecclesiology
- Goal for evangelisation: salvation, membership, and prosperity
- Evangelisation and gender: ‘Masculine’ and ‘feminine’ forms of evangelisation and Christianity?
- Evangelisation and experience: What is the role of spiritual experience, deliverance, and exorcisms in evangelisation?
- Relationship between evangelisation and social transformation, questions of justice – ‘privatisation of conversion’ or societal change?



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церкве

Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name: 2GB2020_DOC9B APPX1 EVANGELISATION
Purpose: For information

- Methods of evangelisation: narratives and ethical considerations

Based on this concept the Thematic Group is planning a series of events with different partners in Europe. Detailed project outlines focusing on the objectives, outcomes, target group, timing and venue, and other aspects of each event are being developed by Thematic Group. As part of the process the Thematic Group submitted a panel proposal at the Ecumenical *Kirchentag* to be held in May 2021.



International Ecumenical Centre

Application form || Deadline: 15 August 2020

Please send your completed application form to iec@oekt.de

1. Contact data

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Organisation: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone: _____

Postal address: _____

Country: _____ Website: _____

Please describe the work of your organisation briefly:

German partner organisation/contact person in Germany (optional)

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Organisation: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone: _____

In what language should the ÖKT communicate with you in the future?

English

German

Shall the ÖKT communicate with you directly or via your German partner (organization)?

with me directly

via German partner (organization)

2. Description of the planned event

Please note:

- Your contribution should have the format of a panel discussion with a duration of 60-90 minutes.
- We would like to encourage you to use interactive/participative methods during the panel if possible.
- The location will have a projected visitor capacity of 250 / 500 people.
- Alongside panels there are many concerts and other cultural events during the ÖKT. If you are planning a concert, a play or a similar artistic performance, please do not apply to the International Ecumenical Centre. Please go straight to the form for the cultural programme (www.oekt.de/kultur) and apply by 15 August 2020.



Title of the event (55 characters max.): _____

Subtitle of the event (55 characters max.): _____

Content of the event:

Please explain the topic of your planned panel discussion. What is it to be about? What central questions are to be discussed? How does the panel relate to the topics of the International Ecumenical Centre? In the case of participative elements: How are the visitors to be involved?

Comments on the format

Please describe any special features of the planned event (e.g. interactive elements, film projections, accompanying theatrical performances or live music):

3. Contributors/Panelists

Please state the name, title, organization and home town of all persons involved in your panel (max. 4 panelists + moderation). The information you give here will be mentioned in the entry of the event in our app and the English programme booklet.

Please make sure you also provide an email address for each person for the further invitation process.

Example: Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, general secretary, All Africa Conference of Churches, Nairobi, Kenya

Speaker 1: _____

Email address: _____

Speaker 2: _____

Email address: _____

Speaker 3: _____

Email address: _____



Speaker 4: _____
Email address: _____

Moderation: _____
Email address: _____

If your application is accepted, all speakers and the moderation mentioned above will be sent an official invitation by the ÖKT. The ÖKT will provide them with free admission passes and accommodation.

You have the option of purchasing up to two additional discounted contributor passes for €26 each. These are intended for people who support the event on site but are not speakers. If you wish to receive these additional passes, please indicate here:

In addition to the speakers mentioned above, we will be involved in the event with probably _____ people.

Language of the event

The working language at the International Ecumenical Centre will be English, which means that all panels will be held in English or will be interpreted into English for the audience.

If any of your panelists does not feel comfortable communicating in English or if the whole panel will be held in another language than English, please indicate here. We gladly provide interpretation.

We will need interpretation from and into the following language: _____ for
the following number of panellists: _____.

Travel expenses

Please note that the ÖKT can only guarantee the full assumption of travel costs for public transport within Germany. Financial support for travel expenses from abroad is possible in exceptional cases; however, we cannot guarantee to cover the full costs especially for flights. With a limited budget, we want to enable as many groups as possible to participate in the International Ecumenical Centre. We would be grateful if you can cover your travel expenses by other means. Please indicate below. The more guests contribute to their travel expenses (especially intercontinental flights), the more groups can participate.

We have other means of covering our travel costs and will not need support from the ÖKT.

The following panelists will need financial support for travel costs from the ÖKT:

of the expected overall amount of € _____.



4. Additional comments

Other remarks (e.g. special technical requirements, special resources needed)

I accept the [General Terms and Conditions](#) of the 3rd ÖKT and note that the information I give will be saved electronically in the context of its privacy regulations.

I accept the [Conditions for Contributing for panels](#) at the 3rd ÖKT.

Place, date

Contact person



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церквей

Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC9B APPX3 HOPE OF COMMUNION
Purpose: For information

Thematic Group Ecclesiology & Mission

Project Description

1. Title

The Hope of Communion: From 1920 to 2020.

2. Kind of project

Online Conference commemorating the Patriarchal Encyclical Letter to “the Churches of Christ everywhere, and the Lambeth “Appeal to all Christian people’ both published in 1920.

Introduction

Following the Great War European Christianity became increasingly aware of the need for unity among nations and churches. In 1920 most Christian communions welcomed the project of the movement on Faith and Order to call a world conference on divisive doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters. The time seemed suitable for churches to move from mobilisation around the internationalist vision of visible Christian unity to its realisation. Despite their different priorities, emerging ecumenical initiatives were interrelated, as they shared their common concern for Christian unity.¹

After the fall of the Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, Orthodox churches found themselves in a new historical situation. In January 1920 the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate addressed an encyclical letter to “the Churches of Christ everywhere”² which was primarily concerned with the quality of inter-church relations. The encyclical was the culmination of a reflection on the dialogue of the Orthodox Church with the Catholic, Old Catholic, and Protestant Churches that had been initiated by Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III with his 1902 encyclical. It focused on practical proposals for the improvement of inter-church relations and urged for the abolition of mistrust and bitterness and the rapprochement and fellowship (*koinonia*) between churches.

¹ For an overview on the interconnectedness of the 1920 ecumenical movements, see Odair Pedroso Mateus, Faith and Order 1920: The Life and Times of an Ecumenical Conference, publication pending.

² “A New Translation of the 1920 Message of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,” *The Ecumenical Review*, XII (1), October 1959, 79-82.



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC9B APPX3 HOPE OF COMMUNION
Purpose: For information

In July-August 1920 the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered in the frame of the Lambeth Conference addressed an “Appeal to all Christian people,”³ as they reflected on the “reunion of Christendom.” They noted that “men never prized the fellowship of mankind as they did when the Great War has for the time destroyed it” and they sought to examine “how the bands of its own fellowship are loosened and broken.” Further, they acknowledged that those who believe in Christ and had been baptised into the name of the Trinity share with them “membership in universal Church of Christ which is His Body.”

Both texts emerged in the context of a wide range of interrelated ecumenical initiatives and movements. They both played a decisive role in the ensuing ecumenical engagement of Orthodox and Anglicans respectively. 2020 is the hundredth anniversary of the two documents that encouraged and inspired ecumenical engagement. CEC in cooperation with the Catholic University of Leuven is organising an academic conference to commemorate the Patriarchal Encyclical addressed to ‘the Churches of Christ everywhere’ and the 1920 Lambeth Appeal to all Christian People, bringing together scholars to reflect on the historic significance of both texts, and the ecumenical achievements that followed, but also their relevance for the current challenges to Christian unity.

3. Aim(s) of the project

The conference will draw on the tremendous sense of hope demonstrated in both texts. It will explore the role of the two texts in fostering unity and discuss hopes for communion in terms of present relationships among Christians.

4. Objectives

- To increase awareness of one another’s history in seeking unity.
- To animate hopes for communion today that are grounded in theology, ecumenical dialogue and a realistic analysis of the current socio-political context.
- To revisit models of church unity.

5. Outcome

³ “Reunion of Christendom – An appeal to all Christian People from the Bishops Assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920,” in Faith and Order Continuation Committee, *A Compilation of Proposals for Christian Unity*, Faith and Order Paper 34 (First series). Also: <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920>, resolution 9.



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC9B APPX3 HOPE OF COMMUNION
Purpose: For information

- Participants will have reflected on early hopes of communion and existing models of church unity.
- They will have identified emerging themes in contemporary ecumenical dialogue.

6. Gender-related issues

Attention will be given to inviting female speakers.

7. Target group

Church leaders, ecumenical leaders, theologians focusing on ecumenical dialogue, persons responsible for theological formation and leadership, seminarians, and emerging male and female scholars.

8. Timing and venue

The initial idea was to hold an International Conference in Istanbul in 2020 hosted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The proposal was to have His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury as the main speakers. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic the plans for a physical Conference were put on hold. In April 2020 the Thematic Group on Ecclesiology & Mission met for the first time and discussed the project. A small subgroup was created to work on the planning together with the partners from the Catholic University of Leuven. The Thematic Group will discuss the possibility to hold a conference in Istanbul in the new year.

The online Conference will be held from 16-17 December 2020.

9. Partners

KU Leuven, Louvain Centre for Eastern and Oriental Christianity:
https://theo.kuleuven.be/en/research/centres/centr_loceoc

10. Press and Communication aspects

There will be a press release. The online conference is promoted on CEC social media and the KU Leuven website and network.

11. Follow-up



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церквей

Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
--

Agenda Item: 9

Document Name:

2GB2020_DOC9B APPX3 HOPE OF COMMUNION

Purpose: For information

The organising committee will consider the possibility of publishing the conference papers.

12. Programme

THE HOPE OF COMMUNION: FROM 1920 TO 2020

Programme Agenda – Day 1, 16 December 2020

Greetings

CEC Vice-Presidents

14:30-14:40

Rt. Rev. Dr. Guli Francis-Dehqani, Church of England

H.E. Metropolitan of Sweden and All Scandinavia, Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Louvain Centre for Eastern and Oriental Christianity (LOCEOC)

14:40-14:50

Prof. Joseph Verheyden, Coordinator of LOCEOC

Session 1: 1920: Annus mirabilis? 'Unto the Churches of Christ Everywhere,' and 'Appeal to All Christian People'

15:00-15:20

The 1920 Encyclical and the Self-Understanding of the World Council of Churches

Rev. Dr. Odair Pedroso Mateus, World Council of Churches

15:20-15:40

The Lambeth Appeal and the Appeal of Britain

Rev. Canon Prof. Mark D. Chapman, University of Oxford /Ripon College

15:40-16:00



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церкве

Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
--

Agenda Item: 9

Document Name:

2GB2020_DOC9B APPX3 HOPE OF COMMUNION

Purpose: For information

The contribution and ecumenical vision of Metropolitan Germanos Strenopoulos and Professor Hamilcar Alivizatos for a *Koinonia* of Churches

Prof. Stylianos Tsompanidis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

16:00-17:00 Discussion

Programme Agenda – Day 2, 17 December 2020

Session 2: Hopes Fulfilled, Deferred and Re-directed: Changing ecumenical priorities 1920–2000

11:00-11:20

The Patriarchal Encyclical of 1920: the vision of the Church's mission in the world

Ms. Natallia Vasilevich, Council of Christian Churches in Germany

11:20-11:40

Developing a Roman Catholic View on Unity: from the Malines Conversations to Vatican II

Prof. Peter De Mey, KU Leuven

11:40-12:00

Communion and Context: Discerning *Koinonia* on the Ground

Dr. Andrew Pierce, Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin

12:00-13:00 Discussion

Session 3: Signs of Hope, Models of Unity: The ecumenical landscape today

14:30-14:50

The challenges to the goal of full visible unity, and the shift from organic unity to reconciled diversity

Prof. Michael Root, Catholic University of America

14:50-15:10

Visible unity in reconciled diversity? How to continue the mission of *Charta Oecumenica*

Prof. Friederike Nüssel, Heidelberg University



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церкве

Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020

Agenda Item: 9

Document Name:

2GB2020_DOC9B APPX3 HOPE OF COMMUNION
--

Purpose: For information

15:10-15:30

Visible unity: Still our hope?

Rev. Canon Dr. Jeremy Worthen, Church of England

15:30-16:30 Discussion

Reflections on the Conference and Concluding Remarks

17:00-17:30

H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Ecumenical Patriarchate

Prof. Peter De Mey, KU Leuven



Introduction

The assembly planning committee (APC) convened for its fourth meeting online 22-25 September 2020 to continue developing plans for the WCC 11th Assembly. The meeting was led by Bishop Staccato Powell, APC vice-moderator. The leadership of the assembly worship planning committee (AWPC) joined the meeting. The interim general secretary, Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca and staff (Geneva and Karlsruhe) were also present.

The WCC executive committee, meeting in July, affirmed the spirit and vision expressed in the APC report from December 2019. They asked the APC to consider the practical and thematic implications of COVID-19 and growing social unrest as well as how best to shape the thematic coherence of the assembly. The outcomes of this APC meeting are meant to provide further direction for the development of the assembly programme. In addition to this report, detailed minutes of each session are available for internal use. The APC is invited to continue providing feedback.

Objectives

The APC annotated agenda included the following objectives in response to the recommendations of the WCC executive committee:

1. Convene the APC and leadership of the AWPC following the decision to postpone the assembly, now taking place from 31 August to 8 September 2022 in Karlsruhe, Germany under the theme *“Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity”*; with pre-assemblies on 29 and 30 August.
2. Engage the APC in further developing plans for the assembly given the implications of current global realities such as COVID-19 and growing social unrest in response to racism and other inequalities.
3. Consider how best to shape the thematic coherence of the assembly with regard to the use of biblical texts for daily use in prayer, thematic plenaries and home groups.
4. Review draft ecumenical conversation abstracts, offering advice on further development and cooperation with member churches and ecumenical partners.

Recommendations:

1. The APC **recommends** its report the WCC executive committee in response to the request to continue planning based on the spirit and vision of the APC, while taking into account the impact of COVID-19 and growing social unrest in response to racism and other inequalities.
2. The APC **thanks** Beate Fagerli for the spirit of inclusion and her leadership in moving the assembly planning forward as assembly coordinator.
3. The APC **agrees** to meet on-line 2-5 February 2021 from 14.00 to 16.30 (GVA time) to continue monitoring planning for the assembly, with a focus on the Brunnen programme, home groups, assembly business and budget.

Practical and Thematic Implications (22 September 2020)

Bishop Staccato Powell welcomed the APC to its first on-line meeting. He shared the apologies of H.E. Metr. Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima, APC moderator. He reminded the APC of its mandate to help shape the thematic coherence of the assembly. The meeting opened with prayer.

The APC received an update from the interim general secretary on the decision to postpone the assembly, restructuring of the assembly office and work underway to continue planning according to the spirit and vision of the APC. He assured the APC that the assembly was among his highest priorities.

In a round of sharing, the members of APC reflected on how the current situation has impacted their churches. They referred to the postponement of meetings, new ways of working, expressions of practical ecumenism, the financial impact and challenges in responding to pastoral needs. There was a common affirmation that many of the changes we are experiencing are here to stay, i.e. less travel, more on-line work. Bishop Powell challenged the APC to continue thinking creatively about “virtual assembling”.

Practical Implications and Updates

The APC received an update on logistics, highlighting that the new dates follow the same pattern of the first dates, i.e. number of days, beginning on a Wednesday, ending on Thursday, etc. The APC was informed that the host churches and city of Karlsruhe remain committed to the assembly in 2022; and were informed of a major funding approaches with the German federal government and the state of Baden-Württemberg. The APC was informed that 66% of the member churches have submitted their delegations and that all member churches and ecumenical partners were officially informed of the new dates and asked to confirm/name their delegations by 31 March 2021. On-line registration will open in September 2021. The assembly symbol was launched and the assembly website is well underway. An update on assembly publications and resources was presented.

Thematic Implications

The APC was joined by the leadership of the International Assembly Theme Group, which presented its draft reflection on the theme. Their reflection addresses the biblical and theological basis of the theme as well as the contexts of COVID-19, climate change, inequalities, digital revolution and cries for hope.

The work of the group is meant to stimulate further reflection on theme “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity”. As such, it is not a statement on the theme. The APC was asked for feedback on how the reflection resonates with the experience of the churches.

Appreciation was expressed for the focus on the love of God in Christ and reference to Christ’s compassion (Matthew 9). Appreciation was also expressed for the “accessibility” of the language of the draft. The APC had suggestions for strengthening the contextual references, particularly concerning different ways that churches respond to pastoral challenges in the context of COVID-19. The APC was invited to send further comments by email to the group to strengthen its work on the draft reflection.

Recommendations:

4. The APC **thanks** the international assembly theme group for its draft reflection and **asks** the general secretary to continue working with the group to produce a reflection that can help stimulate ongoing reflection on the theme “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity”.

5. *The APC **asks** the international assembly theme group to include two additional mega-trends as lenses for the thematic work – militarization and the multi-religious realities of today's world.*

Thematic Coherence (23 September 2020)

Bishop Powell welcomed the APC and thanked everyone for their participation and commitment. Following a brief review of the previous discussion on the previous day, the meeting opened with prayer.

The APC received a proposal for the thematic coherence with regard to the use of biblical texts for daily prayer, thematic plenaries, home groups and Bible study. The proposed framework builds on the work of the APC, AWPC and international assembly theme group. The framework was presented day by day, reviewing the day theme, biblical text and thematic plenary. The framework needs improvement, including suggestions to incorporate the interfaith elements of context and response. Following a round of questions for clarification, the APC met in breakout groups for deeper discussion.

The APC responded with many suggestions for how to improve the framework. For example, the need to see a strong connection with the pilgrimage (PJP) as an example of the churches moving together for justice and peace; to ensure that thematic plenaries speak to the world and not only the churches (high level speakers); to address the legacies of slavery, not only racism and colonialism, including the role/complicity of the churches; to address the deeper economic impact of COVID on poverty and health (wounds); to express a deeper understanding of the relationship between healing, liberation and reconciliation; the need to name the rise of militarism and populism; and the possibility of addressing the ambivalent implications of the digital revolution.

The proposed plenary on unity stimulated a lot of discussion on the need to address “unity and common witness”, i.e. the unity we seek as Christians and the response of the church through mission and evangelism.

The use of biblical narratives that describe the compassion, justice and service of Christ was affirmed with some suggestions for alternative texts and the interest in using supporting Old Testament references. The APC affirmed the approach will help stimulate sharing in home groups, Bible studies, ecumenical conversation, i.e. stories of faith, examples of resilience and strengthening relationships; as expressed in the vision and direction of its previous reports.

The feedback and discussion informed the revision of the proposed framework for further review by the APC. The APC was interested to know how this framework will also inform the business of the assembly and public statements of the assembly.

Recommendations:

6. *The APC **recommends** that planning continue for daily prayers, thematic plenaries, home groups, Bible study and other programmatic elements based on the revised framework for thematic coherence (see appendix 1).*
7. *The APC **reaffirms** its recommendations from the December report and **asks** the AWPC, at its next meeting, to continue planning the spiritual life of the assembly from the perspective of the revised framework.*

Ecumenical Conversations (24 September 2020)

Bishop Powell welcomed the APC and thanked everyone again for their participation. The meeting opened with prayer. The moderator noted that not everyone had spoken yet, so asked each person to say a word of introduction before proceeding with the agenda.

The APC received an update on the development of ecumenical conversations, including 22 draft abstracts, each with a brief description and objectives; conversation outline over 4 days; and methodologies and suggested partners. The APC was asked to give feedback to help develop the process and content for ecumenical conversations. After a first round of discussion, the APC met in breakout groups and reported back in plenary.

The APC responded with many observations and suggestions about both process and content. The APC provided a number of comments and suggestions for specific conversations, which are recorded in the daily minutes.

The APC thought an additional conversation was needed to allow space for discussion on spirituality, pastoral care and the liturgical life of the churches, taking into account the experiences with COVID-19.

The APC reiterated its request from December to nominate a small group of APC members to accompany staff in the development of ecumenical conversations.

Regarding process, the APC expressed the need to be clear about who participates in conversations and how the results of the conversation are used. Only delegates and participants with voice participate in ecumenical conversations. The conversation reports are not approved by the assembly. They become a resource for consideration by the central committee to further develop the policy and programmatic directions approved by the assembly.

There was discussion about the plan that after two sessions each ecumenical conversation would provide a short update for consideration by the committee established by the assembly to review programmatic issues. More reflection is needed on the methodology of sharing input from ecumenical conversations with regard to assembly business and committees.

In addition to its suggestions about specific conversations, the APC observed that some conversations are rooted in existing programme work, some in specific documents, while others seek to address current challenges. This should be made clear so delegates understand the different types of conversations.

The APC observed that some conversations are very focused, while others are very broad. The APC suggests conversations be focussed toward the future, i.e. beyond an overview of work or analysis of the present situation. Conversations should not only consider current challenges, but also a broader horizon, i.e. 2030 as red-thread connecting a common direction. The APC observed the conversations may help enrich the understanding of the theme where appropriate, i.e. the thematic reflection and mega-trends articulated by the International Assembly Theme Group.

Concern was expressed about too many speakers, encouraging more conversation and fewer speakers. The APC observed there was a lack of Orthodox voices and emphasized the need for balance across regions, confessions. The APC advised that there be more attention to the expected outcomes and how they will be achieved.

Recommendations :

8. The APC **thinks** the staff for the draft ecumenical conversations abstracts and asks that the detailed input of the APC be shared with the staff as a resource to continue developing the ecumenical conversations.
9. The APC **recommends** that an additional conversation be developed relating to spirituality, pastoral care and the liturgical life of the churches, taking into account the experiences with COVID-19.
10. The APC **nominates** four members to continue working with staff on the development of ecumenical conversations:
 - Kerstin Kollander
 - Katerina Pekridou
 - Staccato Powell
 - Audeh Quawas

Conclusion (25 September 2020)

Bishop Powell welcomed the APC and thanked everyone for the work that was achieved over the past three days. The meeting opened with prayer.

At the request of the moderator, the meeting began with a review of the flow of the assembly time-table with attention to the rhythm of daily prayers, thematic plenaries, home groups, Bible study, ecumenical conversations, assembly business (plenaries and committees) and the *Brunnen* programme.

A revised framework for the thematic coherence of the assembly, taking into account the discussion of the APC was presented, gathering further feedback. The moderator confirmed that the APC wanted to continue planning in this direction (indicator cards).

Regarding the theme of the assembly, the moderator asked for further feedback on the work of the International Assembly Theme Group and confirmed that the APC wanted to continue planning in this direction (indicator cards).

The moderator asked the APC for further feedback on ecumenical conversations and confirmed that the APC wanted to request the development of an addition conversation related to spirituality, pastoral care and liturgical life the churches, taking into account the experiences with COVID-19; as well as the APC recommendation to nominate some members to accompany staff in the further development of ecumenical conversations (indicator cards).

A draft report of the APC was read aloud and discussed section by section, allowing for revision of the narrative. The APC reviewed and revised draft recommendations for consideration; approving them by consensus (indicator cards). The recommendations approved by the APC are included above in the corresponding sections of the report

The moderator thanked the members of the APC and the leadership of the AWPC for their active participation and work. The moderator thanked the staff for preparing and facilitating the meeting. The interim general secretary thanked the moderator for his leadership. The meeting closed in prayer.

Participants

APC Vice-Moderator

Bishop Dr Staccato POWELL
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Interim General Secretary

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan SAUCA

Assembly Planning Committee Members

Rev. Marianne H. BREKKEN	Church of Norway
Rev. Dr Prof. Yang-en CHENG	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
Rev. Fr Andrzej CHOROMANSKI	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
Dr David Emmanuel GOATLEY	Baptist World Alliance
Rev. Anne HEITMANN	Evangelical Church in Germany
Mr Andrej JEFTIĆ	Serbian Orthodox Church
Ms Kerstin KOLLANDER	ACT Alliance
Mr Luciano KOVACS	World Student Christian Federation
Mrs Sara Pottschmidt LISHERNESS	Presbyterian Church (USA)
Ms Katerina PEKRIDOU	Conference of European Churches
Ms Teny PIRRI-SIMONIAN	Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)
Dr Audeh B. QUAWAS	Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
Dr Ann K. RIGGS	Religious Society of Friends: Friends General Conf.
Rev. Canon Aida Consuelo SANCHEZ-NAVARRO	The Episcopal Church
Ms Miriam Jane WEIBYE	Church of Scotland

Assembly Worship Planning Committee Leadership

Rev. Dr Elisabeth KRAUSE-VILMAR (mod)	Evangelical Church in Germany
Dr Swee Hong LIM	Methodist Church in Singapore
Archpriest Mikhail GOUNDAIEV	Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Rev. Sabine UDOESKU	Evangelical Church in Germany

International Assembly Theme Group Leadership (Tuesday, 22 September)

Prof. Dr Marina KOLOVOPOULOU (mod)	Church of Greece
Rev. Dr Susan DURBER	United Reformed Church

Apologies

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr GENNADIOS OF SASSIMA	Ecumenical Patriarchate
Mrs Elenor I. LAWRENCE	Church in the Province of the West Indies
Bishop Dr Alex Gehaz MALASUSA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
Ms Merenaisi MAOPA	Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma
Mr Philip MODAYIL MANI	Church of South India
Rev. Emma SEPAH	Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

Staff and Resource Persons

Ms Charlotte BELOT	World Council of Churches
Mr Douglas L. CHIAL	World Council of Churches
Ms Marianne EJDERSTEN	World Council of Churches
Dr Ani GHAZARYAN DRISSI	World Council of Churches
Mr Marc-Henri HEINIGER	World Council of Churches
Rev. Dr Odair PEDROSO MATEUS	World Council of Churches
Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo PHIRI	World Council of Churches

Rev. Dr Mikie ROBERTS
Rev. Dr Martin ROBRA
Ms Hannelore SCHMID
Rev. Dr Marc WITZENBACHER

World Council of Churches
Consultant
World Council of Churches
Karlsruhe Assembly Local Office

Appendix 1

Framework for thematic coherence of the assembly

This was the first APC meeting after the Covid-19 crisis began and the decision was taken to postpone the assembly to 2022. It was clear that the APC could not just continue where it left its work on the preparations of the assembly in December last year. Taking a step back and looking with fresh minds at the tasks to be accomplished was necessary.

The Executive Committee had requested the APC to give particular attention to

- the “thematic and practical implications of current global realities such as Covid-19 and growing social unrest in response to racism and other inequalities” and
- the “coherence of biblical texts for daily use in prayer, thematic plenaries, home groups; Bible study and other programmatic elements.”

The APC approached these tasks inspired by a document of the International Assembly Theme Group. It paved the way for the work of the APC, unfolding the theological richness of the theme and pointing to five important megatrends that mark the present context:

- Covid-19
- the climate emergency
- racism and growing social and economic inequalities
- the undermining of democracy through authoritarian politics of fear and hate, and
- the ambiguous consequences of digitalization.

The APC observed also an increasing militarization of conflicts and warfare pushing millions to become refugees. There is a growing danger that nuclear weapons are being used, not to speak of chemical and biological weapons of mass-destruction. The APC would like to highlight also that this world is a multi-religious world in which Christians dialogue and cooperate more and more with people of other faith. The cooperation of all people of good will on the way of justice and peace is required as we see day by day on the pilgrimage of justice and peace. Interfaith cooperation should be visible, for instance in thematic plenaries. The APC points also to the concerns for Christians living as minorities among people of other faith that should be included where appropriate.

These trends are not all new, but together – and especially with Covid-19 adding to the situation – they are like an overwhelming wall imprisoning the world. Deep and radical changes are required to bring this wall down, which start with the hope that it is possible to overcome paralysis and breach the wall. The assembly needs to address this situation and speak to the world in clear and sharp ways accessible to all. It cannot gloss over the deep multi-faceted civilizational crisis. However, it has the chance to explore how Christ’s love opens a horizon of hope beyond the wall. It is indeed God’s purpose to move the whole world and the entire cosmos to reconciliation and unity.

Mindful of the theme of the assembly and the present context, the APC is proposing the following day themes and Biblical references for each day of the assembly (except for the weekend-programme) and themes for thematic plenaries. Please note that the biblical texts are anchor texts for each day. It is not excluded to involve other text from the Hebrew or Greek Bible.

The APC shares some reflections on the theological flow and thematic foci as appendix which intends to explain the choices made and inform further work.

Day themes and biblical references

Day 1: *Opening – “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity”*. The assembly theme should be the theme of day 1 with reference to 2. Cor 5:14. AWPC is proposing to add John 4, exploring each day “stories of Christ’s love”.

Day 2: *The purpose of God’s love incarnated in Jesus Christ – reconciliation and unity* with reference to Col 1:19 f. (Eph 1:10) and Mt 9:35 f.

Day 3: *Europe with Lk 10 (The Good Samaritan) as biblical reference* – The APC asks the Conference of European Churches and all involved in the preparations of the Europe plenary to take the concerns mentioned in the appendix into consideration.

Day 6: *Christ’s love – Compassion for life* with reference to Mk 10: 46-52 (Bartimaeus’ healing).

Day 7: *Christ’s love – Transforming discipleship* with reference to Mt 15 (Phoenician woman – also proposed Lk 16:13).

Day 8: *Christ’s love – The bond of Christian unity and the churches’ common witness* with reference to John 13 (foot washing-the new commandment).

Day 9: *Closing – Christ’s love – moving together on the way* with reference to John 21 (Jesus and Peter).

Thematic plenaries

On the basis of the day-themes and the biblical anchor texts, the APC considered titles and possible topics of thematic plenaries. These need to be tested and further developed towards the forthcoming Executive Committee and the next APC meeting:

Day 2: Theme plenary – *The purpose of God’s love incarnated in Jesus Christ – reconciliation and unity* – reflections on the theme and signs of the times from different contexts and traditions, one from the Christian minority situation in the Middle East.

Day 3: Europe plenary (see the appendix)

Day 6: *Affirming the wholeness of life* – Covid-19 (health and healing), the climate emergency, the wisdom of indigenous peoples, young people leading the care for creation.

Day 7: *Affirming justice and human dignity* – Against racism, for gender justice and an economy of life in the context of increasing digitalization. Persons with disabilities should be involved here explicitly.

Day 8: *Christian unity and the churches’ common witness* – The WCC constitution gives primary importance to the search for unity in apostolic faith leading to eucharistic fellowship, which includes to address the wider context of Christian disunity. What do we mean by Christian unity today? Complacency of Christians in injustice and war, new horizons for the unity and mission of the church; anniversary of the Nicene Creed 2025.

Appendix to the Framework

Theological flow and thematic foci of the 2022 Assembly in Karlsruhe

The opening of the assembly (day 1): The request of the Executive Committee and the contribution of the International Theme Group have direct consequences for the way how the present context and the theme are being introduced and the tone is set for the following days of the assembly during the opening of the assembly. The assembly cannot start with a celebration that remains silent in view of the victims of Covid-19 and other diseases, of racist murder, violence against women and children. There should be time to remember victims of racism, injustice and war. It is precisely the hope for change that the theme is promising which requires and allows to address this context with honesty and solidarity because we believe that “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity”. The assembly theme should be the theme of day 1 with reference to 2. Cor 5:14. AWPC is proposing to add John 4, exploring each day “stories of Christ’s love”.

Unfolding the theme (day 2): It is the love of the triune God that is incarnated and made fully manifest in Jesus Christ. Christ’s love is the love of the one in whom God is made present in the world in all its woundedness and brokenness. God’s love leads divided churches and a divided humanity to reconciliation and unity as God’s intentions for humankind and creation (Eph 1:10 and Col 1:19 f.). The divine love of Christ is compassionate and deep, bringing healing and life-transforming hope (Mt 9:35 f.). It is out of this love for his disciples and the world that Christ prays on the way to the cross: “Let them be one, so that the world may believe” (John 17:21). The APC is proposing as theme for day 2 The purpose of God’s love incarnated in Jesus Christ – reconciliation and unity with reference to Col 1:19 f. (Eph 1:10) and Mt 9:35 f.

Europe (day 3): The APC had intense discussions how to approach day 3 with its focus on Europe and the Europe plenary. The choice of the Biblical text by the AWPC (Lk 10, the Good Samaritan) calls for the care for the other and is coupled with an emphasis on hospitality. The APC drew the horizon wider also in view of the need to include the inter-faith dimension, reflecting on Europe and its more and more multi-religious reality. APC members also underlined that it is hard to imagine a Europe day and plenary in a global gathering of churches that do not address the legacy of colonialism, slavery, genocide, war, and complacency of Christians in these evils. This past still impacts on present forms of structural injustice. The way to reconciliation and a future of solidarity and peace leads through the recognition of the traumas of the past and repentance. How do we approach the required healing from traumas of the past when we are living in a world that is increasingly wounded? Europe has shown after World War II how enmities can be overcome and reconciliation is possible. This is evident at the German-French border between Karlsruhe and Strasbourg. The APC is proposing that preparations of the Europe plenary take these concerns into consideration.

Compassion for life and transforming discipleship (day 6 and day 7): Day 6 and day 7 belong together. Both of the days speak to the world and ask for the common witness and mission of the churches in this world. High profile speakers that draw the attention of the media could be involved here.

Covid-19 is exacerbating existing inequalities and exposing even further the already existing structural injustice. Racism and politics of fear and hate are dividing and killing people. The pandemic of ignorance, white supremacy and hate is deadly and so is the pandemic of injustice. The two days give space to explore the megatrends. In view of the fact that the time available is scarce, some aspects have to be addressed more through press features (interviews, reports from

Brunnen workshops etc.), ecumenical conversations and/or public-issue statements than through thematic plenaries. Militarization, for instance, could be taken up in this way. Both of the days require a deeper understanding of the relationship between healing, liberation and reconciliation.

Day 6: The proposal is to concentrate on day 6 on Covid-19 and the care for people and creation, which includes the megatrend of climate change. The WCC's work on health and healing and the inter-faith cooperation on Covid-19 could be presented. The voices of indigenous peoples and young people leading the care for creation could be heard. Representatives of EDAN should be involved. The APC proposes as theme for day 6 "Christ's love – Compassion for life" with reference to Mark 10: 46-52 (Bartimaeus' healing).

Day 7 should explore Christ's love inspiring transforming discipleship as mark of the mission of the churches and the call for justice. Affirming justice and human dignity, day 7 should concentrate on the struggle against racism, for gender justice and an economy life (addressing the idolatry of the market – see Arusha call) and the impact of digitalization. Addressing such culturally deeply engrained expressions of injustice requires to name and repent for injustices of the past, such as the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism. The APC is offering as theme for day 7 Christ's love-Transforming discipleship with reference to Matthew 15 (Phoenician woman – also proposed Luke 16:13).

Unity (day 8): Day 8 is to focus on Christian unity and the fellowship of the churches and their mission in the world. The meaning of Christian unity today should be explored for the sake of greater clarity concerning the primary purpose of the WCC according to its constitution ("The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.") This requires addressing also what divides the churches, how Christians have been complacent for instance in the transatlantic slave-trade, colonial and present economic exploitation or war, and how the work of Faith and Order can open new horizons for the search for Christian unity and the mission of the church in this world. This includes work on new emerging ecclesiologies as well as preparations for 2025, the anniversary of the Nicene Creed. The APC proposes as theme for day 8 Christ's love – The bond of Christian unity and the churches' common witness with reference to John 13 (foot washing-the new commandment).

Closing (day 9): The dialogue between Jesus and Peter in John 21 combines the love of and for Christ with the call to follow him in this world. It is an excellent entry point to sum up the previous days, to turn around and to concentrate on tasks ahead of all as disciples following Christ as ambassadors of Christ's love and to do so as Christians together on the way of justice and peace.

There was so far no special theme for the closing. With reference to John 21 it could be "Christ's love – moving together on the way". The APC asks the AWPC to consider this question.

PAPERS AND PUBLICATION

Those who wish to present a paper should send a summary (400–500 words) by email to St. Andrew's Institute by 15 October 2020. The Organizing Committee selects papers for the Conference and sends invitations to the speakers. The full texts of all selected papers will have to be submitted by 1 December 2020. The working languages of the conference will be Russian and English.

Papers are scheduled for 20 minutes each. Some of the papers will be published in St. Andrew's quarterly *Pages: Theology, Culture, Education*. The registration form can be found on St. Andrew's website www.standrews.ru. Registrations, summaries and papers should be sent to:

Mikhail Tolstoluzhenko
St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute
Jerusalem St. 3, Moscow, 109316, Russia
Tel/Fax: +7 495 6702200
Email: standrews@yandex.ru

ORGANIZATION AND ACCOMMODATION

The working days of the Conference are 11 and 12 December. The organizers can assist the speakers in finding suitable accommodation in Moscow. Some scholarships to cover part of the cost of participation in the conference might be available upon request.

St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute

PATRONS: METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS OF DIOKLEIA, LORD RICHARD HARRIES,
PROFESSOR HANS KÜNG, PROFESSOR JÜRGEN MOLTMANN,
VERY REV. LEONID KISHKOVSKY, . REV. DR JOHN BINNS



St. Andrew's
Biblical Theological Institute
(Moscow, Russia)



cec
CONFERENCE OF
EUROPEAN CHURCHES

Faculty of Religion
and Theology
Beliefs and Practices



POKROVSKIE VOROTA
CULTURAL CENTRE
(MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

VU
UNIVERSITY
AMSTERDAM

Invitation and Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE PERSON IN A POST-RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

10–13 December 2020
Moscow, Russia

Visit our web-site
STANDREWS.RU

THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

Significant changes taking place in contemporary society over the last decades, caused by globalization and the information revolution, allow us to speak of a new emerging religious situation. Traditional religion is more and more superseded by a different kind of religiosity often called “post-religion”. This multifaceted phenomenon is difficult to determine in strict terms but it can roughly be described as a free, open and non-dogmatic search for the sacred, which often finds its expression in emerging groups and communities that, unlike traditional religious bodies, are non-hierarchical in their structure and have a more positive attitude toward the contemporary world with its aspiration for individual freedom and self-realization. This applies not only to the so-called new religious movements but increasingly to the mainstream religions, including Christianity. Even within the most conservative Orthodox churches there emerge such grass-roots movements inspired by new ideas and new approaches to age-old existential and spiritual issues. Post-religion thus should not necessarily be presented as something totally opposed to and separate from traditional religiosity; it can perhaps be regarded as a further stage in the evolution of religion conditioned by new developments taking place in human society.

How does this new situation affect the concept of the person, the very content of this idea? Christianity has often claimed that this concept has theological roots: as long as the human being was considered to be an image of God, the idea of the human person was deeply influenced by the notion of the Trinity and the

interpersonal relations between its hypostases, as this was developed in early Christian theology. Even if this is not the full truth, still one can hardly deny that a religious dimension has been important for the understanding of the human person in medieval and modern times. But what kind of changes in the concept of the human person can we observe today, in our post-modern and post-religious age,

- when Christianity actively interacts with other religions and cultures whose understandings of the person may differ significantly from the Christian concept;
- when, due to feminist theology, God is no longer perceived in solely masculine and patriarchal terms;
- when ecological concerns and the issue of animal rights impel us to think of the rest of creation in less impersonal categories than in the past and to regard the human being not as “the crown of creation” but as just one part of it, perhaps not even the best part;
- when real human community is more and more transformed into a society of consumption and entertainment populated by “one-dimensional” individuals with “virtual” rather than real relations between them;
- when artificial intelligence is becoming itself a quasi-personal reality that can greatly facilitate our life but can also be used to control almost every aspect of it?

These are some of the questions we would like to discuss at the forthcoming conference.