

Are we just 'Oxfam with Hymns?'

The Role of Religion in Faith Based Organizations

A One Day Seminar for the WCC, the ACT Alliance
and other Sister Ecumenical Organizations

Background

During the past ten years, there has been increased interest in the role of faith based organizations in humanitarian and development work. The questions have been raised:

- ❖ is there an added value of being a faith based organization?
- ❖ what's different about faith based organizations ? and
- ❖ do faith based organizations have a specific role to play in overcoming poverty and injustice?

The World Council of Churches and ACT Alliance are providing an opportunity for members and sister ecumenical organizations to explore these questions together in a one day seminar.

Date: Monday, 22 November 2010
9am-5pm (worship at 8.30am)

Venue: The Ecumenical Centre, Geneva

Objectives of the Day:

1. to increase our ability to articulate who we are as faith based organizations
2. to explore how being a faith based organization shapes our thinking and agenda (does it make a difference? does it add value?)
3. to listen to, and discuss the findings of a major research study undertaken by the Religions and Development Research Programme at the University of Birmingham

Who Can Attend?

The seminar is open to all members and staff of the World Council of Churches, the ACT Alliance and other sister ecumenical organizations and Christian World Communions.

Cost: Members from outside of Geneva must cover their own accommodation and meal costs. Members are responsible for paying for their own lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided by the ACT Alliance.

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Agenda

- 8.30am **Morning worship in the Chapel**
- 9am **Introductions**
- 9.15am ***Relating Faith to Development***
Address by The Rev Prof Michael H Taylor, former Director of Christian Aid and writer of 'Not Angels but Agencies' (1995) amongst other publications.
- Plenary discussion
- 10.30am **Coffee/ Tea**
- 11am ***Religion and Development- some findings***
Address by Professor Carole Rakodi, Director of Religions and Development: a research programme at the University of Birmingham UK in partnership with research teams in India, Tanzania, Nigeria and Pakistan
- Table group discussion on 'what are the main learnings for us from this study' followed by plenary
- 12.30pm **Lunch**
- 1.30pm **Small group work**
Identifying:
a. ways in which our organizations need to be- or do not need to be- distinctive
b. specific issues arising out of today's discussions that we need to take further
- 2.45pm **Issues and questions from the small groups**
- 3.15pm **Coffee**
- 3.45pm **Plenary discussion with panel:** Response from Irene Mutalima (Director of ECLOF), Michael Taylor and Carole Rakodi
- 4.30pm **Next steps from here**