



Transforma mundo

World Council of Churches 9th Assembly

Porto Alegre, 21 February 2006

#7

Today in Porto Alegre



11:00 Theme plenary

"God, in your grace, transform the world"

Speakers:

Rev. Angélique Walker-Smith (National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc.), moderator

Rev. Joseph (Leandro) Bosch (Ecumenical Patriarchate, Argentina)

Ms Carmen Lansdowne (United Church of Canada)

Ms Paula Devejian (Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenia)

Prof. Namsoon Kang (World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions, Korea)

Ms Sarah Newland-Martin (Baptist, Jamaica)

Ms Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga (International Community of Women living with HIV-AIDS, Bolivia)

12:00 First reading of the Assembly message

13:30 Forum on the Assembly theme (plenary hall)

15:00 Hearing plenary: Report of the Programme Committee

17:00 Decision plenary: Report of the Nominations Committee

20:30 DOV 'Walk for Peace' with Brazilian youth and Nobel prize laureates (see page 4)

Number
of the
day

2

Nobel Peace Prize winners "Walking for Peace" tonight

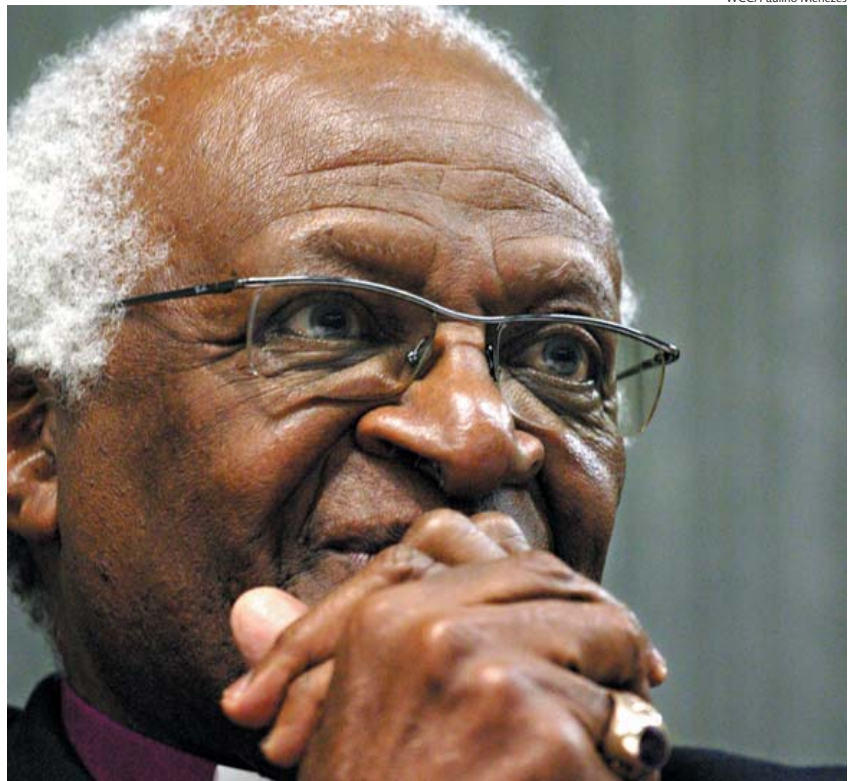
Bible readings

Today's worship centres on the prayer, "God, in your grace, transform *our lives*." The Bible readings (Ezekiel 27: 1-12) and John 4: 1-42 are about water, which is also today's worship symbol; Jesus, who taught in parables, described the redemption he offered as "a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

More stories, photo and videos on www.wcc-assembly.info

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WCC/Paulino Menezes

Nobel prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the 9th Assembly (see page 2)

God, in your grace...

It was the Latin American Churches that first suggested divine grace as a theme for the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. In the following extracts from an article prepared for the Assembly, a Latin American theologian, Elsa Tamez, reflects on what it means to pray "God in your grace, transform the world" in Latin America today.

Paradoxically, when we speak of grace we must also speak of sin. And in Latin America, talking about sin not only involves the personal dimension but above all, its social dimension: injustice, violence, wars. In Latin America it is not possible to reflect on grace without thinking about the *disgraceful* situation faced by millions across the re-

gion on a daily basis: economic, social, cultural and spiritual misery. Today the Christian concept of grace is challenged by a context of social inequality and a lack of human dignity, both of which are signs of structural sin.

In our world today it is apparently not enough to be human. In order to "be someone" in the eyes of the world people must have many merits. These are above all economic: a high salary, a nice house and more than one car. People who do not meet this minimum standard are not considered "people." They are not important.

In this context, the Christian message about grace restores the human being. It reminds them of their place in the world as a son and daughter of God,

created in the image and likeness of God. For the poor and discriminated, for those not considered people in our society, this is good news. In a context where the excluded, the non-person abounds, the experience of grace makes people visible, it gives them back their dignity.

Today, more than ever it is necessary to underline the close relationship between God's grace, "image of God," and human dignity. When we experience God's grace we feel like sons and daughters of God, the image of God is restored and the dignity of the person reappears. This is not only valid for each of us personally but also for the other. When we recognize God's grace in someone else, we also recognize their human dignity.

By the way...

Return to Jerusalem?

“The main rival of Christianity is not any of the major non-Christian religions, but secularism.” Any guesses as to when and where that was stated as the major outcome of an ecumenical conference?

No, not some recent consultation on Christian identity in a religiously plural society. It was in fact in 1928, at the 2nd World Missionary Conference in Jerusalem. It already seems a long way from Edinburgh 1910, when the watchword was still being heard, “The evangelisation of the world in this generation.” Jerusalem called for a kind of inter-religious alliance, in which each faith brought its best insights into a common endeavour against what seemed to be a secularist tide of thought and action spreading throughout the world, without any kind of reference to God.

The Jerusalem approach was sidelined in the 1930s, in the North at any rate, by the appearance of an even more ominous threat to Christianity. It appeared in the form neither of another world religion nor of secularism, but of the pseudo-Christianity that placed the cross on the altars of race, nationality and state in Europe.

But awareness of the presence of other world religions has marked the modern ecumenical movement from its beginning and has repeatedly appeared on the agenda of WCC assemblies, sometimes contentiously (Nairobi 1975, Canberra 1991). Participants at Porto Alegre will have seen the summary account of the WCC’s intensifying work in interfaith relations in the last seven years in the report *From Harare to Porto Alegre* (pages 81-84).

What makes the situation today so different, not just from Edinburgh and Jerusalem but even from any previous Assembly, is that religion has now entered the public and global arena with such *political* force. Or perhaps it would be better to say that what was always apparent to some (those at the receiving end of the Western colonial enterprise for example) long, long before “9/11” is now inescapably evident to all. This means, too, that “interfaith relations” is no longer just one area of programmatic work but a dimension to so much else on the ecumenical agenda: violence, racism, peace-building and international relations, human rights . . .

This new urgency appears to be prompting two kinds of response to prioritising the overall ecumenical agenda. On the one hand it is being said that the new interfaith context makes even more important the quest for visible Christian unity: a divided Christian witness has no credibility in a fragmented world. On the other hand there are voices calling for ecumenism to be redefined as the search for harmony between all the major world religions. Since the *oikumene* means “the whole inhabited earth,” not just the Christian population, these voices are saying that the “ecumenical community” must include people of other faiths with whom we have common problems and must seek common ethical answers.

More likely the coming debate will be about how we define more carefully the relation between these two enterprises. And as always, it will be discovered how greatly we differ according to our particular contexts.

Angelos



Canberra, 1991



“Come, Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation.” The 7th Assembly theme highlighted the recent attention to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, and, meeting in the Australian context, gave a high profile to Indigenous peoples and their bond with the land. But the Assembly was overshadowed by war in the Gulf and it proved difficult to make a united response to the crisis. There was also controversy over how to understand the relation between the Holy Spirit and “spirits” in general. But Canberra also witnessed to the start of healing relationships, with the reception into WCC membership of the China Christian Council, and the attendance of observers from the (white) Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

Bate-Papo

Young people, agents of change

This is the theme for the *Bate-Papo* which will take place at 12:45 today, Tuesday, in the theatre of building 40. It is a very timely issue in view of the discussion in the plenary on the WCC Central Committee nomination process.

The dialogue will be initiated by Michael Wallace, who is from the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia and is also general secretary of the World Christian Student Federation.

Today’s respondent will be Bishop Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter of the Evangelical Church in Germany. She is one of the three bishops of the German church who are women. She is also chairperson of Bread for the World, one of the most important German ecumenical NGOs.

Tutu: "We can only be human together"

"A united church is no optional extra," said Archbishop Desmond Tutu in an impassioned speech to the Assembly on Monday. It is "indispensable for the salvation of God's world."

In a plenary session on church unity Tutu paid tribute to the support given by the WCC, particularly through its Programme to Combat Racism, to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. "This was controversial but was quite critical in saying our cause was just and noble and that those who as a last resort had opted for the armed struggle were not terrorists but freedom fighters," he said. "Nelson Mandela was no terrorist."

The WCC was his "mentor", and he owed it a very great deal, he said. "You, the WCC, demon-

strated God's concern for unity, for harmony, for togetherness. You must celebrate the success you notched up in defeating apartheid, for you were inspired not by a political ideology but by Biblical and theological imperatives."

Apartheid had continued so long, he said, because the church was divided, and God called it to unity. "Jesus was quite serious when he said that God was our father, that we all belonged to one family, because in this family all, not some, are insiders."

"Bush, bin Laden, all belong, gay, lesbian, so-called straight—all belong and are loved, are precious."

On Robert Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe, he said that he had "admired" Mugabe, who was at one time "the brightest star in the Afri-

can firmament."

"But something happened to him, because now he oversees something that is totally unacceptable. We, and all of Africa, should be prepared to say that violation of human rights is violation of human rights, whoever does it."

Of relations with Muslims, he said, "I hope that the WCC will preach that it is *adherents* of a faith who are good or bad, not the faith. No faith says, 'We believe in injustice or violence.'"

He said of economic progress in Africa that rich nations had to understand that an unjust economic order could not continue. However, he added, "Africa has had a succession of corrupt governments. We too have responsibility. Government exists for the sake of the governed."

WCC/Paulino Menezes



"A united church is no optional extra, it is indispensable for salvation"



Water for Life & Nuclear Arms

Assembly takes actions for life

The Assembly has called on member churches to urge their governments to pursue the unequivocal elimination of nuclear weapons in line with the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

It also adopted a statement calling on churches and ecumenical partners to work together to pre-

serve and protect water resources against over-consumption and pollution.

The statement on nuclear arms elimination urges churches to work to overcome the "ignorance and complacency" in society concerning the nuclear threat, and especially to raise awareness in generations with no memory of what

these weapons do.

The statement on "Water for Life" draws on the demand of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, that water never be treated as private property, stating that "indifference towards the vitality of water constitutes both a blasphemy to God the Creator and a crime against humanity."

WCC/Igor Sperotto



Elections: youth seek greater role

As the first slate of names was proposed for election to central committee on Monday, youth and some others expressed concern that the proposal had fallen far short of the goal of 25 percent youth membership, which had been suggested prior to what was anticipated as a "youth Assembly."

Only 14 percent of the 214 names submitted by member churches to the nominations committee were youth, and the proposal contained the names of 22 youth - 15 percent of the proposed new central committee. Nominations committee moderator Rev. Dr Bernice Powell Jackson said the committee "did the best we could with what was submitted to us."

Some of the Assembly's youth participants staged a protest demonstration at the plenary session, several wearing scarves over their mouths to signify that they felt they had been denied the right to speak. Some carried signs saying "We are the church of today, not just of the future"

"Young people are crying out to participate in the Council," said youth delegate Tiago Albrecht, a Brazilian Lutheran.

Dr Marion Best, vice-moderator, acknowledged the demonstration at the close of the plenary and thanked the group for not disrupting the session. "I think we in the WCC have raised high expectations that we cannot always fulfill," she said.

Earlier, the moderator and general secretary met with youth representatives to discuss ways in which youth participation could be strengthened in the WCC. They reiterated their support for a stronger youth contribution, and agreed to convey proposals to the Assembly committees for action.

Children and spirituality

WCC/Igor Sperotto

What did Jesus see in children? Finnish Lutherans posed the question for visitors to their booth in the exhibition hall to consider.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has been posing a question for visitors to its booth in the exhibition hall to consider, and recording their answers.

According to the Rev. Kalevi Virtanen, people were asked why they thought Jesus had held up a child as an example of mature spirituality. Participants from around the globe have shared their perspectives:

- *Hong Kong* – Spirituality should be simple and playful, with all honesty. Children have that.
- *Namibia* – The child is characterised by stubborn trust and the ability to change and forgive.
- *Samoa* – In the Pacific, the child's spirituality is a manifestation of communal upbringing.
- *Netherlands* – Children are mature spiritually because they are open and respectful and dare to be vulnerable.
- *Switzerland* – Children are always open to be surprised.
- *Brazil* – Children are spontaneously confident.



WCC/Paulino Menezes



WCC/Paulino Menezes



Jesus said: "Unless you have faith like a little child, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."



Tuesday in Porto Alegre: Stepping out for peace

Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, will lead a Walk for Peace in downtown Porto Alegre on Tuesday night. The winner of the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel will also take part.

This will be the culmination of ceremonies which will begin in the Largo Glênio Peres at 18:30, with cultural and social presentations, as

well as music and song led by Xico Esvael and Victor Heredia.

At 20:30 church bells in the city will ring for one minute, after which the ceremony marking the change in the focus of the Decade to Overcome Violence from Asia to Latin America will take place. Dr Prawater Khid-arn of the Asia Church Conference will symbolically make the transfer to the Rev. Israel Batista of the Latin American Council of Churches.

After a talk by Julia Quizbert (a Bolivian native), focusing on violence against Indigenous people, there will be a blessing of the light. The march to Praça da Matriz will set off at 21:00.

Bishop Tutu served as assistant director of the WCC in London in the early 1970s until he was appointed Dean of St Mary's Anglican Cathedral in Johannesburg. In 1976 he was elected Bishop of Lesotho

and was appointed general secretary of the South African Council of Churches in 1978. He became Archbishop of the Province of South Africa in 1986.

President Nelson Mandela appointed Bishop Tutu as chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated gross human rights violations during South Africa's years under the policy of apartheid.

The last divided country on earth

Korean Christians at the 9th Assembly are deeply committed to making Korea one nation again. They lament the division of families living on both sides of the heavily fortified border separating North and South Korea. They also believe the tensions created by a divided Korean peninsula are a major threat to world peace.

At a worship service in the university chapel last week, South Koreans joined with the three North Korean Christians who were able to attend the Assembly and prayed for reunification of their country.

"This joint prayer meeting is another historic milestone in our journey together towards peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula," said WCC general secretary, the Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, in addressing the service.

Kobia recalled WCC initiatives since 1984 to start peace and reconciliation talks between South and North Korean churches, and he reiterated the WCC's commitment to help facilitate meetings, which, he hoped, would finally reunite Korea.

"It is thus my fervent prayer that at

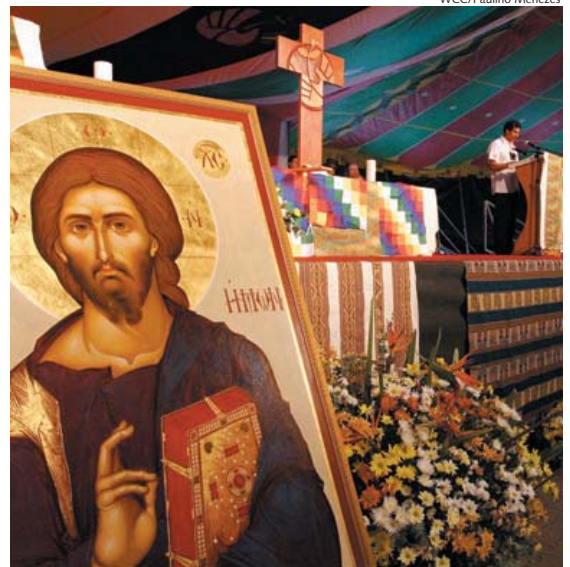
the WCC 10th assembly participants will be coming from a united Korea," Kobia said. The WCC has been invited to hold its next Assembly in South Korea.

At a booth in the exhibit hall on Saturday, three young Korean women were handing out brochures and eagerly discussing the reunification cause with passing visitors. They are in Porto Alegre representing the National Church Youth Association of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

Presbyterians are the largest group of Christians in South Korea, followed by Methodists. Both are represented at this Assembly. The Rev. Wonjae Lee, chief of staff of the 1.5- million-member Korean Methodist Church says reunification of Korea will be a big focus at the 19th World Methodist Conference July 20-24 in Seoul. Held every five years, the meeting draws Methodists from across the globe. This year's conference, planned around the theme "God in Christ Reconciling," will include an emphasis on reunification of Korea. WCC general secretary the Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia is scheduled to preach at the event.



Praying for Korea: the Rev. Wonjae Lee greets WCC general secretary the Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia at a special worship service



Sister Theodora Nasser, Iraq, with Ayda Kaplan, Belgium

Orthodox youth serve as "bond of unity"

Syndesmos, the Greek word meaning 'bond of unity,' is the name of the only global organisation for Orthodox youth, which has a booth in the Assembly exhibit hall. "To be Orthodox is to be ecumenical" claimed its founders. In fifty years of work, *Syndesmos* has become a fellowship of 126 youth movements in 42 countries.

Syndesmos seeks to encourage a deeper understanding of the Orthodox faith, while

at the same time assisting its members in their relations with other Christians and persons of other faiths. Its aim is also to be a special instrument of understanding with the youth of the Oriental Orthodox churches.

Syndesmos has become synonymous with Orthodox lay renewal, and organises consultations and work camps on diverse contemporary themes.

More information on: www.syndesmos.org.

Setting goals for development

Do the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals address the root cause of global poverty? This was one of the questions addressed at a *Mutirão* workshop Friday, which sought ideas to take back for development programs in India.

The workshop was organized by the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), the social arm of 24 Protestant and Orthodox Churches in India.

The eight Millennium Development Goals range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV and AIDS and providing universal primary education—all by the target date of 2105. They form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and leading development institutions.

But a paper presented at the workshop criticized the truncation of the goals, largely at the behest of rich nations. It said most discussions of the goals "are not about changing the way development aid and so on is provided, but more of an attempt to contain or preempt efforts by the poor in the South to radically transform their miserable plight."

Officers from CASA sought a people-centred critique of the goals, questioning who set the agenda and whether or not the people involved could oversee its implementation. What is the role of civil society, they asked, of the churches and of youth — "the best energy available"— in ensuring the goals are implemented properly?

Desmond Tutu diz que Deus ama Bush e Bin Laden



O prêmio Nobel da Paz diz que a unidade das igrejas é indispensável para transformar o mundo

“Deus não tem inimigos”, disse hoje o bispo sul-africano Desmond Tutu, Prêmio Nobel da Paz e uma das mais conhecidas figuras do ecumenismo. Ele disse a seguir que, no abraço amoroso de Deus, cabem brancos e negros, bonitos e feios, homens e mulheres, gays e lésbicas, Bush, Sadan Hussein e Bin Laden.

O bispo anglicano, sobrevivente do Apartheid na África do Sul e ex-secretário-geral do Conselho de Igrejas do seu país lembrou que os cristãos têm mania de se apropriar de Deus e excomungar outras pessoas. Mas, disse ele: “Ninguém tem o direito de direcionar o amor de Deus”.

O bispo Desmond Tutu foi recebido de pé e aplaudido demoradamente pelos participantes da 9a Conferência do Conselho Mundial de Igrejas – CMI. Ele creditou a vitória na luta contra o Apartheid na África do Sul à comunidade ecumênica internacional em geral e ao CMI em particular. “Sou

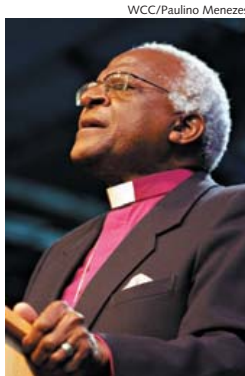
muito grato ao Conselho e a ele devo também o meu crescimento e o meu preparo”, ele disse.

Só a união das igrejas vai poder transformar o mundo, de acordo com o bispo Desmond Tutu. Para ele, a Igreja unida não é apenas necessária, mas indispensável para resolver os problemas mundiais atuais.

A Plenária sobre Unidade da Igreja, na qual falou o bispo sul-africano, teve também a participação do bispo Samuel Robert Azariah, como moderador, do rev. Jacob Kurien, da Igreja Síría da Índia, de Isabel Apawo Phiri, da Igreja Presbiteriana Unida da África do Sul e do padre Jorge Scampini, da Igreja Católico-romana da Argentina, todos oradores.

Uma entrevista muito bem-humorada

O bispo Desmond Tutu levou o público às gargalhadas na Coletiva de Imprensa realizada logo após a



WCC/Paulino Menezes

O bispo Tutu foi aplaudido calorosamente

Plenária. Quando uma jornalista holandesa perguntou sua opinião sobre o documento Ágape, a respeito da globalização econômica, ele quase gritou: “Estou aposentado” e escondia o rosto com a mãos, parecendo uma criança ao ser em flagrada em erro. É que o bispo, que somente chegou a Porto Alegre na noite de domingo, não tivera tempo de ler o documento do CMI. O auditório estremeceu com tantos risos.

Desmond Tutu intercalava

brincadeiras com momentos seríssimos, como quando explicou porque destacara homossexuais e lésbicas, assim como Bush e Bin Laden, para falar da pluralidade do amor de Deus, ao invés de assassinos, ladrões e outros.

Explicou o bispo que citara os homossexuais por causa da controvérsia e porque, como os negros, eles são discriminados sem ter culpa pela cor ou pela inclinação sexual: “Eles não fizeram nada: são o que são independentemente de suas vontades”, explicou. Quanto a Bush e Bin Laden, eles são os extremos, disse.

O bispo pediu que sejamos gentis no julgamento dos que tentam administrar os problemas africanos “porque é muito, muito difícil” lidar com eles. Sua voz ficou embargada e ele confessou que chora quando fala na situação do Zimbábue. Lembrou que não é incomum encontrar cristãos que fazem e defendem o mal: cristãos que justificam o racismo e as guerras. Até a organização que assassina negros nos Estados Unidos, a Ku-Klux-Klan, exibe uma cruz nas suas vestes, lembrou o Prêmio Nobel da Paz.

Un pedacito de Palestina

El stand de Palestina, en el área de exposiciones, sin dudas ha sido uno de los que más ha movilizado público. El carisma de sus muchachos, las danzas, las hojas de olivo y los brazaletes repartidos, y hasta alimentos típicos que comparten con la gente, les ha hecho ganar una popularidad que quedará en la memoria de muchos.

Estas muestras, como parte del Mutirao, han venido a colorear la Asamblea, a darle el sabor propio del júbilo que mantiene la llama de la esperanza como fruto de este encuentro.

Música si, guerra no



Para Nielsen sus ojos son el piano

Para el noruego Ulf Nielsen sus ojos son el piano. Ciego de nacimiento comenzó los estudios a los ocho años. Desde entonces, y hasta ahora, ha recorrido un largo camino embriagado por el indescriptible aroma de su teclado.

La IX Asamblea ha tenido el privilegio de oírle tocar en su plenario, previo a la discusión de los importantes asuntos que se tratan, como una especie de bálsamo que dispone el espíritu al ágape de las ideas.

Un jazz lleno de sabor ha endulzado de nostalgias el aire de la sala. Junto a su pastor, el reverendo Sindre Eide de la Iglesia Luterana Noruega, hizo lo de siempre; improvisar el duelo musical entre su piano y la trompeta del otro. A ellos se sumó la señorita Toril Edoy, discapacitada, que es la consejera en esa misma congregación para enseñar a actuar a las personas frente a quienes portan algún tipo de discapacidad. “Tocó el tambor como diciendo: ¿Ven que soy como ustedes?”, expresó el Eide.

Nielsen, artista profesional, afirma que el piano es su vida. Ante la pregunta de si tenía algún mensaje para los participantes de esta IX Asamblea, primero quedó algo perplejo. ¿Qué tendría él de importancia que decirle a tanta gente? Luego quedó serio unos instantes y su boca tóco la mejor sinfonía: “¡Hagamos música, no guerra!”

Evangelicais e pentecostais a favor do diálogo



O argentino Norberto Saracco avaliou que a postura de diálogo do CMI é extremamente importante.

Um espaço especial foi aberto na manhã do dia 20, na 9a. Assembléia do Conselho Mundial de Igrejas, durante a Coletiva de Imprensa que reuniu três representantes de igrejas evangélicas e pentecostais: o pastor e diretor da Aliança Evangélica Mundial, Geoff Tunnicliffe, com sede no Canadá; o diretor da Igreja de Pentecostes de Gana, Michael Ntummy; e o pastor argentino da Igreja Evangélica Boas Novas, Norberto Saracco.

“A Aliança Evangélica Cristã Mundial (World Evangelical Alliance - WEA em inglês) agradece o convite do CMI para participar da sua 9a. Assembléia como observador”, confirmou Tunnicliffe. “Como um rede paralela, representando quase 400 milhões de cris-

tãos evangélicos em todo o mundo, nos identificamos com diversos temas levantados aqui.” Entre estes, a pobreza global, HIV/Aids e injustiça e violência contra crianças.

Michael Ntummy falou em termos de parceria sobre o trabalho das igrejas evangélicas e outras igrejas e o próprio CMI. “Todos somos parceiros e estamos trabalhando para um senhor somen-

te.” Para ele, as maiores dificuldades entre as igrejas tradicionais e as novas igrejas são de ordem histórica. “Ainda existe muita desconfiança. Muitas vezes pensamos que a espiritualidade está morta nas igrejas mais antigas; estas, por sua vez, dizem que as novas igrejas são iletradas ou só sabem rezar”, confirmou.

A Igreja de Pentecostes, à qual Ntummy pertence, é a segunda maior denominação em Gana, com mais de 9 mil congregações locais e missionários em 57 países. “Nossa proposta é deixar o passado de lado, esquecer a amargura e trabalhar em conjunto. Se é possível conviver com a diversidade em outras áreas, também é possível conviver com os pentecostais.”

O argentino Norberto Saracco avaliou que a postura de diálogo do CMI é extremamente importante. “Os evangélicos em geral e em especial os pentecostais têm avançado muito no que se refere à unidade da igreja”, disse. “O movimen-

to ecumênico deve prestar mais atenção a isso, especialmente no que se refere à América Latina.”

Na opinião de Saracco, os grandes obstáculos para uma aproximação maior são as estruturas hierárquicas, os dogmas, os acordos teológicos e as alianças entre instituições, que acontecem com as igrejas históricas. “Como podemos nos relacionar com as igrejas-membro do CMI? Posso dar algumas pistas, mas será que não podemos esperar um novo Pentecostes? Acredito que a unidade da igreja deve ser um trabalho do Espírito.”

Ainda que poucas igrejas evangélicas ou pentecostais sejam membros do CMI, o diálogo não é novo. No ano 2000, durante a Assembléia de Harare, constituiu-se um grupo de trabalho conjunto, denominado Grupo Consultivo Conjunto CMI-Pentecostais. Na América Latina, 25 igrejas evangélicas e pentecostais fazem parte do Conselho Latino Americano de Igrejas (Clai).

Evangelicals, Pentecostals: new perspectives on ecumenism

Evangelical Christians – of which there are many in WCC churches – are committed to integral mission, the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Evangelical and Pentecostal participants in the Assembly say they welcome better relationships with WCC churches and have called for greater cooperation in the future.

Three leading evangelical figures spoke to journalists on Monday. The Rev. Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director and CEO of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), said that this “parallel network” of 400 million Christians identified with many of the WCC’s themes, such as work on HIV and AIDS, violence and poverty.

He said that evangelical Christians—of which there are many in WCC

churches—are committed to integral mission, the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. “If we ignore the world, we betray the Word; if we ignore the Word, we have nothing to bring to the world,” he said.

The Rev. Dr Michael Ntuny, chairperson of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana, made an impassioned plea for closer connections between Pentecostal and WCC churches. He referred to the origins of Pentecostal congregations a century ago, many of them the result of acrimonious separations from old churches. “Although time does not necessarily heal all divisions, 100 years is long enough,” he said.

In the Assembly, he said, he had observed “the beauty of confessional diversity.” He praised the strong emphasis in WCC churches on the social gospel, but said that “the Pentecostal em-

phasis on the proclamation of the gospel is an area WCC churches do not emphasize enough.”

The Rev. Dr Norberto Saracco of the Good News Evangelical Church in Argentina, spoke of the ecumenical advances made in Latin America at the initiative of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, and of the growth of non-denominational churches.

“In Latin America, we are entering into a post-Pentecostal era, which will create better conditions for ecumenical dialogue,” he said. Referring to the text of his later speech to a plenary session on church unity, he said, “For evangelical churches, unity is not based on the recognition of hierarchical authority, nor on dogmas; not on theological agreements, nor on alliances between institutions. We have to accept that that way of doing ecumenism has gone as far as it can.”

Getting to know our Pentecostal neighbours

“Build relationships with Pentecostal churches at local and national levels.” This is one of the recommendations the Joint Consultative Group WCC-Pentecostals is making to the Assembly. Only a few Pentecostal bodies are WCC members, but Pentecostalism is the fastest-growing segment of Christianity in Africa and Latin America.

Donald W. Dayton and R. Keelan Downton, from the United States, take this recommendation very seriously. They have been scouting out some of the many Pentecostal storefront churches and some larger sanctuaries that pepper the urban landscape of Porto Alegre. They point out that within a few blocks of the Continental Porto Alegre and Ritter Hotels, one can find examples of several diverse streams of Pentecostalism. These churches have services most days and can be easily visited.

To the right of the hotels is the immense sanctuary of the Deus é Amor (God is Love) congregation. A little further to the left, two churches face each other across Av. Júlio de Castilhos. Both are “deliverance” churches, emphasising healing and exorcism. Though controversial, the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Universal Church of the Reign of God) has been described as



Worshippers during praise at a Pentecostal service in Porto Alegre on Sunday

the most important church to emerge from the Third World in the 20th century and can be found in major metropolitan centers worldwide. In less than 30 years it has grown to 2 million members in Brazil and has employed a variety of media technologies to proclaim its message. On the other side of the street is the Igreja Internacional Graça de Deus (International Church of the Grace of God). It split from the Universal Church of the Reign of God in 1980.

Behind the hotels is a bookstore that serves local Assemblies of God congregations. Founded by U.S. and European missionar-

ies, this denomination has grown to several times the size of the Assemblies of God in the United States and has become a major force in Brazilian Protestantism. Not far away is the Igreja Pentecostal Unida Do Brazil (United Pentecostal Church of Brazil), which uses trinitarian language but rejects classical understandings of the Trinity.

Dayton and Downton are at the Assembly representing the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches. They shared some of their learnings from dialogues with Pentecostals and evangelicals in a *Mutirão* workshop last week.

A voice for nonviolence

Marilyn Stahl has noticed recently that people have a growing interest in her church. “People hear I’m Mennonite, and they say, ‘I wish our church was a peace church,’” says Stahl, who has come to the 9th Assembly from the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University in the United States.

The Historic Peace Churches are small compared to most of the WCC’s 348 member churches. But this group - the Mennonites, Brethren and Friends (Quakers) - believes it has a unique voice with particular relevance for this time in the Council’s work. The churches have a long pacifist tradition, based on Jesus’ commandment of nonviolence, accepting this as a key element of Christian identity.

When the WCC launched the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) five years ago, the Historic Peace Churches were asked to provide leadership by speaking out of their experiences. Six churches from the three faith traditions are WCC members.

“It’s a culture we’ve grown up in,” says Stan Noffsinger, general secretary of the U.S. Church of the Brethren. “We have an understanding of Christ talking about heaping love on our enemies. We understand the theology of peacemaking not just in response to violence or war; it’s a transformative way of life that looks at all of life through a very different lens.”

A *Mutirão* workshop at the Assembly looked at various Historic Peace Church contributions to the DOV. Unlike churches that espouse the “just war theory,” the peace church tradition says any use of violence is inappropriate for Christians.

It can be hard for the voice of the Historic Peace Churches to be heard, particularly in the current U.S. environment, Noffsinger says. “We’ve tried to speak out, but the drums of war are pretty loud.”

Announcements

Calling North American young adults

This group will meet for the last time on Tuesday at 13:15 in room 1111 of building 50.

There will be a short presentation on recent ecumenical events in North America, and discussion about how to keep the network established in Porto Alegre connected.

Violence in the churches

As part of the Decade to Overcome Violence programme, an informal discussion will take place on the issue of violence within the churches at 13:30 on Wednesday in room 903 of building 50. This will include the topics of the protection and care of survivors.

Healing service

Today's service will take place in the university chapel at 16:30. It will include the ceremony of anointing and laying on of hands, and will be led by a team from the Reformed tradition.

Caminhada pela paz

Esta caminhada será marcada por gestos, símbolos e pronunciamentos proféticos como a do Prêmio Nobel da Paz, Bispo Desmond Tutu. Concentração às 18h30, com apresentações culturais. Saída do Largo Glênio Peres (Mercado Público) e chegada na Praça da Matriz.

Walk for Peace with Desmond Tutu (see page 4)



Vera Mucillo/Prefeitura de Porto Alegre

- 1 PUC
- 2 Largo Glênio Peres

Transporte coletivo da PUC até o Largo Glênio Peres:

Linha	343	Campus-Ipiranga
Linha	353	Ipiranga-PUC
Linha	476	Petrópolis-PUC
Linha	D43	Universitária

Programme changes

The following changes to the *Mutirão* schedule have been announced:

- ▶ **21 Feb**
13:30 - MW 142 (The Orthodox Presence in Latin America)
Room changed to Building 50, Rm 901
- ▶ **21 Feb**
15:00 - MW 379 (Campaña de prevención del maltrato de los niños y juvenes)
Room changed to Building 50, room 314
- ▶ **21 Feb**
17:00 - MW 334 (Los aportes que las organizaciones de mujeres han contribuido a la paz)
Room changed to Building 50, room 313

Leaving on a jet plane?

Transportation from hotels to the airport will be provided by Fellini Turismo.

Those departing on **21st February** should go to the Fellini desk at their hotel to arrange transport.

For those leaving on **22nd, 23rd or 24th February**, buses will be picking up participants from 6:00 to 19:00 every two hours, according to the sector routes already established.

Participants should arrange to depart from their hotels 3 hours before their flights are scheduled.

Those leaving on **25th or 26th February** should go to the Fellini desk at their hotel to arrange transport.

People at the Assembly



WCC/Paulino Menezes e Igor Sperotto



World Council of Churches
9th Assembly Newspaper
"Transforma O Mundo"

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