



Transforma mundo

World Council of Churches 9th Assembly |

Porto Alegre, 22 February 2006

#8

Today in Porto Alegre



11:00 Plenary: Nominations

15:00 Plenary: Policy Reference / Public Issues

17:00 Plenary: Assembly Message



Get your 9th Assembly CD & DVD!

(see back page for full details)

Number of the day

10,000

Number of WCC books distributed at the Assembly



Marching for peace in Porto Alegre: Nobel laureates Adolfo Esquivel and Desmond Tutu

From the Bible

"God in your grace, transform *our witness*" is the last of the six variations on the Assembly theme. The Bible passages, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Mark 4:26-29 and Luke 13:20-21, are about the unveiling of a transformed reality through the power of the Holy Spirit. Today's worship symbol is bread, a reference to our most basic needs and to God's gracious gifts on which our lives depend.

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

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Looking to the future

As the Assembly's work reaches conclusion, and important decisions are made about the future, it is worth recalling the underlying vision of the fellowship of churches.

The WCC's Common Understanding and Vision process offered a coherent and challenging vision: a broad fellowship of churches, committed and accountable to one another, seeking visible unity in their life and witness today.

After centuries of division, the churches recognized

anew that they are one in Christ. Within the ecumenical fellowship they witness together, work against injustice, and seek to overcome their theological and historical differences. The churches within this fellowship have agreed to reflect and act together – to stay together, to encourage and challenge one another, even as they work to resolve remaining differences which hamper and test their fellowship.

In trying to identify our specific tasks in the transformation of today's world, it is

important to begin always from our faith convictions and to base our actions on Biblical and theological grounds. Equally important, however, is understanding the context one is working in and addressing. Christians today, before confronting and challenging the world and its ways, have first to understand and love it, to identify the signs of the presence of God's grace and to try building upon that foundation, by God's grace, through the work of transformation and reconciliation.

By the way...

New clothes?

Amsterdam 1939 was one of the most significant moments in the ecumenical story.

No, we haven't got the date wrong. We're talking about the World Conference of Christian Youth that met in Amsterdam from 24 July – 2 August that year. What a time to hold such a meeting! Yet youth from 71 countries worldwide gathered and declared: "The nations and peoples of the world are drifting apart, the churches are coming together. There is a growing conviction of the essential togetherness of all Christians."

The poignancy of their witness was confirmed as, within four weeks, Europe and much of the rest of the world went to war. Most of the participants were themselves caught up in the destruction and chaos of the next six years, but afterwards many were to meet again in the work of reconstruction and reconciliation. The vision still burned.

At this Assembly in Porto Alegre, as in so many previous ones, the role of youth has been highlighted in ways both designed and unexpected, in the programme and in protest. It is a continual refrain, but one that does need repeating, that just as young people are not the future church but part of the church now, so they are not just the future ecumenical movement but essential to its present life.

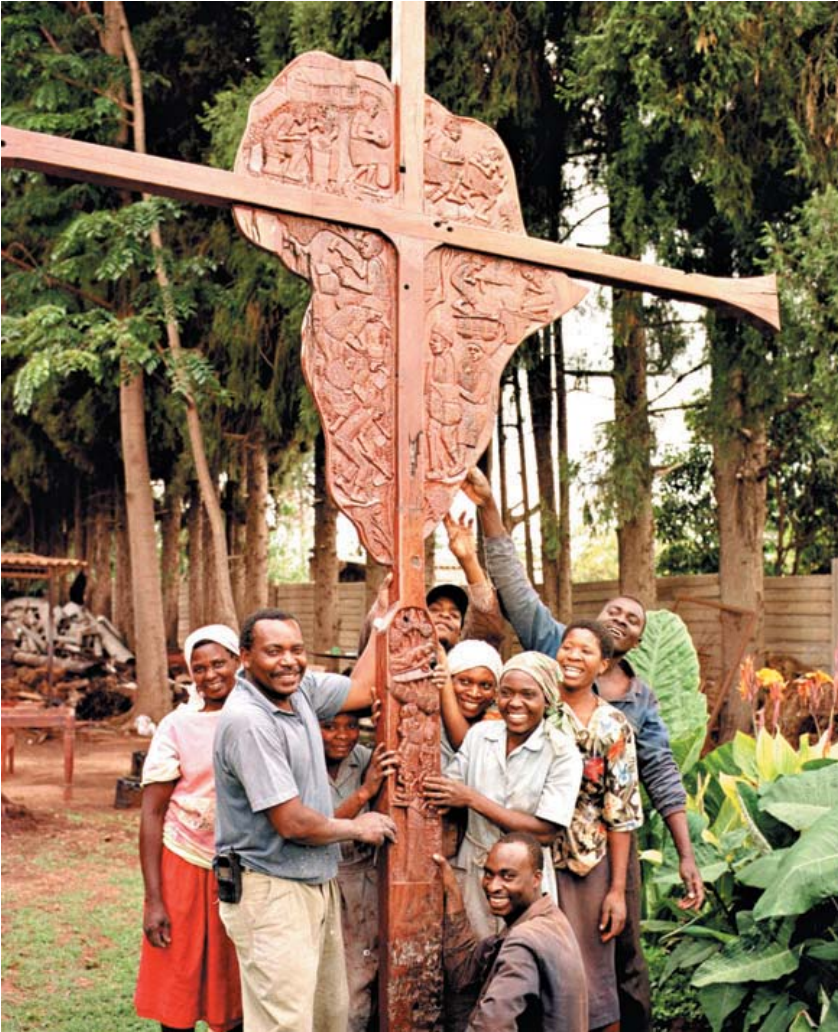
Over the years their contribution has been on several levels. First, whether in Bible study groups, work camps, magazines or now by Internet as well, young people have always been the best recruiting agents for other young people into the movement. Older Assembly participants might recall just how they themselves first became enthused.

Second, and most basically, the role of youth has been to believe in the ecumenical calling. Of course everyone should do that. But young people, coming fresh to the vision, can grasp essentials and priorities without the inhibiting factors and excuses for inertia that too often masquerades as "reality" in the middle-aged world. Like the child in the story of the emperor flattered by his courtiers who told him his non-existent new clothes were so beautifully delicate, someone has to ask, "Why is the emperor naked?"

Third, young people at successive stages of the ecumenical movement have been quickest to see new possibilities in communication – or rather, have seen as normal the new ways of relating to others that the older generation is still getting used to. It was exactly 110 years ago this year that the student movement held a huge international gathering in Liverpool, England. They thought nothing of being able to organise it for themselves, while most Christian World Communions still had to get off the ground.

In the middle of the conference a telegram arrived from Japanese students: "Make Jesus King!" and another from the YMCA in India asking for more volunteers to work there. Today, do some of the frustrations experienced in assemblies stem from our not yet making best use of new ways of relating other than a big meeting once every six or seven years?

Angelos



Harare, 1998

"Turn to God – Rejoice in Hope." The 8th Assembly celebrated the 50th anniversary of the WCC with the largest gathering in its history. Meeting for the second time in Africa, the Assembly highlighted the challenges facing the continent, ranging from HIV and AIDS to international debt. High on the agenda was the future direction of the ecumenical movement and the WCC itself. Critical questions from the Orthodox churches were heard, but the Assembly reaffirmed the founding commitment of Amsterdam, declaring, "We shall stay together." Harare also marked the conclusion of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

Bate-Papo

Understanding God: a women's perspective

The final dialogue of the generations will take place at 12:45 today, Wednesday, in the theatre of building 40. Throughout the Assembly these events have opened space for the younger and older participants to share stimulating perspectives on topical issues.

Today's discussion will be on "Understanding God as a woman, in the context of present-day theology." Participants in the dialogue will be:

Ms. Lydia Obolensky D'Aloisio, a young Orthodox woman theologian from Belgium, who represents the Pan Orthodox Movement for Christian Education and Theological Awareness; and Dr. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a leading African woman theologian who has been instrumental in the formation of the Circle of Concerned African Woman Theologians. She is a former deputy general secretary of the WCC and a former president of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.



Panelists during the Assembly theme plenary on Tuesday

To transform the world, practice what you preach

A panel “show” during the 9th Assembly concluded that God’s grace has transformative power, even in the midst of terrible things. But the transformation of the world requires action from the churches for justice, compassion and inclusiveness.

A plenary on the Assembly theme, “God, in your grace, transform the world,” offered a convergence point of discussion and reflection that has taken place during the Assembly - in committees, workshops and Bible studies.

The Rev. Angélique Walker-Smith of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. welcomed the plenary audience to her “morning show” with a panel of guests given the opportunity to share stories of transformation and grace.

The Rev. Joseph (Leandro) Bosch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople posed the question: Where, in a world of war, hunger, poverty and decadence, is God?

The answers were varied and inspiring:

- Ms Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga, a representative of REDBOL (National Network of Bolivian People living with HIV and AIDS), told of suffering sexual abuse and being infected with HIV. But she knew the love of God and came to rely on God because nobody else would help her.

- Ms Sarah Newland-Martin of the Bethel Baptist Church, Jamaica, said

her life had been fully transformed by baptism through the grace of God. She represented Jamaica in the Pan-American wheelchair games from 1972-1982 and in the 1980 para-Olympics.

- Ms Carmen Lansdowne, an Indigenous person and member of the United Church of Canada, noted how Indigenous people had suffered, not only at the hands of the state, but also at the hands of the church. Now, she said, she hoped Assembly delegates would act on the WCC central committee’s February 2005 call for member churches to urge the establishment of a United Nations’ International Year of Indigenous Languages.

- Ms Paula Devejian, from the United States and currently working in Armenia for the Catholicosate of All Armenians, said that she has been strengthened by meeting people from every area of the world and observing the commonality of their struggles.

- Korean Professor Namsoon Kang, vice president of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions, said her encounter with feminist discourse and with the ecumenical movement led to her transformation.

Finally, Bosch answered his own question: “God is here, transforming the life of each of us” through suffering, pain and all the things people cannot understand. “It is God who is able to bring about the miracle of life, who

will go on perfecting the world and the life of each of us ... often in his absence, in his silence.”

Quiroga said, “We need to be able to give faithful witness that God is working through us and in us.” She called for the involvement of more people, new people, saying, “Whatever problems we have to deal with, we will do our work better if we do it together.”

There is costly ecumenism and cheap ecumenism, Kang added. Cheap ecumenism is just the empty proclamation that “we are one in Christ,” while nothing is done about exclusion based on age, gender, sexual orientation, colour, race and disability. But costly ecumenism accompanies transformation. It requires personal and institutional repentance and acknowledgement that “all of us belong to the family of God.”

“We must practice what we are preaching,” Quiroga said. The mission that God entrusts to us must be practised regarding HIV and AIDS. And Devejian said, “We should not discriminate against anyone. We must fully integrate people with disabilities into church communities.”

Bosch concluded, “God is challenging each one of us. This is the moment. I am waiting to see what you can do together. God is waiting and hoping we will transform the world.”

Focus and integration to shape future programme

Facing a decline in income, the Assembly moved towards a refocusing of the WCC’s programmatic work on Tuesday, as the delegates discussed proposals for the future programme priorities and adopted a report from the finance committee.

The WCC “should do less, do it well, in an integrated, collaborative and interactive approach,” said the Rev. Walter Altmann (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil), moderator of the programme guidelines committee.

The committee presented four major areas of engagement for shaping the future life and work of the Council: unity, spirituality and mission; ecumenical formation; global justice; and an ethical voice and prophetic witness to the world.

Calling for a strengthened theological basis for all areas of activity, the delegates also pointed to the need for comprehensive planning and communication strategies “to build engagement and ownership by the churches.”

The committee “strongly endorses” promoting leadership development of youth in the life of the WCC, Altmann emphasized. “Their voices, concerns and presence must be brought more directly into decision-making and leadership,” the committee stated. Following discussion, a final version of the report will be brought to the Assembly on Thursday.

Reviewing the financial situation, the Assembly was informed of a 30% decline in income experienced by the Council since 1999, which has led to new ways of working in the organization, and made recommendations for the future management and planning of programmes.

The Assembly endorsed efforts to increase the number of churches paying their membership fees, and agreed that member churches be declared “non-active” after three (instead of seven) consecutive years of non-payment.



“Jesus in our midst”

Spirituality is an emerging theme in the ecumenical movement, and has been a notable feature of the life and prayer of the Assembly

More than 100 Assembly and *Mutirão* participants seeking spiritual enrichment found a peaceful oasis on Tuesday afternoon in the large and dimly lit auditorium of building 4. They came together for a workshop structured around the question: “What binds you together as a community?”

Following a Portuguese song of welcome by local young people, listeners heard from representatives of six lay ecumenical movements: Focolare (from Italy), Grandchamp (the French part of Switzerland), Iona (Scotland), St. Egidio (Rome), Taizé (France), and a Rumanian Orthodox lay community called the “Lord’s Army.”

All of these communities originated in Europe but now have members all over the world. Their way of life seems countercultural in a world increasingly shaped by the quest for individual fulfillment.

What binds these communities together? The answers ranged from prayer, Bible reading, and action for justice to celibacy and a life apart from the world. The Iona community stresses mutual accountability for use of time and money, as well as commitments to nonviolence and overcoming poverty. Taizé members strive for “joy, simplicity and mercy.”

What makes unity possible? The Focolare representative said it best: “It’s Jesus in our midst.”



Photos: WCC/Paulino Menezes

A welcoming song: members of the Focolare community of Brazil singing at a workshop on lay ecumenical movements



The keys to community: representatives of six lay communities describing their search for spirituality



Committee Voices

What outcome do you hope to see from the 9th Assembly?



Programme Guidelines Committee moderator
Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann,
Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil

“I do hope WCC and churches will come out of this Assembly with a deep and strong spirit of Ecumenical operation in the field of theology, spirituality and are prepared to give a credible witness to this world.”



Nominations Committee moderator
Rev. Dr. Bernice Powell Jackson,
United Church of Christ, U.S.A.

“I hope we will leave Brazil re-liberated and re-energized, filled with the Holy Spirit and ready for the 21st century of the ecumenical movement. For the Nominations Committee, we will do our utmost to prepare for the future WCC.”



New initiatives on HIV and AIDS

On Tuesday the Assembly saw the launch of two important initiatives around the issue of HIV and AIDS:

- The Council's Health and Healing programme addressed a questionnaire to church leaders, based on a Declaration of Commitment signed by all governments at a special session of the United Nations in 2001. The responses will give guidance on how the programme can proceed to assist the churches to act more effectively in the struggle against HIV and AIDS..

- The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) released a new teaching curriculum, which comes out of its "Keep the Promise" campaign.. It offers resources for advocacy and encourages young people to voice their opinions and remind their governments of their commitments.

At a press conference panelists stressed that HIV and AIDS is an issue of human rights. Canon Gideon Byamugisha of Uganda welcomed the fact that the "WCC is willing to accompany those living with HIV and AIDS," calling it "a testimony that the churches are actively committed to breaking the stigmatisation of those living with the disease."

Dr Sue Parry of the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), which helps churches in Africa to access information, training and resources, said: "Strategies need to be presented holistically— from voluntary counselling and testing, to safe sex practices, information about mother-to-child transmission, access to medication, and the economic empowerment of people living positively with the virus."

Transform the world



WCC/Igor Sperotto

Cyprus: still divided

In yesterday's issue of the newspaper, the editors described Korea as the "last divided country on earth," as a way of drawing attention to the partitioned peninsula. Of course, there are other divided nations in the world. Perhaps no division is more visible internationally than

Cyprus, the northern part of which has been occupied by Turkish forces since 1974. Pointing to the dividing "green line," Bishop Vassilios (Karayiannis) of the Church of Cyprus emphasizes the tragic division which persists on the island, and about which the WCC has repeatedly expressed its concern.

Day of prayer



Youhama Shawky

Some 200 students attending the 9th Assembly gathered at the university chapel on 19th February for one of the oldest ecumenical celebrations: the Universal Day of Prayer for Students. The first such gathering took place on 13th February 1898 at a meeting of the general committee of the World Student Christian Federation. Youth delegate Carla Khijoyan, from Lebanon, preached at this year's day of prayer on the topic, "Empire and Identity."

Interviews prepared by stewards in the WCC communication team

Message Committee moderator

Ms Wendy Evans, United Church of Canada

"I hope we will remember ourselves in the body of Christ, so that together we may offer a living message of hope and resurrection to all of creation, which longs for transformation."



Policy Reference Committee moderator

Rev. Dr K. M. George, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India

"My expectation of the Council is that it will be rooted in the life of its member churches and liberated from cultural and theological assumptions that hamper our growth towards true Christian fellowship. I hope for a truly transformed Council that embraces with love the depth and breadth of God's creation."



Photos: WCC/Igor Sperotto

Public Issue Committee moderator
Dr Agnes Abuonm, Anglican Church of Kenya

"I hope that our spirit and fellowship will be renewed—especially through the ecumenical conversations, the *Mutirão* and the Bible studies, that are important for deepening the fellowship. I hope we will honor the youth, the women, the indigenous and the differently able to make the ecumenical movement more inclusive. I beg this Assembly will be a step forward to be the really inclusive household of God."

Las iglesias deben esforzarse por implantar políticas de atención a las personas con SIDA

"No podemos ver al sexo como el culpable. La pobreza y la desigualdad son las principales vías de contagio del VIH/SIDA", afirmó el reverendo Jape Heath, secretario general de la Red Africana de Líderes Religiosos Afectados o Viviendo con HIV/SIDA, durante la conferencia de prensa que tuvo lugar en la IX Asamblea del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias (CMI), en Porto Alegre.

Heath se refirió a los estigmas en torno a la enfermedad como un mal colateral. Explicó que su origen está en la base moral de la sociedad que cree que las personas enfermas son culpables de pecado, cuando el virus pasa por la pobreza mundial como máxima responsable. Según informó solo en África hay 25 millones de infectados.

Puntualizó que su organización busca la educación de las iglesias para que encaminen sus esfuerzos a implantar políticas de atención a las personas con SIDA y eli-

Pobreza y desigualdad, principales vías de contagio del VIH/SIDA

minen los mensajes negativos en torno al tema.

La doctora Sue Parry, coordinadora regional del CMI para las iniciativas en África del trabajo ecuménico HIV/SIDA, habló de las acciones que, en el tema, ha emprendido el CMI en toda la región africana, lo cual ha permitido la inserción de la iglesia en tema tan serio y urgente.

Mientras la señora Renu Chahil-Graf, coordinadora del programa ONUSIDA en Brasil, explicó que la presencia de la ONU en la Asamblea obedecía a la influencia de la iglesia en lo preventivo como en el acompañamiento a las personas enfermas. "De ahí que muchas organizaciones se unan al CMI en la búsqueda de mayor efectividad en su acción."

"Soy un seropositivo que llevo 15 años viviendo con el virus y mi vida es un ejemplo de que el SIDA se puede manejar con una actitud responsable", afirmó el reverendo ugandés Canon Gideon Bymugisha, quien agradeció la labor de acompañamiento del CMI a través de la implantación de sus programas en el África.



Gracia Quiroga:
"Las Iglesias deben ser más responsables"

Por su parte, la boliviana Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga, quien también es seropositiva, dijo ser testigo de cómo la gracia de Dios ha logrado transformar su tragedia personal en un signo de esperanza y de amor. "Y el mensaje que traigo a la Asamblea es que la igle-

sia tiene que ser más responsable porque la comunidad cristiana ha sido muy débil en manifestarse."

Afirmó que el tema había estado presente solo en los ámbitos marginales de atención de la Asamblea. "Las iglesias deben poner en práctica lo que están predicando con acciones concretas", apuntó.

La gracia de Dios puede transformar personas, comunidades e instituciones

Varios testimonios sobre cómo actúa la gracia de Dios en la vida de las personas y de las comunidades desafiaron las prácticas cotidianas de las iglesias durante una sesión plenaria ayer en la que se profundizó el tema de la IX Asamblea del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias, "Dios en tu gracia, transforma al mundo".



Carmen Lansdowne, indígena de Canadá; Paula Devejian, de la Iglesia Apostólica Armenia; Sarah Newland Margin, de Jamaica, miembro de la Red Ecuuménica de Activistas sobre temas de Discapacidad, y Gracia Ross Quiroga, joven de Bolivia

viviendo con HIV-SIDA, relataron experiencias de la gracia transformadora de Dios en sus vidas y realizaron un llamado a que las iglesias se dejen transformar para llevar adelante su ministerio.

En conferencia de prensa luego de este plenario, la Dra

Angelique Walker Smith, de la Convención Nacional Bautista de los Estados Unidos de América, señaló la importancia de tener presentes las experiencias y los testimonios personales de transformación. Consideró que las iglesias deben preguntarse dónde están ubicadas hoy en relación a la manera en que lo profético y lo pastoral se conjugan en la acción transformadora de vidas y de comunidades.

Para la teóloga feminista Namsoon Kang, de Corea, es importante ver con ojos realistas lo que nos divide. Señaló, por ejemplo, que la simbología

cristiana, muy masculina y europea, justifica la exclusión de otros, sosteniendo un sistema de valores que divide. Llamó a un "ecumenismo costoso" y al "arrepentimiento institucional" para transformar al mundo con justicia y compasión,

"Podemos experimentar la gracia de Dios y la transformación de nuestras vidas cuando reconocemos nuestras debilidades y nos acercamos a su trono de gracia con humildad y verdad", dijo Sarah Newland Margin, quien aseguró que "las iglesias que no dan lugar a los discapacitados, pierden capacidades".

"Cristãos comiam gente"

A vida é assim: quem diso cuida, diso usa. Enquanto os caras-pálidas morriam de medo dos indígenas, achando que podiam ser por eles devorados vivos, os indígenas não deixavam por menos: acreditavam piamente que os cristãos comiam indígenas. Pelos menos os indígenas das montanhas da Bolívia, onde vivia Fernando. Na reunião sobre indígenas x cristãos ele disse com todas as letras que até 1970 temia muito ir a La Paz porque, certamente, seria comido por algum cristão.

Fernando não somente foi a La Paz como agora reside lá, onde estuda Direito. Curioso, ele acabou conhecendo de perto alguns cristãos, perdeu o medo e hoje é um deles.

Água e desarmamento nuclear – primeiras decisões da Assembléia

O desarmamento nuclear e a proteção da água como símbolo de vida e elemento vital para a sobrevivência humana foram os primeiros temas sobre os quais se chegou a um consenso na 9ª Assembléia do Conselho Mundial de Igrejas. As decisões foram divulgadas ontem.

A "Declaração sobre a água para a vida" parte da afirmação do valor simbólico e real do precioso líquido descrito na Bíblia como "expressão da graça de Deus" concedida perpetuamente a toda criação.

Ainda, foi solicitado que o Conselho Mundial de Igrejas contribua para o cumprimento do Decênio Internacional para a ação "Água, fonte de vida", lançado pela Unesco.

Com a aprovação da "Nota sobre a eliminação das armas nucleares", as igrejas-membro do CMI devem pressionar seus respectivos governos para acabar com este tipo de armamento.

Philip Potter - "An ordinary chap"



Potter's 12 years as general secretary saw the Council facing some of the most challenging world issues and developing its reputation as foremost in the fight against injustice

Philip Potter still stands as tall and smiles as warmly as he did when he attended his first World Council of Churches Assembly in 1948.

He has a unique place in the modern ecumenical story. Not only was he general secretary of the World Council of Churches for 12 years (1972-84), but he also has the rare distinction of having attended all nine WCC Assemblies to date. Now in his 85th year, Potter still recalls vividly his early childhood on the Caribbean island of Dominica, his activity in the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in the West Indies - and that first WCC Assembly that he attended as a youth delegate.

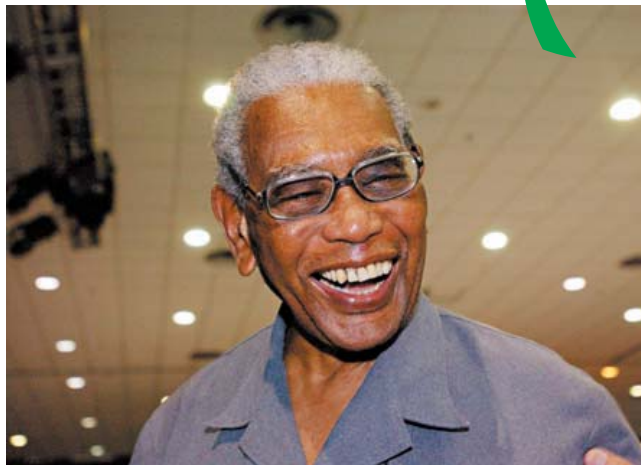
"It was a great moment for us," he says. "It was the first gathering of the church, the first big event, after the war. . . and here in Amsterdam were people who had been on both sides of the war."

There were 100 youth delegates. Wim Visser't Hooft, the first general secretary of the WCC, asked Potter to address the Assembly on behalf of the youth.

After completing his studies, Potter worked on the staff of the SCM in England, and then went to Haiti as pastor for four years.

"It was very hard there," he says. "I was a bachelor living on my own in the manse. There was great poverty, and getting around was difficult. I had no car or jeep and had to cycle everywhere. To live among the poorest of the poor for four years was a most formative experience for me."

After filling various ecumenical and mission posts in London and Geneva, Potter succeeded Eugene Carson Blake as WCC general secretary in 1972. His 12 years in the post saw the Council facing some



Philip Potter, still laughing after attending all nine WCC Assemblies

of the most challenging world issues and developing its reputation as foremost in the fight against injustice and human rights abuse.

"It was a time when we were a very controversial body," Potter recalls. "We were tackling things people did not like. . . but at the same time, the WCC began to be a body playing a really public role, not just vis-à-vis the churches but also governments, internationally."

For example, the WCC was involved in detailing the atrocities being carried out by the Brazilian military government. There was the Programme to Combat racism (PCR), and the struggles against apartheid and colonial oppression in southern Africa.

"But there were all kinds of other developments too," he says. "For example, relations with churches in Eastern Europe. It was important for them that we were with them. . . We also had dealings with China and its churches. . ."

How did Potter cope with the controversies and conflicts? "I learned the importance of humour," he says. "It's never been my style to be very formal and serious. . . in the tough years of Eastern Europe that was very important. It was the same when dealing with big finance corporations and institutions in the battles over investment in South Africa. Here again I think it was important to . . . encourage a sense that even when dealing with people with whom you disagreed strongly you were all striving together for the good

of the whole community."

He credits his heritage for enabling him to stay calm in tense situations. "My grandmother came of aristocratic Irish stock," he says. "Her death when I was nine years old was the first tragedy of my life. But she used to tell me, 'Philip, always be a gentleman!'"

Potter has been recognised in ways he might not have expected when in the thick of the struggles. No fewer than nine honorary doctorates have come his way, the first from Hamburg and the latest from the University of Cape Town - a recognition of how much the ecumenical commitment to end apartheid owed to his leadership. What really gave him pleasure, he says, was hearing of the imprisoned Nelson Mandela's gratitude for the support of the churches of the world.

What of the ecumenical movement today? Potter talks rather nostalgically of something he fears may have been lost at the level of church and ecumenical leadership: close relationships with other church leaders. He remembers, for example, his friendships with Roman Catholics, including Pope Paul VI and especially the short-lived Pope John Paul I, who took a close personal interest in Philip when his first wife Dorothee was close to death.

How would he like to be remembered? "As an ordinary chap," he says with a chuckle. "Even when we had very heavy fights on some issues - that I could remain human, that I could remain myself."

One young adult's journey

Sara Faulhafer's encounter with ecumenism began in seminary when a WCC delegation came to visit. Faulhafer, is a student. They talked about the upcoming 9th Assembly in Brazil. That caught 28-year-old Faulhafer's interest.

She was worried about missing classes, but her teachers said, "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. Forget about school!"

And so this member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada finds herself in Porto Alegre, joining with about 150 other stewards who aid the operation of the Assembly.

"It's just been phenomenal," she says. She found other young people, like herself, passionate about ecumenism and determined to be involved in more than "bit parts" or purely supporting roles. They are committed to having their perspectives represented in WCC leadership positions.

For Faulhafer, ecumenism is here to stay. "Long-term, it's definitely going to shape my ministry," she says, reflecting on the Assembly experience. "I want to become further involved with the WCC or other local ecumenical initiatives. It's something I'm going to draw on the rest of my life."

WCC/Igor Sperotto



WCC steward Sara Faulhafer

Another Assembly veteran

Padre Julian García Hernandez, an 86-year-old native of Spain, has attended almost every WCC Assembly. He didn't make it to Amsterdam and New Delhi

This former history professor is responsible for creating the Centro Ecueménico Misioneras de la Unidad in Madrid following Vatican II. The centre hosts meetings of people from various church bodies around the world.

One of Hernandez's favorite Biblical texts is from Jesus' prayer for his followers in the Gospel of John: "That they may be One."

"It's scandalous that the church is not one," he says. "Only when the church is one, will the world change."

Announcements

Healing services

The final two services in the university chapel during the Assembly will be inter-confessional services with anointing and laying on of hands, presided over by ministers of the United/Uniting tradition: Wednesday 21st – at 16:30 Thursday 22nd – at 10:30

Anglican network

There will be a meeting of all Anglican youth partici-

pants today (Wednesday) at 13:00 in room 401 of building 50 to discuss the global network for Anglican youth.

Tours offered

Habitat for Humanity, who have initiated a project to build 100 houses for the poor in Port Alegre have arranged two tours to the project at 9:00 on 22nd and 23rd. Buses leave from behind building 40.

Women church leaders

All women bishops or presidents of communions are invited to lunch together on Wednesday 22nd in section L7 at 12:30.

Eucharist invitation

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) invites all to a Eucharist Service at 13:30 on Wednesday, 22nd in the chapel. This worship service is open to everyone.

wcc



Life for many families in a poor area of Porto Alegre, like the one pictured at right, will improve as a result of the efforts of Habitat for Humanity and participants in the Assembly to build 100 houses.

Programmes rescheduled

Mutirão changes Wednesday and Thursday

22nd

- ▶ **11:00** MW 379 (Campanha a de prevenção del maltrato de los niños y juvenes)
Dirija-se ao edifício 40, sala 413.
- ▶ **11:00** MW 31 (Finding grace amidst catastrophe)
Moved to building 50, room 413.
- ▶ **15:00** MW 78 (Naming the powers, taming human violence, claiming Christian vocation)
Moved to building 50, room 413.
- ▶ **15:00** MW 335 (Situación de los pueblos indígenas del Gran Chaco Sudamericano)
No auditório do prédio 50.

23rd

- ▶ **9:15** MW 100 (Students in the 21st Century)
Moved to building 50, room 413

Tchau Porto Alegre!

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

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.

Share the story of Porto Alegre!



Remember to get your Assembly CD and DVD with video highlights

As a lasting souvenir of the 9th Assembly, WCC is offering all delegates and participants a special CD and DVD to take back to the churches. The CD contains daily news, hundreds of photos and documents in five languages. The DVD contains video highlights from the Assembly, and is offered in both NTSC and PAL formats for use in all countries. These resources are designed to help you share the experience with your community. A full account of the Assembly will be produced by WCC in late 2006.

As the CD and DVD were prepared before the end of the Assembly, they contain news, images and texts from the first week of the event. All images, final versions of the documents and additional video highlights and recordings of the theme plenaries are available on the official Assembly website:

www.wcc-assembly.info



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

Texts and photos by WCC 9th assembly communication staff

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