



World Council of Churches 9th Assembly

14 to 23 February 2006
Porto Alegre, Brazil

Theme: “God, in your grace, transform the world”

Participants: Up to 3000 in total

- ◆ Up to 1200 core participants including 728 member church delegates, delegated representatives, observers, advisors, consultants, stewards and staff.
- ◆ Up to 1800 additional participants committed to the ecumenical movement’s vision of Christian unity and justice, including ecumenists, partners, agencies, congregations, ecumenical formation groups, student groups, etc.

Venue: Porto Alegre and the Pontifical University (PUC)

- ◆ Capital of Rio Grande do Sul
- ◆ Modern City of 1.2 million
- ◆ Leading university
- ◆ Joint hosts of the World Social Forum
- ◆ City guided by the vision that “another world is possible”

What will characterize this Assembly?

- ◆ A Praying Assembly
- ◆ A Listening Assembly
- ◆ A Youth Assembly
- ◆ A Latin American Assembly

Assembly Programme “Building Blocks”

Prayer Life – Opening and closing prayer celebrations; common morning and evening prayers outdoors under a tent; mid-day Eucharist services in the university chapel; Sunday worship with local congregations.

Bible Study – core participants in “home groups” of 15 persons following the Assembly Bible Study resource and sharing experiences; additional participants in larger language groups with presentation-style bible study in Portuguese, Spanish and English.

Thematic Plenaries – presenting major issues in creative and stimulating ways on:

- ◆ Economic Injustice – focus on viable alternatives that involve churches;
- ◆ Christian Identity – in the context of secularism and religious plurality;
- ◆ Church Unity – and the future of ecumenism;
- ◆ Latin America – celebration with Latin American churches;
- ◆ Overcoming Violence – mid-decade celebration and renewal; and
- ◆ ‘God, in your grace, transform the world’ – insights on the Assembly theme and message.

Ecumenical Conversations – opportunity for sustained dialogue among core participants on 20 topics grouped under the following:

- ◆ Changing religious and cultural landscape;
- ◆ Changing ecumenical landscape;
- ◆ Changing international and political landscape; and
- ◆ Changing social and economic landscape.

In the context of a changing world, how does our prayer for transformation inform our actions as a fellowship of Christian churches seeking visible unity and justice?

All youth participants are invited to join the Ecumenical Conversations in an effort to encourage fresh input and ecumenical formation.

Committees – focused on the “business” agenda of the Assembly; around 25 members each, working in the following areas: Programme Guidelines Committee; Policy Reference Committee; Public Issues Committee; Message Committee; Nominations Committee; Finance Committee; Worship Committee; and Business Committee.

Decision Making – Consensus model decision-making.

Mutirão – Coming together to make a difference – “make a Mutirão”; incorporating previous concept of a Visitors’ and Partners’ Programmes. The ecumenical movement coming together to make a Mutirão around the WCC Assembly. Strong focus on youth participation and ecumenical formation.

- ◆ Exhibition – of churches and agencies helping to transform the world.
- ◆ Celebration – cultural and artistic offerings from Latin America.
- ◆ Reflection – 10 to 15 “oficinas” or workshops per day, open to all participants, encouraging open dialogue and deeper reflection on major issues.
- ◆ Ecumenical Formation – Lectures on the history and vision of the ecumenical movement; “home” space for student groups, congregational groups, etc.

Offerings for the Mutirão will be sought in equal parts from Brazil and Latin American; ecumenical partners; and WCC member churches and networks. Offerings should be constructive contributions related to the theme and issues before the Assembly; and must be recommended by a member church or a church-related organisation.

Mutirão is open to any person, congregation, faculty, agency or organization, etc. that wishes to accompany the Assembly in a spirit of ecumenical sharing, celebration and formation.

Pre-Assembly Events (11-13 February)

- ◆ Youth Pre-Assembly Event (up to 500)
- ◆ Women Pre-Assembly Gathering (up to 400)
- ◆ Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network

Stewards’ Programme – 150 young people working and learning together on behalf of the Assembly; one-third coming from Latin America and the remainder from all parts of the world.

Youth Camp – An initiative of the Brazilian hosts to offer an affordable space for young people who want to attend the assembly; housed in the Sports Centre of the university, up to 250 young people will share a common living space.

Theological Congress and Café – São Leopoldo Theological Seminary will host a congress of Latin American theological students and faculty that will run concurrently with the Assembly. A Theological Café at the Assembly venue will provide a space for casual and spirited theological discussion.

The initiative should encourage other faculties around the world to take advantage of the Assembly as the ultimate “classroom for ecumenical formation”.

Some Assembly Resources

- ◆ **Assembly Website** – The place to find all Assembly information and materials from January 2005 at <http://www.wcc-assembly.info/>.
- ◆ **Assembly Bible Studies** – Contains an introduction to the theme authored by the Theological Commission of CLAI and seven bible studies with prayer and questions for discussion authored from around the world. To be published in May 2005.
- ◆ **From Harare to Porto Alegre** – A magazine-style presentation of the work of the WCC over the past 7 years. To be published in May 2005.
- ◆ **Worship Resource Book** – A collection of liturgies, prayers and songs in celebration of the Assembly and for use beyond the 2006. To be published in late 2005.