



Mutirão

Coming together to make a difference

What is the WCC Assembly?

The WCC assembly, held every seven or eight years, is the highest governing body of the World Council of Churches. The 9th assembly will be held in Porto Alegre, Brazil from 14-23 February 2006, around the theme “God in your grace, transform the world.” Delegates from each of WCC’s 342 member churches will come together to evaluate the Council’s past work, to reflect together on the theme and to provide guidance and leadership for the Council’s future work.

But just as the ecumenical movement is much broader than the WCC, so too the assembly is an opportunity for the larger ecumenical family to come together. Representatives of related organizations, of other churches and other faiths, advisors, and guests will be present as well as a large number of people from all regions who are interested in supporting and learning more about the ecumenical movement. In addition, many Brazilians and Latin Americans will come to the assembly.

While the number of official delegates will be relatively small (less than 800), the *Mutirão* will enable much broader participation in the life of the ecumenical movement. As an integral part of the assembly, the *Mutirão* will provide a space for workshops, celebrations, seminars and exhibits for the whole assembly community.

What is the Mutirão?

The word *Mutirão* comes from a Brazilian word meaning a meeting place and an opportunity to work together for a common purpose. In Brazil, for example, people in poor communities sometimes “make a *mutirão*” to build a house together. They ensure that there is the needed expertise on how to build a house and then the community works together to realize a concrete objective.

The *Mutirão* at the assembly will provide a space for reflection, celebration, and exhibits. A full programme will provide a rich array of offerings on many different issues, organized by churches and related organizations in all parts of the world. The *Mutirão* will have a particular Latin American and Caribbean focus with many participants from the region and will have a special focus on youth.

Who will participate in the Mutirão?

The *Mutirão* is open to any person, congregation or organization that wishes to accompany the assembly in a spirit of ecumenical sharing, celebration and formation.

What will the Mutirão offer to the Assembly?

The *Mutirão* will offer workshops and seminars, cultural events and exhibits to all participants in the assembly. It will provide a space for home groups to meet. The *Mutirão* will provide an opportunity to deepen substantive reflections on the theme of the assembly and the plenaries presented in the first half of the assembly. Delegates are encouraged to participate in the *Mutirão* offerings and to bring these reflections into the decision-making process.

As an integral part of the assembly, the workshop offerings in the *Mutirão* are intended to supplement and accompany the assembly deliberations. Assembly insights and deliberations are expected to help guide the work of the many churches and ecumenical organizations that will participate in the *Mutirão*.

What will participants in the Mutirão do?

- Pray together with all assembly participants in morning and evening prayers as part of the assembly community and participate in worship services at midday
- Engage in daily Bible studies around the assembly theme
- Participate in some of the 15 workshops organized from 12.30-15h every day

- Attend seminars on ecumenical formation for those who are new – and not-so-new – to ecumenism
- Celebrate being together in Latin America by participating in programmes of music, dance and drama and by joining Brazilian youth in the Youth Space
- Participate in the Women’s Space being organized by Brazilian women
- Follow the assembly plenaries on economic justice, unity, religious pluralism, the Decade to Overcome Violence, Latin America and the theme: “God in your grace, transform the world” as well as business sessions
- Worship in Brazilian churches and participate in the Latin American celebration on Sunday
- Browse exhibits prepared by churches, networks, ecumenical organizations, seminaries, and many other organizations
- Have the opportunity to meet well-known theologians, grassroots Christian activists and many others from all over the world

What can you offer to the Mutirão?

You can come to the *Mutirão* to participate in the many diverse offerings. You can bring a group from your congregation, your agency, your school or your organization. If you would like, we will try to provide a room at the *Mutirão* for your group, to serve as “home space” throughout the assembly.

You can propose to facilitate a workshop or seminar or cultural offering or exhibit. These will be organized by people coming to the *Mutirão* and offer an opportunity for reflection, discussion and celebration. Forms are available to propose a workshop or an exhibit. While the deadline for workshop proposals is 1 July 2005, you are encouraged to submit these as soon as possible. Decisions will be communicated by 1 September at the latest.

In deciding on workshops, attention will be given to ensuring a diversity of offerings as well as to regional and gender balance. Proposals from traditionally marginalized groups are particularly encouraged. If there are several proposals on a given issue, the proposers will be encouraged to work together in putting together a single workshop or to offer an alternative proposal.

Workshops for the *Mutirão* should:

- encourage open exchange of experiences and ideas. Participatory and creative methodologies are encouraged.
- be proposed or endorsed by a WCC member church, church-related organization, a recognized ecumenical partner, or by WCC.
- address key issues facing the churches and the ecumenical movement in today’s world and should
- relate to the theme of the assembly: “God in your grace, transform the world.” There is particular interest in workshops which explore alternatives to the present world order and/or which are action-oriented.
- include youth perspectives to the extent possible. Priority will be given to workshops initiated by youth

How can you participate in the Mutirão?

To participate in the *Mutirão*, complete a registration form and return it to the assembly office. The assembly office will arrange hotel accommodation for you and include you in all mailings about the assembly. While WCC is able to provide subsidies for only a very few participants in the *Mutirão*, participants are encouraged to be creative in seeking funds to enable their participation.

The registration fee for the assembly ranges from USD100 to USD350. The cost of a shared hotel room is about USD30 per day and 3 meals cost about USD15. The organizers are working to find lower-cost alternative lodging, particularly for young people.

How can you learn more about the *Mutirão*?

To propose a workshop or exhibit or to request more information about the *Mutirão*, contact mutirao@wcc-coe.org. Workshop proposals from Latin America will be forwarded to the appropriate bodies in the region.