

## **Doc 10**

### **Programme Highlights: September-December 2007**

#### **1. The “team” of Programme Directors is complete**

With the arrival of the two programme directors (P3 and P6) the “team” is now complete and some processes reactivated (reviewing internal leadership mechanisms for all staff, etc.).

#### **2. Two key processes were launched**

##### **Continuation Committee on Ecumenism in the 21st Century (*Draft report available*)**

The committee met for its first encounter 18-20 November 2007 at the Ecumenical Institute. The main objectives of the meeting were: to constitute the committee, to review the recommendations made by the 2004 Chavannes de Bogis consultation on Ecumenism in the 21st Century in light of reflections on previous steps in the process, the changing context and recent developments, and to establish a work plan for the committee until the next meeting.

The review of the recommendations made by the 2004 consultation was combined with reflections on the Global Christian Forum that had gathered in Limuru, Kenya just a week before and the discussion on the proposal of an expanded WCC assembly in 2013 that had been initiated by the policy reference committee of the WCC assembly in 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The revised recommendations and an agreement on the steps to be taken in preparation of the next meeting of the committee on 10 (arrival)-17 (departure) January 2009 in Brazil were the main outcome of the meeting.

##### **Global Platform 2007**

The theme of the Global Platform – theological reflection on migration – attracted a good response from the ecumenical movement. Around 200 churches, specialised ministries, networks and involved individuals responded to the initial invitation to participate and about 50 examples of theological reflection were submitted (reports, papers, Bible studies and worship resources). Many of these were posted on the WCC website and were discussed at the Global Platform meeting 26-29 November. The meeting had 27 participants plus five programme staff from the ecumenical centre and Bossey. The meeting was based around case studies and the participant’s own experience. A four-page analysis on what was learned in terms of content and methodology is being produced.

#### **3. A series of consultations have taken place**

##### **Healing memories: the Dublin consultation (*report available*)**

The bloody conflict in Northern Ireland, the crimes committed under the apartheid regime in South Africa and under communist rule in eastern Germany, mass killings perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia or by the Guatemalan military during a 35 year-long civil war: the diverse cases of these nations and their struggles to cope with the legacies of massive human rights violations were at the heart of the 1-4 October ecumenical consultation “Healing of Memories – Reconciling Communities” in Dublin, Ireland, co-organized by the WCC and the Irish School of Ecumenics. The consultation was part of the preparatory process leading up to the IEPC in 2011.

Some thirty international academics and reconciliation practitioners gathered at the Dominican retreat centre Tallaght, Dublin. Drawing on the five case studies, the ecumenical consultation assessed best practices and established a manual that would help churches, civil society groups and policy makers to understand the needs and options of community healing.

### **The WCC and Pentecostals deepen their conversation**

A second round of dialogue between World Council of Churches (WCC) members and Pentecostals was inaugurated in Baar, Switzerland, 4-9 October 2007. A group of seventeen Protestant, Orthodox and Pentecostal Christians met to re-launch the work begun by the first Joint Consultative Group between the WCC and Pentecostals from 2000 to 2005.

The meeting in Baar began and ended each day with prayer and Bible readings according to different church traditions. In-depth Bible studies were held each morning. Participants shared personal testimonies of faith and the stories of their churches. The group took time to reconstruct the story of the dialogue that developed between 2000 and 2005 and also set an agenda for their work in the years to come.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Finnish Pentecostal Mission, presented an overview of Pentecostal bilateral dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and conversations with the Lutheran World Federation. He stressed how this work has “laid the foundation for continuing Pentecostal involvement in the struggle for the unity of the Church of Christ”.

Harold D. Hunter, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, led a conversation on the “ecclesial gift of charisms”. Marina Kolovopoulou, Church of Greece, and Cephaz Omenyo, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, led a conversation on the “ecclesial gift of sacraments”. Both topics had been recommended for further discussion by the first group.

The group set for its agenda continued theological dialogue on the nature of the church, beginning in 2008 with a study of the marks of the church – Oneness, Holiness, Catholicity and Apostolicity. As the conversation progresses, the group will continue in 2009 with discussion on the nature of mission.

The group was hosted at the Focolare Centre and enjoyed an evening of fellowship and culture with the community there. Group members worshipped with local Reformed, Free Evangelical and Syrian Orthodox churches. The group will meet again in October 2008.

### **The Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration (*report available*)**

The Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration was hosted Patriarch Ignatius IV (Hazim) of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East 27-30 October 2007 in Damascus, Syria. The committee, comprised of fourteen members, is the successor to the

continuation committee of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. The deliberations were chaired by the two co-moderators of the Committee, Metropolitan Prof. Dr. Gennadios of Sassima of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi of the Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi.

The work of the permanent committee during this inaugural meeting focused on four of the areas that had received specific attention by the Special Commission, specifically as recommendations in these areas had been experienced during the WCC 9th assembly and during the meetings of the central committee and executive committee following Porto Alegre: membership, consensus decision making, ecclesiology and common prayer (the final two were considered together by the committee during this meeting). The permanent committee also considered the proposal from the Porto Alegre assembly for expanded assemblies, a matter referred from the executive committee.

**Greed, overproduction and over-consumption: an AGAPE regional encounter (*report available*)**

At the 5-9 November gathering in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, some fifty women and men of faith from Africa and beyond – youth, activists, theologians and church leaders – worked on ecumenical strategies and actions for addressing the interlinked problems of poverty, excessive wealth, and ecological degradation.

Structures of domination and exploitation based on class, gender or ethnicity are sinful, they declared, citing the woeful heritage of slavery and colonialism alongside negative consequences of neoliberal globalization.

“Neoliberal trade policies and patent systems that force Africa to produce cash crops for export” and bar poor people from access to medicine and healthcare, as well as reduced chances for young people in privatized educational systems are concrete grievances named in the final statement. It also denounces “desperate economic conditions produced by systemic trade deficits, external indebtedness and structural adjustment” that abet ecological destruction, insecure labour, human trafficking and violent conflict over resources.

The Dar-es-Salaam gathering was the first of five regional church encounters to be held by the members of the WCC on different continents during the next six years. The regional consultations and the study process they feed into, continue a WCC project that became known as Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE).

**4. Evaluation of 2007 at activity level was concluded and first learnings presented to the SLG**

Almost activities under the projects and all the management teams were evaluated and a first tentative list of learnings was drawn. While these preliminary results have, to some extent, informed the prioritization exercise, they will be more systematically used for finalizing the activity plans for 2009.