



Transforma mundo

World Council of Churches 9th Assembly | Porto Alegre, 18 February 2006

#5

Saturday and Sunday in Porto Alegre



Saturday

15:00 Plenary: Overcoming Violence

Speakers:

Ms Tale Hungen (Norway), president of Changemakers youth movement.

Mr Olara Otunnu (Uganda), UN special representative on children and armed conflict

Dr Janice Love (United Methodist Church, USA), chief executive officer of the Women's Division of the church

Mr Alfred Rock (Roman Catholic Church, Palestine), Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center

11:00 Ecumenical Conversations III

13:30 Forum on economic justice and AGAPE (plenary hall)

17:00 Confessional meetings (see Handbook)

Sunday

Worship with local churches (see schedule on back page)

16:30 Plenary on Latin America

18:00 Dinner

19:30 Celebration with Latin American churches

Number
of the
day

-1 hour

The time change in Brazil on Saturday night. Change your clocks!!

Meditation

"God, in your grace, transform *our lives*" is today's version of the Assembly prayer. Ezekiel 36:26-27 links the Assembly theme and the Decade to Overcome Violence's focus on the use, abuse and misuse of power, while the vision in Ezekiel 47:1-12 of water flowing from God's temple, reminds us of water's transforming and healing power in our lives.

Webcasts, texts, photos and more on www.wcc-assembly.info

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Brazilian president Lula addressing the 9th Assembly on Friday (full report on page 3)

Churches seeking peace

Five years have passed since the ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence was launched in February 2001 in Berlin. The Assembly at Porto Alegre, therefore, marks the mid-term of the Decade and offers a welcome opportunity to share experiences, make an interim assessment and refocus the course to be followed during the second five-year period.

Since its earliest beginnings the ecumenical movement has been a movement for peace and reconciliation. The ecumenical fellowship of churches

strongly manifests the conviction that the communion of all saints, which is a gift from God and rooted in God's triune life, can overcome the culture of enmity and exclusion which continuously leads into the vicious circles of violence. It has become in itself an image for the possibilities of reconciled living together while recognizing continuing diversities.

During the second half of the Decade the task will be to develop these efforts in the direction of firmer alliances and more effective links between churches, networks and move-

ments. The "ecumenical space" that is being offered by the Decade needs to be shaped and filled through mutual visits, by identifying more exemplary initiatives, and by a deliberate focus on the basic elements of the Christian witness for peace, in order to strengthen the unity and the common voice of the churches.

Only in this way can the overall goal of the Decade be reached, moving the search for reconciliation and peace "from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church."

WCC/Paulino Menezes

By the way...

Changing partners?

Stunning colours of flowers and birds; vibrant music; friendly faces; an opulent shopping mall; a poorly clad man sleeping on a sidewalk near the Novotel; a taxi-driver absorbed in reading his Bible while waiting for his next passenger... these are just one person's random collection of impressions of Porto Alegre so far. Tomorrow, Assembly participants will deepen their encounters with the Brazilian and Latin American context as they meet and worship with local churches, attend the plenary on Latin America and enjoy a dinner and celebration with the churches of the region.

Over the years the Latin American churches have enriched the wider ecumenical life in diverse ways: through their spirituality and forms of worship, their challenging theologies and their social and evangelistic passion; not to mention the leading roles taken by many sisters and brothers on the world church scene. They gave the WCC Emilio Castro as its general secretary 1985-92. At the same time, this context is now putting new and critical challenges to the ecumenical movement and WCC, two of which can be mentioned here.

The first is in the Latin American context itself, though it does have certain parallels elsewhere: the huge growth of Pentecostal churches. This is a complex phenomenon and any stereotyping of them all as conservative or fundamentalist in theology, or anti-ecumenical, would be wrong. Nevertheless these communities are for the most part outside the WCC and other ecumenical structures and very few of the non-members even have observers at this Assembly.

Their growth equally presents questions to the Roman Catholic Church. In the WCC there is much talk of "widening the circle." But is there an assumed normality about the "circle" being a Protestant-Orthodox (and Catholic) affair in which others are invited to join? Whose circle is it anyway? Will there come a point when in certain parts of the world it will be this kind of Pentecostalism that is "the norm" and historic ecumenism an isolated exception?

The second challenge implicates the present ecumenical fellowship. Recent years have seen much debate in WCC circles about the role and funding policies of European and North American agencies (specialised ministries) in relation to development work in the South. Nowhere has this discussion been more serious than in the annual joint meetings of the regional ecumenical organisations (REOs), of which the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) is the body for this continent.

There is, on all sides, a concern to build true partnership with mutual confidence, without the ecumenical partners in the South being bypassed or their own concerns ignored. But an Assembly itself can also be decisive in renewing South-North relationships. It was Uppsala 1968 that made an important leap in taking on board a new concept of development in which, for the first time, perspectives *from* and not just *about* the South were integral, and leading to the formation of a Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development. Clearly, "development" itself continually needs developing in ecumenical understanding!

Angelos



Nairobi, 1975

"Jesus Christ Frees and Unites." The 5th Assembly was one of **"consolidation,"** with a strong emphasis on the theological undergirding of the social and political commitments affirmed at Uppsala. The search for unity and for common confession of the faith was highlighted, and the churches were called to respond to the Faith and Order texts on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry – a process that would lead to the major "Lima text" of 1982. Inter-faith relations were a topic of major debate, especially between Western and Asian participants, and the sensitivity of the issue of human rights in the Soviet bloc became very evident.

Give peace a chance



Andrés Martínez (Argentina)

Bate-Papo

Young and old(er) continue talking

Today's dialogue between the generations will be on the subject "Victims as healers, building peace in contexts of violence" and will be held, as usual, in the theatre of building 50.

The younger generation will be represented by Morse Flores of the Philippines who will address questions to Mr Olara Otunno, the United Nations under-secretary-general and special representative for children and armed conflict, about what the older generation has and has not done to make this a better world for all.

President Lula asks Assembly to keep the flame of solidarity alive

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, president of Brazil, received an enthusiastic reception on Friday as he addressed the Assembly. The president thanked the WCC for its leadership in "the quest for a world at peace."

WCC general secretary the Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia and Latin American church leaders joined the president on the plenary hall stage. Catholicos Aram I, moderator of the Assembly, welcomed President Lula "in the spirit of Christian fellowship, love and solidarity."

The president spoke for nearly a half hour, interrupted numerous times by applause. He began by thanking the WCC for its work, especially during the 1970s and 1980s when Brazil was under totalitarian rule. "We found in the World Council of Churches not only moral and spiritual incentives, but active solidarity and effective support for us to go on believing in our own battles... struggling to defend human dignity and freedom," he said.

He expressed special gratitude for the WCC's welcome of Paulo Friere, a noted educator who was forced to leave Brazil by the military regime during that era. Friere joined the WCC staff in Geneva, Switzerland, as a consultant after his exile.

President Lula also praised the WCC's efforts in hunger and poverty relief, issues that have been central to his agenda since his election in 2002. Brazil and the Council, he said, share many common concerns.

He said the most important thing is "keeping alive the flame of fraternity and solidarity among all peoples of the world." He called on the WCC to "continue working together with us to build a society that is more fair" for all people, and a more peaceful world. The president concluded by stressing the importance of coming together at events like the Assembly to share ideas, engage in dialogue and gain strength and renewal.

Early in his speech the president gestured toward the overflow area just outside the ple-

nary hall, where shouts from a crowd of Brazilians watching the speech could be heard. A small group of protesters was among them. "There is no more pleasant noise than the people shouting," he said, calling it a sign of healthy democracy. "Against or in favour, it doesn't matter - they're shouting."

Many Brazilians left the hall smiling, embracing and raising their hands in the air. "Having the president here was a great thing," said Tiago Schmidt, a Brazilian youth attending the Assembly. "It shows we (Brazil) are receiving the Assembly with open arms."

President Lula began his career as a trade unionist and strike leader in the 1980s, eventually founding the Workers Party (PT). He is noted for his passion and leadership on social issues such as hunger, poverty, and job creation.

A play about fair play (and fair trade)

Fair play - without it sport is pretty meaningless. But the expression is used in a wider sense in a play that exposes the dark side of international sportswear production and sponsorship deals, which all too often are not fair at all.

The Ball Is Round, being staged several times at the Assembly, features strong acting by the young actors of the Dusseldorf Youth Theatre.

Written by German actor and playwright Thomas Ahrens, it's the story of Nico, soccer star of the local high school, who is offered sponsorship by Gigas, a giant sportswear company. But all is not as it seems: the company's squeaky-clean image is a sham, their goods are produced in sweat-shop conditions, and the workers who produce them suffer intimidation and violence.

This play is not afraid to name names. Household brands like Nike and Adidas, it says, are implicated in unjust practices. The companies producing goods for firms like these pay low wages, treat workers unfairly, and victimize or dismiss those who complain.

The play's producers highlight the work of the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), founded in the Netherlands in 1990 and now active in 12 European countries. It is aimed at securing better conditions for workers in the textile and garment industries.

The play is touring under the auspices of the Fair Play - Fair Life initiative of the Evangelical Churches of Rhineland and Westphalia, which has a booth selling fairly traded footballs at this Assembly

The Ball Is Round will be presented in German on Saturday 18th at 19:30 in the theatre of building 40. The Clean Clothes Campaign can be found at www.cleanclothes.org

WCC/Paulino Menezes



A gift for the president: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, president of Brazil, receives a German church-sponsored Fair Trade football from the WCC general secretary, Rev Dr. Samuel Kobia

Habitat

Building to last



Habitat for Humanity, whose booth can be found in the exhibition hall, is helping to leave a lasting physical remembrance of the Assembly by transforming a community of the poorest people in Porto Alegre living on the edge of Lago Guaíba.

Starting during the Assembly, volunteers and members of the local community will build 100 houses as a permanent reminder of the WCC's presence in the city. The project is being co-sponsored by the City of Porto Alegre, educational institutions, the Hospital Moinhos de Vento and the Lutheran, Methodist and Maristas churches.

Information about tours of the project and a breakfast on Tuesday 21st can be found at the Habitat for Humanity booth.

Sell your church, open a nightclub!



Do we really want young people to belong to church, or do we need to create a new form of spirituality?

In a Friday *Mutirão* session provocatively titled “Isn’t your church irrelevant to youth?” young missiologists led an enthusiastic discussion on the challenges facing young people in contexts as diverse as post-genocide Rwanda, urbanised South Africa and New York City nightclubs.

How do we enable young people to belong? How do you belong if you are different? How do you belong if you do not yet believe? Do we really want young people to belong to church, or do we need to create a new form of spirituality?

Just days ago, in his report to the Assembly the WCC Moderator, Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia, told how youth at the last meeting of the Central

Committee had called for a more open church and more relevant theology. The message that emerged in the *Mutirão* session was that the church truly needs to address and implement such statements, and not continue making them over and over again.

Alternative models of church suggested included street pastors and student chaplaincy in nightclubs. One participant said that in Oslo masses and blessings are conducted in busy city streets. “Maybe we should say, ‘Okay, let’s sell the buildings’ and not feel so sad about it.”

Discussion moved to how many nightclubs had names with religious themes, such as Genesis, Revelation and Sanc-



WCC/Igor Sperotto

A more relevant church: the Rev. Ms Prime Sarojini, of India, and the Rev. Kaisa Aitlahti, of Finland

tuary. One nightclub, someone said, operates in an old church with the frescoes still intact. Another actually is used as a place of worship during the day.

Participants said Christian teaching does not make sense to some, because the church offers intangibles, while capitalist society teaches that tangible things are most important. But

the self-centred and individualistic value system prevalent in society should not be adopted by the church to attract greater numbers of young people. Neither should the church forget core messages such as siding with the marginalised.

How can the church be relevant *and* different, was another question. Many young people

seeking values and meaning in life don’t find them in the church. Young people want to be active - they volunteer for Greenpeace or other projects - but how does the church provide opportunities for involvement?

One participant summarized the challenge: the transformation of the world cannot happen until the youth are heard.

Positive voices on HIV and AIDS

WCC/Paulino Menezes



HIV-positive participants in the Assembly are living openly with their status, and express joy and hope

At a gathering on Friday afternoon, several people who have been tested positive for the HIV virus told their stories to a group of about 50 Assembly participants.

Their unanimous message was: “We are living positively with the virus, and the time for the church’s denial about the disease and its lack of action to counter stigmatisation of people living with the disease must stop.”

Gracia Violeta Ross from Bolivia told of discovering that she had the virus after being raped by two men. Still, she was able to say confidently: “My story is successful!

“At first, I was ashamed to tell

my father, who was a lay leader in the church. I was also afraid of how the older people in the church would gossip. But when I told my father, he showed the most amazing compassion, and when I told the church, I received more hugs than I had ever had in my life.”

The Rev. Steve Sjoquist, a priest from Sweden, told the meeting that come this September, he will have been living with the virus for 19 years. “There are good days and bad days,” he admitted.

Monica Mvela, an Anglican from Zambia, told of the Circles of Hope that are being formed in churches in her country to

provide emotional and spiritual support for HIV-positive people. She added: “Sadly many churches are still not supportive of the idea.”

Canon Gideon Byamugisha of Uganda and the Rev. JP Heath from South Africa, founding members of the African Network of Religious Leaders living with AIDS (ANERELA), facilitated the meeting.

People who would like to sign a document calling for a recommitment by the churches in response to HIV and AIDS can do so at the “Acting Together – Transform our World” booth in the exhibition hall before noon today.



Imam A. Rasheid Omar and other participants in a workshop on inter-religious dialogue

One religion = no religion

If you take the advice of feminist Buddhist Dr Rita Gross, you'll discover that the study of other religions enriches your own spiritual perspective.

"If you know only one religion, you know no religion," Gross said in a *Mutirão* workshop called "Invitation to an Inter-religious Thinking Together." Encouraging those at the workshop to take up inter-religious study for their own good, she said, "In the world we live in we simply cannot afford not to think together."

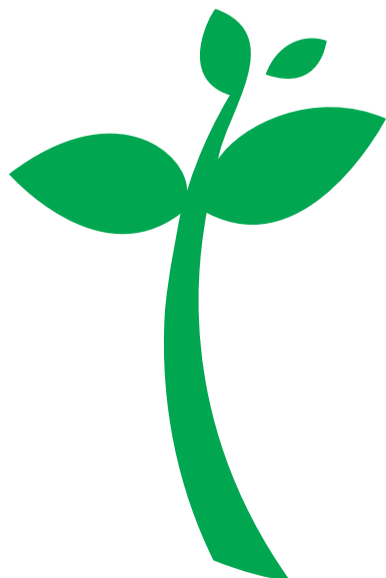
The workshop opened a conversation on how people living in the midst of religious diversity can express common convictions and explore core issues in their respective traditions.

It featured "Thinking Together," a small group of people of different faiths, with substantial experience of interreligious dialogue. For instance, they have engaged in some collective thinking about how to build peace by confronting the logic of violence.

The WCC's Hans Ucko cited the old ecumenical principle, "That which we can do together, we

should not do separately." This would be given new life if taken as a challenge for a concerted effort by people of different faiths to overcome the spirit and logic of violence.

Professor Anantanand Rambachan, a Hindu, observed that religions have done most of their theologizing in isolation. He suggested the group explore the implications of theological thinking in the presence of each other, adding, "We cannot know ourselves fully unless we see ourselves in the other's eyes."



Acting together, making a difference

One of the organisations represented in the Assembly exhibit and the *Mutirão* is the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, a broad network for international cooperation on the issues of HIV and AIDS and global trade. Co-founded by the WCC, more than 90 churches and church-related organisations from the worldwide ecumenical family support and participate in its work.

The alliance's global "Keep the Promise" campaign is based on the understanding that all churches are living with

and affected by HIV and AIDS. It focuses on fighting stigma and discrimination, promoting prevention, mobilising resources, advocating universal access to treatment and promoting accountability.

Under the theme "Trade for People – Not People for Trade," the alliance works to build a movement to promote trade justice. It believes trade should be an instrument for the promotion of human well-being, sustainable communities and economic justice, with priority given to people who live in poverty.

Ecumenical Conversations

What made an impact on you in the Ecumenical Conversations?

Photos: WCC/Igor Sperotto



Micheline Kamba, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Congo (delegate)

"In the ecumenical conversation about disability, we talked about barriers in the churches. It is not many people with disabilities in church. And in our conversation it was not many people without disabilities. The problem is some people think this is not a question for them."



Fernando Huanacuni, Aymara culture, Bolivia (*Mutirão* participant)

"I talked to a pastor from the Aymara culture. When he told me he was Aymara, our conversation changed—I learned one can be a pastor without neglecting the Aymara culture and our ancestors."



Father Vahram Melikyan, Armenian Apostolic Church, Holy See of Etchmiadzin (delegate)

"We talked about how to enable churches to be more involved with new technologies for more fruitful and successful evangelisation. The discussion was wonderful. It is interesting for me how people, especially youth, want to see the church be involved in new technologies, and I hope tomorrow there are even more ideas I can take back to help youth and clergy connect with the cyber-world."



Karryl Jeffrey, Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean Conference of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church (steward)

"Today we discussed how we would like WCC to take a stance on violence against women and children. We should send a message saying they need to complete the teaching of theology—this means don't teach that men are the head of the household without teaching at the same time about humility and submission for men as well as women."

Tema do dia: “Superando a violência”

Depois de discutir a “Identidade cristã e o pluralismo religioso”, e suas implicações nos diferentes contextos, o tema do dia é “Superando a violência”.

A plenária avaliará as realizações do CMI desde 2001 e os desafios esperados para a segunda metade da década.

Presidente Lula discursa à 9ª Assembléia

“O Brasil era conhecido pelo futebol, pela floresta amazônica e pelo Carnaval. Hoje, o mundo reconhece outros valores, como a democracia, a reforma social atuante, o desenvolvimento econômico sustentável e o combate à violência e à corrupção. O País deve recuperar seu papel social na comunidade mundial”, disse o *Catolicós Aram I*, ao dar boas-vindas ao presidente Lula.



WCC/paulino Menezes

A 9ª Assembléia do Conselho Mundial de Igrejas (CMI) recebeu, hoje, a visita do presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Ele veio acompanhado por sua esposa Marisa e pelos ministros Miguel Rossetto (Desenvolvimento Agrário), Dilma Rousseff (Casa Civil da Presidência da República), Tarso Genro (Educação), Olívio Dutra (Cidades) e Benedita da Silva (Ação Social).

Antes de iniciar seu discurso - ao saber da presença do movimento estudantil e da questão agrária do lado de fora da plenária - Lula disse: “os convidados

devem ter percebido que a democracia respira forte do lado de fora. Para quem viveu durante 23 anos sob a ditadura, não há nada melhor do que ouvir o povo gritando contra ou a favor do Governo. Isto é democracia”. E foi muito aplaudido.

Em seu discurso, Lula ressaltou a importância do CMI como incentivador moral e espiritual da solidariedade, também para com o Brasil, já que a organização acolheu, entre os anos 70 e 80, em Genebra, um de seus brasileiros mais famosos: Paulo Freire. “A democracia e a liberdade do povo brasileiro devem muito à solidariedade das igrejas”, afirmou, referindo-se aos estudos desenvolvidos por um dos maiores nomes da Educação.

Como não podia deixar de ser em suas apresentações oficiais, Lula citou alguns números de seu

Governo, como a Bolsa-Família, que oferece três refeições por dia para 77% da população que vive abaixo da linha da pobreza; a Reforma Agrária, que assentou 245 mil famílias nos últimos três anos; e a chegada da energia elétrica para mais de 2,2 milhões de pessoas da zona rural. Também falou sobre a construção de 13 mil sisternas no semi-árido brasileiro, o programa dirigido aos afro-descendentes e sobre o Prouni, que reserva 10% das vagas oferecidas no Ensino Superior para pessoas empobrecidas. Por fim, falou sobre a criação de quase 4 milhões de novos empregos formais nos últimos três anos.

Em seu discurso, o presidente Lula reconheceu publicamente a contribuição do CMI para a construção de uma sociedade mais justa e igualitária, promovido pelo diálogo ecumênico.



Mutirão

- Sri Lanka Street Theater, das 12h45 às 13h15, na Avenida Ecumênica
- Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, da Igreja Metodista de Maringá, em local a ser anunciado
- Ciemal – Consejo de Iglesias Evangélicas Metodistas de América Latina y Caribe, das 17h às 18h30, no prédio 50, sala 303

Muçulmano diz que Deus é cristão, judeu e islâmico

O príncipe muçulmano El Hassan bin Talal, moderador da Conferência sobre Religião e Paz, que estará no Brasil em março, disse - por meio de vídeo-mensagem enviada à 9ª Assembléia do CMI - que muçulmanos, cristãos e judeus acreditam em um mesmo Deus. Para ele, os códigos éticos e morais são comuns, centrados na justiça, igualdade, liberdade, caridade e fé em Deus. A mensagem foi enviada ao secretário-geral do CMI, o metodista Samuel Kobia, e divulgada por ocasião da plenária

“Identidade Cristã e Pluralidade Religiosa”.

O texto foi escrito no Monte Nebo, na Jordânia, onde está erguida a Igreja de São Jorge, em cuja construção foi encontrada a primeira evidência da escrita árabe, uma pedra com o texto “bisalameh”, que significa “em paz”.

“A palavra ecumenismo será usada inúmeras vezes durante esta Assembléia - diz o príncipe muçulmano. Para mim, ela deve ser usada não somente para expressar a união de igrejas, mas também de religiões

e, nesse contexto, de valores”.

O príncipe indiano Talal cita as palavras do mais conhecido representante de seu país, Ghandi: “Acredito em todas as grandes religiões do mundo e não haverá, finalmente, a paz se não aprendermos não somente a tolerar, mas a respeitar a fé das outras pessoas”.

Em suas reuniões, os muçulmanos saudam-se com a expressão “Salaam alaykum” (a paz esteja com você). “O Deus do Islã - ele diz - é *rabb al alamin*, o Deus do Mundo e não o Deus dos Muçulmanos”.

Mutirão: Danza y teatro expresan también al mundo ecuménico

Avenida Ecuménica es un espacio que se ha constituido en un interesante centro de expresión artística. Grupos de danza y teatro dan diariamente demostraciones de las culturas de sus pueblos, incluyendo los temas que son parte del testimonio y la misión de las iglesias a las que pertenecen.

Durante esta semana, han actuado allí el grupo de danza de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Bolivia; el conjunto de tambores Dalit, de la India; el conjunto de Niños de la Calle de Bostwana, que pertenece al programa Tsholofelong, de promoción y ayuda a la niñez; el teatro mudo de la Escuela de Sordos del Pacífico; el Teatro Callejero de Sri Lanka y grupos vocales de la Asociación Canoense de Discapacitados Motores.

¡CUBA, CUBA!

El lobby del plenario se convirtió en una isla llena de calor humano. El coro Shalom, de la Iglesia Metodista de Cuba, actuaba para los delegados e invitados a la 9ª Asamblea del CMI. El improvisado público olvidó que era la hora del almuerzo para doblar el calor con su aplauso.

Casi una treintena de voces, bajo la batuta de la maestra Rita Oliva, levantaron en el público gritos de ¡Cuba, Cuba! Un sacerdote ortodoxo interrumpió la función para tomarse una foto con los artistas y la risa se hizo general. Luego el silencio nos atrapó a todos bajo la música de un negro espiritual como “Every time I feel the spirit”, que dio paso a “Canción para las naciones”, donde dos muchachas jóvenes, que integran la delegación cubana a la cita, bailaron en puntas para los asistentes al compás de la música.

Cuando la tradicional canción “Guantanamera” dejó escuchar sus primeros acordes como cierre, el público comenzó a cantar creyéndose estar navegando, en el barco de todos en esta Asamblea: la fraternidad humana, camino hacia la Isla.

Casa de Passagem: hospedagem para quem busca transplante

A Casa de Passagem, que hospeda pessoas que vêm à Porto Alegre em busca de tratamento médico - especialmente transplante e não dispõem de hospedagem - é apenas um dos trabalhos que você pode conhecer durante a 9ª Assembléia.

Para visitar um dos 8 trabalhos liderados pela Comunidade Evangélica de Porto Alegre (Cepe) - como a Casa da Criança Bom Samaritano, a Casa da Criança de Alvorada, o Centro Diaconal Evangélico Luterano, o Centro Infantil Eugênia Conte e o Centro Infantil Lupicínio Rodrigues, ou, ainda, conhecer a Oficina do Pão - procure o estande da Comunidade Evangélica de Porto Alegre (Cepe), no Salão de Exposições.

The promise and risk of inter-religious dialogue



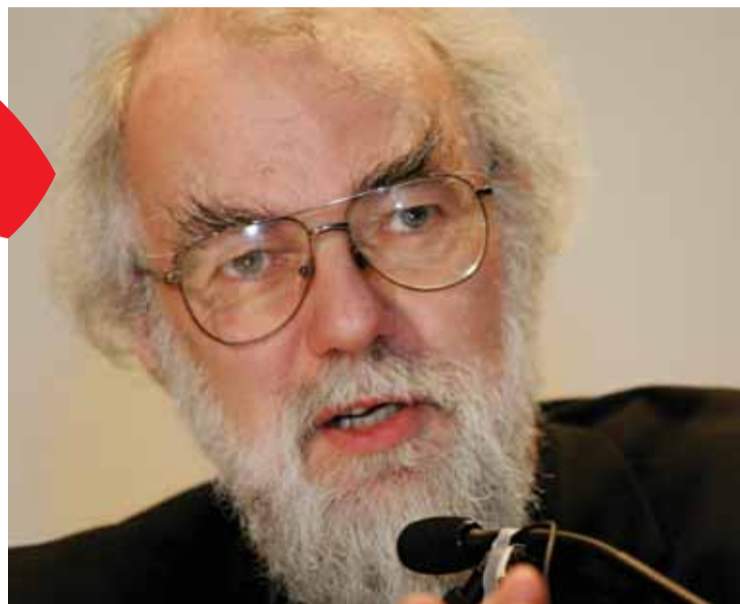
The exclusive claims of Christianity are not claims to absolute knowledge, but to a unique perspective, which “will transform our most deeply rooted hurts and fears and so change the world at the most important level.”

Christians in a world of plural convictions are in a place which is “both promising and deeply risky,” according to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams.

“We are called to show utter commitment to the God who is revealed in Jesus and to all those to whom his invitation is addressed,” he said. But he rejected aggressive efforts to convert those of other faiths, saying, “We are not called to win competitions or arguments in favour of ‘our product’ in some religious market-place.”

In an Assembly plenary session on Christian identity and religious plurality, Dr Williams drew applause from the participants when he urged churches worldwide to keep in mind the sufferings of Christians living as persecuted minorities. “What is remarkable is the courage with which Christians continue - in Egypt, in Pakistan, in the Balkans, even in Iraq - to seek ways of continuing to work alongside non-Christian neighbours,” he said.

“This is not the climate of ‘dia-



WCC/Paulino Menezes

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, speaking on Christian identity and religious plurality

logue’ as it happens in the West or in the comfortable setting of an international conference; it is the painful making and remaking of trust in a deeply unsafe and complex environment.”

The Archbishop spoke of Christian identity as “to belong in a place that Jesus defines for us.” The exclusive claims of Christianity, he said, are not claims to absolute knowledge, but to a unique perspective, which “will transform our most deeply rooted hurts and fears and so change the world at the most important level. It is a perspective that depends on being where Jesus is, under his authority, sharing the ‘breath’ of his life, seeing what he sees.”

He urged his hearers to recognise commonalities in their own faith experience and that of others, saying, “Sometimes when we look at our neighbours of other traditions, it can be as if we see in their eyes a reflection of what we see; they do not have the words we have, but something is deeply recognisable.”

He continued, “When we face radically different notions, strange and complex accounts of a perspective not our own, our perspective must be not, ‘How do we convict them of error? How do we win the competition of

ideas?’ but ‘What do they actually see? And can what they see be a part of the world that I see?’”

Speaking at a press conference after the plenary session, the Archbishop said that two approaches to inter-religious dialogue were unhelpful. One was to claim an exclusive possession of the truth, while the other was to lose confidence in one’s faith and “slip into a world-view that assumes every religion is as good as another.”

Two theologians responded to Williams’ address in the plenary, which was moderated by the Rev. Dr George Mulrain. Dr Anna May Chain, a Karen Baptist Christian from Myanmar, shared the story of her family’s rescue by people of other faiths when she was a child, and her own experiences of friendship with Buddhist and Muslim women. “My Muslim and Buddhist neighbours may not know the name Jesus, but I believe God had found a path for himself to them,” she said.

Dr Assaad Kattan, a Lebanese Orthodox Christian living in Germany, spoke of the interaction of different Christian traditions with each other and Islam in the Middle East, stressing that “The attempt to define Christian identity must never bypass the cross.”

Islam

Info-terror or info-humanity?

I would like to see a new international initiative that emphasizes the importance of calling for a law of peace, a charter which can promulgate minority rights, emphasize the rights of protected peoples within complex religions and within cultural autonomies. I would like to see an approach which, in short, brings this troubled region a step further away from the impending Balkanization, ethnic and sectarian in-fighting, and rather offers a concept of humanitarian pluralism.

So I ask you, is the essence of our beliefs not the same? To draw once more from the Bible, is it not time that we overcome our own story of Babel to create a new, common language that includes *salaam*, *shalom*, and *peace*? We have 167 satellite frequencies in our part of the world that seem to me to be producing info-tainment and info-terror, but where is the info-humanity?—HRH Prince El Hssan bin Talal, Jordan

Buddhism

Hand in hand, step by step

The WCC has proclaimed the first decade of the twenty-first century to be “The Decade to Overcome Violence.” Truly, this is a timely appeal. At present, war and acts of terrorism continue unabated in our world. People’s hearts are swelling with suspicion, antagonism, and misunderstanding. We religious people cannot afford to overlook this.

Compassion and love are all we can rely upon to overcome violence. I understand that the world of compassion, the world of love for which we strive, cannot be realized in a day and a night. Nevertheless, I believe that if religious leaders can have sincere dialogue and cooperate with each other, then step by step society, and the world, will have peace. This belief is etched in my heart, and my hope is that from now on, I will strive in that direction, hand in hand with all of the members of the WCC.—Katsunori Yamanoi, chairman, board of directors, Rissho Kosei-kai

Judaism

Support voices of reconciliation, not extremism

Unfortunately, because I will not be here tomorrow, I will not be able to participate in the very important session on “Overcoming Violence.” This is a crucial challenge for all of us but particularly for my region of the world, the troubled and volatile Middle East. The common wisdom is that religion is a factor that fans the flames of hatred and violence. But for many of us, religion can also be a positive factor, promoting peaceful dialogue. As we have seen in the WCC’s interfaith initiative called “Thinking Together,” under the leadership of Hans Ucko, our religious cultures may indeed contain potentially problematic texts and traditions, but they also contain tools for alternate interpretations of those texts, as well as spiritual and cultural resources for developing a more positive approach to the Other.

For example, we in the Inter-religious Coordinating Council in Israel have, for the past three years, sponsored a dialogue among rabbis, imams and priests called *Kedem*, a Hebrew acronym for “Voices of Religious Reconciliation.” Those voices sometimes seem to be drowned out by the extremists in all of our communities, but they do exist and must be supported and strengthened.—Dr Deborah Weissman, executive of the Inter-religious Coordinating Council in Israel

Announcements

Pastoral care

Confidential counselling by qualified volunteers is available for any participants in the Assembly who feel the need to talk. This service is available in room 407 of building 40.

Mutirão schedule changes: Saturday 18th

The workshop scheduled for Monday, dealing with “Young women’s responses to violence against women and HIV and AIDS” (Handbook M29, #117) will now take place at 13:30 today in room 304 of building 50.

Please be aware that the groups performing are different than those printed in the handbook and change daily. Come see Marimba music by Youth from Botswana, a Cuban choir, Music and Dance from the Cook Islands, Theatre from Sri Lanka, Riverside Dancers from New York, Bolivian music, Capoeira, and many other cultural presentations from Latin America, Greece and Germany

African meeting

There will be a meeting for all Africans and people in the African diaspora in the plenary hall from 18:00 to 19:30 tonight.

Invitation to meet

Evangelical and Pentecostal participants are invited to meet with Geoff Tunnicliffe, the international director of the World Evangelical Alliance, at 11:30 today in room 307 of building 50.

Prayers for healing

Prayers will be offered in the University Chapel at 16:30 daily (except on Sunday) by the Pastoral Care Team. This brief service is open to anyone seeking healing and wholeness in body, mind and spirit. All services are ecumenical.

Today – Anointing with Laying on of Hands (Anglican).

Peace counts

This is a portrait of peace initiatives all over the world, done by German photographers and jour-

nalists. There will be guided tours through the exhibition at 14.00 and 16.00 daily, leaving from the entrance of the theatre in building 40.

Some solutions to violence

Between buildings 40 and 41, a complete home – Rosenstrasse 76 – depicts the horror of domestic violence. Created by cultural anthropologist Una Hombrecher of the Bread for the World Institute based in Germany, it also offers some strategic solutions to the problem.

Universal day of prayer for students

An ecumenical service will be held in the university chapel at 13:00 on Saturday 18th and led by the Rev. Dr Philip Potter and Dr Kang Moon-Kuy and students from around the world. This will be followed by a World Student Christian Federation reception between the chapel and building 5.

Lord’s Day worship

Sunday services in Porto Alegre

Tomorrow, local churches in Porto Alegre will welcome Assembly participants to worship and prayer. More details about transportation and the locations of the congregations are published below.

A local committee representing different confessions and congregations has been preparing to receive guests from the Assembly, mostly according to their church family as entered on the Assembly registration form.

The local committee has worked with *Fellini Turismo*, so the same buses that bring you to and from the PUC each day will provide transportation today.

Those who signed up to attend Sunday services will receive a note from their host congregation at their hotels by noon today. The note will tell you which congregation you will be attending and when the bus will come and pick you up. Each bus is marked with the name of the congregation to which it will go. Please check the signs on the bus.

Those who would like to bring greetings or who have brought a gift from their home church to the congregation they visit should speak to the liaison person at the local church before the service begins.

As indicated, *Fellini Turismo* will also provide return transportation from the congregations to the hotels. Some participants will be hosted for lunch by their congregations. If not hosted, please take your lunch at your hotel or in a nearby restaurant.

Details of the church services

Paróquia/Comunidade	Endereço	Cidade	Horário do Culto
Paróquia Evangélica de Niterói	R. Lajeado, 336 - Niterói -	Canoas	9h
Paróquia Evangélica de Canoas	R. Monte Castelo, 470 - Nossa Sra. das Graças -	Canoas	9h
Paróquia Evangélica de Esteio	R. Coração de Maria, 120 - Centro	Esteio	9h30
e Igreja Sagrado Coração de Maria			
Comunidade Ev. Floresta Imperial	Av. Pedro Adams Filho, 1998	N. Hamburgo	9h
Comunidade Ev. Hamburgo Velho	R. Júlio Kunz, 65	N. Hamburgo	9h
Comunidade Ev. Bom Pastor	R. Travessão, 1165 - Rondônia	N. Hamburgo	9h30min
Paróquia da Paz	Av. Sertório, 345 - Navegantes	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Paróquia M. Luther	R. Cel. Camisão, 30 - Higienópolis	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Paróquia do Salvador	R. D. Cláudio Ponce de Leon, 377 - Jardim Itati	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Paróquia São Lucas	R. Luiz Voelcker, 285 - Três Figueiras	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Paróquia São Marcos	R. São Miguel, 106 - Glória	Porto Alegre	10h
Paróquia Matriz	R. Senhor dos Passos 202 - Centro	Porto Alegre	10h
Paróquia Evangélica Imigrante	R. Marques do Herval, 480 - Centro	São Leopoldo	9h30min
Paróquia Evangélica de Sapucaia do Sul	Av. Sen Lúcio Bittencourt, 804	Sapucaia do Sul	9h
IELB - São Paulo	R. Cipó, 450 - Jardim Ipiranga	Porto Alegre	9h
Concórdia	Av. Cel. Lucas de Oliveira, 894 - Mont' Serrat	Porto Alegre	10h
Da Cruz	R. João Obino, 130 - Petrópolis	Porto Alegre	10h
Igreja Metodista Institucional	Av. Presidente Roosevelt, 1105 - São Geraldo	Porto Alegre	10h
Igreja Metodista da Glória	Av. Niterói, 383 - Medianeira	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Igreja Metodista Central de Porto Alegre	R. Duque de Caxias, 1676 - Centro	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Igreja Metodista Sarandi	R. Claudio Dubreuil, 131 - Sarandi	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Igreja Metodista Wesley	R. São Vicente, 180 - Rio Branco	Porto Alegre	10h30m
Catedral Santíssima Trindade	R. dos Andradas, 880	Porto Alegre	10h
Paróquia da Ascensão	Av. Engº. Ludolfo Boehl, 300	Porto Alegre	9h
Paróquia do Redentor	R. José do Patrocínio, 570 - Cidade Baixa	Porto Alegre	10h
Paróquia da Ressureição	R. Fernando Abott, 168 - Cristo Redentor	Porto Alegre	9h30min
Paróquia da Graça Divina	Av. Américo Vespúcio Cabral, 476	Viamão	9h30min
Paróquia do Calvário	R. Antônio Fraga, 39 - Centro	Nova Santa Rita	10h
Catedral Mãe de Deus	R. Duque de Caxias, 1047 - Centro	Porto Alegre	10h
Igreja Batista Central	Av. Cristóvão Colombo, 616	Porto Alegre	10h30m
Igreja Pentecostal Para Cristo	R. Cerro Azul, 102 - Passo da Areia	Porto Alegre	9h
Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil	R. Leopoldo Bier, 20 - Bairro Azenha	Porto Alegre	10h
Orthodox Church (Russian)	Av. General E. Lúcio Esteves, 215	Porto Alegre	10h
Orthodox Church (Greek)	R. Monteiro Lobato, 312	Porto Alegre	10h
Syrian Orthodox Liturgy	PUC university chapel	Porto Alegre	10h

- Lutheran/Luterana IECLEB
- Lutheran/Luterana IELB
- Methodist/Metodista
- Anglican/Anglicana
- Roman Catholic/Católica
- Baptist/Batista
- Pentecostal
- Presbyterian/Presbiteriana
- Orthodox/Ortodóxa
- Oriental Orthodox/Ortodóxa Oriental

Please consult the Assembly local worship committee for further information.

Services not previously announced are in bold.



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Texts and photos by WCC 9th assembly communication staff

Newspaper team:
Alex Belopopsky, Eva Stimson, Dave Wanless, Keith Clements, Ana Braun Endo

Design and production:
Lavoro C&M, Cristina Pozzobon,
Rosana Pozzobon (Porto Alegre)

Photographers: Peter Williams, Paulino Menezes, Igor Sperotto

Comments and announcements:
newspaper@wcc-coe.org
www.wcc-assembly.info