

4 | Global, Continental and National Partners

A few months before its anniversary, EMW asked partner organisations to briefly present their work and to describe the experiences with and the insights of working with EMW. It was also asked whether and how this cooperation can be improved in the future. Due to the large number of responses from the partners, we present a representative selection in this volume.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Walking side by side – when solidarity and partnership are more than words

Reverend Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, personally selected the title of this article. He describes not only the objectives of the WCC, but outlines important areas of cooperation with the EMW.



The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of more than 340 member churches from Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and also Pentecostal traditions, with a total constituency of approximately 560 million people in more than 110 countries. While the bulk of the WCC's founding churches in 1948 were European and North American, today most member churches are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific. For its member churches, the WCC is a unique space: one in which they can reflect, speak, act, worship and work together, challenge and support each other, share and debate with each other. As members of this fellowship, WCC member churches:

- are called to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship;
- promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism;
- engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation; and
- foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service.

Mission and Evangelism became essential tasks of the WCC when the International Missionary Council merged with the WCC in 1961. Some of the guiding concerns for this step to be taken were the integration of mission and church,

the need for ecumenical cooperation in mission, and the developing link between mission and development. The close cooperation of German mission societies with the WCC, sharing very similar experiences and concerns, inspired the formation of the EMW in 1975. The late WCC General Secretary Emilio Castro, at that time director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), was invited to speak at the first EMW assembly in 1977 on Mission and Evangelism after the 1975 Nairobi Assembly of the WCC. This choice clearly expressed the deep ecumenical commitment of the EMW as a CWME member.

Since then, EMW directors Martin Lehmann-Habeck, Herbert Meissner and Christoph Anders and their colleagues have accompanied the CWME and the WCC's programmatic work on Mission and Evangelism, Health and Healing and Theological Education in close partnership with the WCC and in solidarity with the member churches. They have made sure that the impulses of the mission conferences of Melbourne in 1980, San Antonio in 1989, Salvador de Bahia in 1996, Athens in 2005 and Edinburgh in 2010, and of the 1982 document on Mission and Evangelism – An Ecumenical Affirmation and finally of the 2012 mission statement *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Chang-*



CWME Pre-Assembly Mission Event in Manila, 2012: Metropolitan Dr Geevarghese Mor Coorilos and WCC General Secretary Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit. The EMW is represented in the CWME by its director Christoph Anders.

ing Landscapes (TTL) were communicated to the German churches and widely discussed among them. In this way, CWME and EMW were mutually supportive in carrying forward the understanding and practice of mission and evangelism and in broadening the circle of those involved in it, including more and more representatives of the Roman Catholic Church over the years and also of Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. The TTL document inspired vital discussions on the role of the Holy Spirit in mission and God's final purpose for the world, and on the notion of mission from the margins as an essential dimension of mission in changing ecclesial landscapes with the shift of gravity of World Christianity towards the South and the East.

In 2014 the EMW organized a significant event in Berlin focusing on the landmark document *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World* that was released on 28 June 2011 by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) of the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) after five years of work. Responding to both the changing ecclesial landscape and an increasing need for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, this document is the fruit of growing relationships among Evangelicals, Pentecostals, the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churches.

The WCC and EMW are working together on the preparations for a twin consultation on "Reformation-Education-Transformation" in 2015 in Sao Leopoldo (Brazil) and in 2016 in Halle (Germany). The process will highlight the commitment of both organizations in the area of theological education and public witness. The Reformation traditions have contributed to transform societies through education and have themselves been shaped by societal processes and discourses of transformation.

The 2013 Busan assembly called all people of good will to join in a pilgrimage of justice and peace, and in transformative action. The cooperation between EMW and WCC is a very good example of the kind of shared commitment and mutual accountability required for such a journey. We are walking side by side. We have experienced on many occasions that solidarity and partnership are more than words on our pilgrimage. They are lived realities informing and transforming what we are doing together as our part in the *missio Dei*.

May God continue to guide and to bless the EMW and its members!

<https://www.oikoumene.org/>

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

The LWF – a Communion of Churches

The Lutheran World Federation is one of the main partners of the EMW. In particular its mission-related tasks are supported since the founding of the EMW. This article describes the specific areas of cooperation.



The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), founded in Lund (Sweden) in 1947, is a lively and engaged communion of 145 churches representing 72 million Christians in 98 countries from all over the world. The Communion Office is based in Geneva (Switzerland). The LWF works through and with its member churches and other actors to bring change to the world. Its member churches share altar and pulpit fellowship, and in common witness and service, in the joint fulfilment of the missionary task, and in openness to ecumenical cooperation, dialogue and community.

The Lutheran churches of the world consider their communion as an expression of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Thus, they are committed to work for the manifestation of the unity of the church given in Jesus Christ. The LWF wants to attest to what it means to be an ecclesial communion from a Lutheran perspective. One of the phrases that have become a hallmark of Lutheran ecclesiology is “unity in reconciled diversity. The LWF Communion brings their spiritual and material resources together in order jointly to participate in God’s mission in the world. This communion is alive because God calls it into being and sustains it. Living together as a communion of churches is a gift entrusted to the churches. In responding to God’s call, the LWF has committed itself to the ongoing realization of the communion. As a gift, the communion is something we receive; as a task, it is something to which we commit ourselves to labour toward.

As a communion of churches we are intensively working towards the 500th Reformation anniversary. Guided by the theme “Liberated by God’s Grace” we are exploring the theological dimensions as they speak to a world today, which has become more polycentric and which struggles to engage in the transcultural and trans-contextual interactions that such poly-centricity demands. Hence, we are insisting on the reformation as a “global citizen”, and seek to engage the an-

niversary with a sense of ecumenical accountability and with our eyes looking into the future. At all times and in every place, churches discern how faithfully to live out the message of the gospel in their contexts. As part of this process, they are called to review and examine cultural and socio-ethical paradigms in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Careful responses to the particular contexts are an important aspect of credibly communicating the message of the gospel. At the same time, the mutual accountability of churches in different contexts is part of their commitment to the catholicity of the church of Jesus Christ.

Areas of Cooperation

The Evangelisches Missionswerk (EMW) has been a faithful and reliable partner in the LWF communion supporting activities related to theological and mission work of the LWF focusing largely on the work with Africa and Asia regions. According to the LWF understanding mission encompasses proclamation, service and advocacy for justice. The cooperation with EMW enabled LWF to accompany its member churches in their holistic mission efforts through the programs aimed to develop and foster church growth and sustainability, communion building and capacity for diakonia.

Through this cooperation the LWF has assisted member churches to develop human capacity deeply grounded in the theology of holistic mission, and in training and supporting church leaders to equip them in managing and leading sustainable, relevant and credible churches in their own context. Furthermore, the LWF has empowered churches with capacities to work towards transformation and reconciliation, and strengthened their public witness as they accompany communities to live in dignity and peace. The LWF has actively pursued joint theological reflection to achieve clearer understanding of holistic mission within the communion, offering platforms for mutual learning between churches and developing resources, such as the Mission in Context and Diakonia in Context, in order to support the holistic ministries of member churches.

Building relationship, deepening shared understanding of Lutheran identity and finding ways to jointly respond to the challenges of today's world are fundamental to the life and witness of the LWF communion of churches. Through the support from EMW, LWF has developed strong participation of all its members in communion and ecumenical life, sharing of needs and joys, solidarity, finding ways to address areas of difficulties such as conflicts and journeying together in God's mission. The LWF area secretaries have facilitated leadership consulta-

tions in the regions, comprising among others, heads of churches, women leaders, youth leaders, and theological faculties, enabling churches to develop instruments of deepening Lutheran and ecumenical understanding, cooperation in new mission areas at regional levels, promoting meaningful participation of all members especially women and youth, exchanges and ways of supporting smaller and emerging churches. These processes of learning aim our growing together as a communion and supporting the LWF vision to live and work together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.

Meaningful Experiences and Insights

The relation of the LWF with EMW is based upon an ecumenical commitment and a holistic approach to achieve common goals via mutual and binding partnership in solidarity with local churches, organizations and institutions committed to the same common purpose and vision. Though the cooperation is coordinated by the LWF German National Committee (DNK) in Hannover, there is also direct relationship between LWF communion office in Geneva and EMW-Hamburg. This unique way of cooperation has a distinctive advantage of the coordination of the various gifts from both the German LWF member churches and LWF non-members under one roof which gives an overview of the German contribution to the LWF communion. LWF values EMW participation in some of the strategic meeting of the LWF governing bodies, such as the LWF Subcommittee for Mission and Development as well as the LWF working together with partner organizations which facilitate critical multilateral dialogues concerning financial, ethical, advocacy, cultural, theological and ideological issues.

Wishes for on-going Cooperation

More engagement is needed at a strategic level on content programs and projects to further strengthen the cooperation and enabling LWF for becoming a coordinating platform for mutuality, and focusing on accompaniment in mission and communion building.

Recommendations for EMW in the Future

To explore programmatic cooperation on some common themes with the LWF in order to keep the space for continued discussion and participation in God's mission.

www.lutheranworld.org

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

Gratitude for Solidarity in Mission

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), a predecessor organization of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), had a long-standing partnership with the Evangelische Missionswerk (EMW). Chris Ferguson, General Secretary of WCRC, describes the current priorities of cooperation.



The WCRC, which came into being at its Uniting General Council in 2010 through the coming together of the WARC and the Reformed Ecumenical Council, is comprised of 80 million Christians in Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting and Waldensian churches. The WCRC, working with its more than 225 member churches, is active in supporting theology, justice, church unity and mission in over 100 countries.

After the Uniting General Council the WCRC and EMW took their relationship to a higher level. This new level of partnership has been mutually beneficial to the vision and focus of both organizations due to their overlapping goals, especially as both are interested in furthering the mission to which God has called them.

This cooperation has allowed the WCRC to deepen its understanding of the relationship between the global mission imperatives of a world Christian communion and the need for faithful mission initiatives and actions that need to be grown from the ground up and rooted in local, national and regional contexts. Today in an age of a globalized, economic Empire all contexts are entangled and so mission responses have to be lived out in communion, interdependence and cooperation. The partnership with EMW has allowed the WCRC to deepen the empowerment of mission work and strengthen the global-regional-local links.

Four main areas have been focused on in this latest stage of the WCRC-EMW partnership:

Mission Empowerment

Many of the member churches of the WCRC find themselves in contexts in which they are in the minority or on the “frontline” of a religious “divide.” The WCRC has come along side many of these churches—specifically in Nigeria and Indonesia, as well as through a global conference—to support and engage them in discussions about how to do mission authentically, what it means to be evangelistic in a multi-faith culture, how to persevere in the face of persecution and how to reach out to those of other faiths.

Theological Education

The Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women in the South was established nearly 15 years ago and has proven to be a very effective way to encourage churches to accept women in ordained ministry. Over the years it has given women financial support they could not obtain through their own churches. It has thus increased the number of women in ordained ministry, building their capacity for effective partnership in God’s mission.

Leadership Development

There are two programmes under this category, which has focused on raising up the next generation of church and ecumenical leaders:

The Global Institute of Theology is an intensive short-term academic programme that gives theological students and faculty from all over the world an opportunity to learn, teach and do theology in an inter-contextual and ecumenical way, situating the theological task in local, regional and global contexts.

The WCRC internship programme provides opportunities to young people to work with the organization in order to learn about global ecumenism and the issues that are central to the WCRC’s vision: to live out the communion, participating in God’s mission, that all may experience the fullness of life in Jesus Christ.

Strengthening Regional Bodies

Two of the WCRC’s regional councils—those in Latin America and Africa—have been and continue to be strengthened through the partnership between WCRC and EMW. In Latin America the additional resources provided have given the regional council the ability to do even more. While in Africa, the funds have

reenergized what had been a struggling council, spurring them back into action, allowing them to rebuild bonds of communion across a large and diverse continent.

The successes in these areas have demonstrated that the partnership between the WCRC and EMW can make an impact on this world fallen among thieves. In this context the WCRC sees expanding and deepening its mission partnership with EMW as imperative. As Christians devoted to God's mission on earth, we must refuse to be divided and fragmented as we face the challenges of doing mission in a scandalous world where the few benefit at the cost of the many, and creation itself is being destroyed.

Unity in transformative action in God's mission is a path we are all called to follow. In this the WCRC hopes that both the areas and degree of cooperation with EMW can grow as all face mounting threats to God's project of Life. The WCRC hopes in this time to work more closely in prophetic witness and mission to confront and dismantle all that threatens abundant living, to overcome and transform the current oppressive, destructive and death-dealing economic order so that all may find life abundant.

In all the WCRC's mission partnerships some partners stand out for their vision, solidarity, perseverance and commitment to justice and equity. EMW is one of these. EMW has chosen a path that empowers the churches in the global south allows the integrity of all of God's people to take the place that God has called them to take in the mission of the whole Gospel to whole world despite the forces of injustice, inequity and exclusion.

The WCRC gives its thanks to EMW for this solidarity in mission and the just sharing of mission resources.

<http://wcrc.ch>

WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

Christian Witness in the World

The WSCF is a global community of Student Christian Movements committed to dialogue, ecumenism, social justice and peace. It is a worldwide ecumenical body composed of 117 Christian student movements or SCMs located in 94 countries across 6 regions. Founded in 1895, it is the oldest ecumenical student organization existing to date. Necta Montes, WSCF General Secretary, reflects on the partnership with EMW.



WSCF mission is to empower Christian students in critical thinking and constructive transformation of our world by being a space for prayer and celebration, theological reflection, study and analysis of social and cultural processes and solidarity and action across boundaries of culture, gender and ethnicity. It is called to be a prophetic witness in the Church and in society, visible in our commitment to dialogue, ecumenism, social justice and peace, nurtured by our radical hope in God's reign in History. As an ecumenical community, WSCF welcomes people from all Christian traditions and encourages dialogue between students of different confessions.

The work of the Federation is carried out in the national, regional and global levels. The SCMs are autonomous movements that are coordinated and supported by a full-time Regional Secretary based in one of the 6 regional offices. The global coordination work is done by inter-regional office in Geneva, headed by a General Secretary and support staff. The Federation is blessed with numerous senior friends supporting, encouraging and inspiring the younger generations of SCMs.

WSCF has been in cooperation with EMW in supporting the over-all mission of the organization by providing a grant that supports the implementation of the Global Strategic Plan of the Federation. EMW and WSCF cooperates in four main Programmatic Areas:

■ **Ecumenical Leadership Formation:** This program area aimed to develop prophetic ecumenical student leaders with social, economic, political and inter-religious awareness and sensitivity, that will take the lead in the development and renewal of the present and future church and ecumenical leadership. It also aims to continue promoting gender justice as crosscutting theme within the WSCF, in the church, the ecumenical movement and society.

■ **Advocacy and Solidarity:** This program area offers WSCF as a global student Christian community, a direct and urgent response to situations of suffering and injustice. It also draws attention to injustice from a global student Christian perspective, aiming at changing policies to promote justice and peace.

■ **Radical Renewal of Biblical and Theological Reflections:** This program area aimed to resource the movements to radically renew their Biblical study, theological reflection and spiritual life by resourcing the movements in exchange, encounter and mutual learning. It also aimed to resource the whole Federation to take the lead in the ecumenical movement and civil society in the renewal of hermeneutics and theological reflection.

■ **Capacity Building:** This program area aimed to make the Federation more transparent, accountable and democratic in its decision-making processes by improving its personnel, financial, communications and PME systems. It also aimed to resource movements to renew their movement life, to build their capacity, to fundraise, to manage projects and finances and become sustainable.

Experiences in the relationship

Belonging to the same wider ecumenical family, EMW is accompanying, enabling and nurturing the younger generation of ecumenically trained Christians towards leadership in churches and the ecumenical movement. WSCF has a long standing relationship with EMW and throughout this journey there have been times of celebrations, affirmation and valuable lessons learned in the process. Some of these are the following:

Affirming diversity in Christ's mission among young people in different social contexts

It is important to affirm the multiple and diverse ways in which Christian communities understands mission and how these are deeply rooted in contextual

realities of young people all over the world. This is inherent in the ecumenical vision we share with EMW, “we are one, but we are many in Christ’s mission” EMW provides the space for WSCF to continue its diverse ministry among Christian youth and students in many parts of the world. WSCF struggles to maintain the diverse identities of its members in the face of growing trends towards homogenizing and globalized monoculture in the secular society and the development practice.

For example, in order to gain financial support for our local SCM programs, movements need to shift into a framework that limits its ecumenical orientation and Christian identity. WSCF believes that ecumenical tradition of mission for the renewal and healing of communities for “wholeness of life,” goes beyond narrow economic development paradigm that has worked for sustainable alternatives to address social problems and the environment. The vision of a New Heaven and a New Earth come from diverse voices of communities of people nurtured by movements like SCMs and other organizations that promote diversity in the way we understand and envision the future of the world.

Developing mutual respect and understanding, empowering the young people for churches mission

WSCF is at its learning curve as it adapts to changes in the funding landscape. Because of the nature and constituent of the organization, that of being a youth movement led by young people in transition, WSCF has had difficulty to demonstrate its institutional capacity to manage and operate the organization professionally. WSCF members by default are deemed inexperienced and to some extent, incapable of efficiently managing its affairs. Very few partners, including EMW understand the nature of WSCF, its history and commitment to churches’ mission and the ecumenical agenda. EMW effectively supports youth empowerment, it has encouraged youth leadership in WSCF and allowed our young professional staff team to gain the experience to develop and sustain the organization with the necessary critical and constructive view from partners like EMW.

Over the years, we have had the privilege of working with partners and learn in the process. We understand that the standards of the international and ecumenical cooperation have changed. Added to financial accountability, new standards require that WSCF be accountable to the contribution to change in relation to specific problems we identify in different contexts.

Over-all, EMW has been journeying with WSCF in empowering Christian youth and students to participate effectively in the churches mission in the world today. It encouraged open communication and critical exchanges for mutual understanding and respect of each other's work and mission as partners.

WSCF congratulates and sends our best wishes to EMW's 40th year of anniversary celebration. We thank EMW for the steadfast support in our on-going cooperation. WSCF prays and wishes for EMW to continue its mission and ministry among the young people all over the world.

Suggestions for the EMW in future

To create spaces for meaningful exchange of knowledge and experiences among partners at the local, regional and global levels. Sharing of resource materials in other languages would be helpful in determining priorities and stories of people and organizations involved in mission work in partnership with EMW.

To continue its partnership cooperation, especially with ecumenical and church programs and initiatives that are less-likely to receive funding support from development funding agencies and the government.

<http://www.wscfglobal.org>

WCC/Marcelo Schneider



The World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) held its 35th General Assembly between February 27 and March 5 in Bogota, Colombia, at the invitation of the WSCF Latin America and Caribbean region and the churches and ecumenical partners in Colombia.

WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION

How far does a Community of Christian Journalism and Media Solidarity reach in the Global Context?

“WACC has through its unique role in the global ecumenical movement brought together in one organisation fundamental studies on communication issues, advice and support for communication projects, the creation of networks, running seminars, workshops and congresses at regional, national and global



level, and offering a wide range of publications (including internet communication). Over a quarter of a century WACC has progressively achieved that all these programs are related to each other and above all to the work of its members in all parts of the world.”

This was how the Head of Unit in the EMW, Frank Kürschner-Pelkmann described 2005 the unique role of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in the international ecumenical landscape. Little has changed since then in the exceptional position of the WACC. Perhaps I should add, that it becomes increasingly clear that the WACC has a very special position, not only in the ecumenical field, but also in the global context of non-government organisations (NGOs); and this - in my opinion - on account of its holistic understanding of communication, which is clearly expressed in the content and also in the project work of the WACC.

Over the last five years, the WACC supervisory boards and members have changed their profile and the direction of the organisation more towards communication rights, sustainable development, social justice and interreligious as well as ethnic issues.

The WACC was founded in 1968. In 2006 it moved its main office from England to Toronto (Canada); however continues to maintain an office in London. WACC

has member and partner organisations in eight regions of the world and in more than 110 countries.

What keeps it all together

■ is the conviction that each and every one has the right to communicate - just as everyone has a right to food, security and a roof over their head; and that communication rights are essential for sustainable development, poverty reduction, as well as gender equality.

■ are WACC's revised and extended communication principles, that try to redefine the range of Christian communication, its task in the context of an information society in view of global media networks and the debate on communication rights.

Under the heading "Communication for All", the eight WACC regions have agreed on seven principles as a common basic understanding of communication:

- Communication is a spiritual exercise;
- Communication builds and shapes community;
- Communication enhances participation;
- Communication promotes freedom and demands accountability;
- Communication celebrates cultural diversity;
- Communication builds connectedness;
- Communication affirms justice and challenges injustice.

The explanations of the seven principles make clear that Christian communication - in the sense of a holistic understanding of communication (*communicatio*) must be measured not only by its professionalism - whether in proclamation, in journalism or in public relations work - but also by its effect on society and how it assists community-building. It cannot in the sense of Acts 2 and 4 let itself be limited to formats, structures, the administration or the management of communication or acting on behalf of others. Far more, it has to act in solidarity, in order to create space for those whose rights to communication are blocked on account of their social position, their identity or gender.

This translates into practice in the WACC's project work: WACC supports several programs and initiatives that stretch over several years, as well as around 70 one-year projects, which according to the Strategic Plan 2012 to 2016 are to "strengthen the public voice and the participation of the poor, the marginalised, the excluded and dispossessed people and communities in their communication".



Peter Williams/WCC

Christian radio station in Tomohon. North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

This special view of things and way of doing things has led over the past few years to the WACC being increasingly recognised at an international level.

This finds expression for example in:

- new cooperation agreements, for example with the Council for Mission (CWM), or at a secular level with the “Association mondiale des radiodiffuseurs communautaires” (AMARC) ;
- the acceptance of WACC as a full member in the international church network Action by Churches Together (ACT), an alliance for humanitarian work and development aid;
- many invitations from UN organisations to participate as one of the leading NGOs in UN initiatives; for example in two UNESCO initiatives (in the area of Women and Media and also Community Radios), UN Women (Women and Media), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in the area of Small Farmers, Agriculture and Community Radios); the children’s relief organisation of the United Nations, UNICEF (in the field of Communication Rights for Children) and the population fund of the United Nations, UNFPA (in the fields of Peace Journalism and Youth and Social Media); as well as
- working actively in the Globethics Network.

WACC's close links with the EMW over many years go back to Pastor Dr Hans W. Florin, who was called to be General Secretary of the WACC in 1976. Florin had been General Secretary of the Protestant Association for World Mission (EA-GWM) that later became the EMW. From the close cooperation between EMW and WACC several initiatives developed that are still remembered today: for example the Forum at the Frankfurt Book Fair for Christian journalists from the global South with colleagues from Europe and North America, or ecumenical training and professional development initiatives for member churches. These and other initiatives, which mostly ended at the end of the Nineties on account of a structural and financial restructuring of the church mission and development work in Germany, are even today painfully missed by the WACC member churches and organisations.

It is all the more pleasing that the cooperation between EMW and WACC was taken up again in 2014 in the form of a Summer Academy on the subject of religion and communication rights; if possible it should be continued in 2016.

I personally hope that this renewed and re-structured cooperation will be able to be extended. The question how far the community of Christian journalism and media solidarity reaches in the global context becomes more urgent than ever in the face of radical changes in the world of communication and information. I trust that WACC will have EMW as an ally in the future, as it was in the Seventies and Eighties, with whom issues can be discussed anew in view of the World Council of Churches Mission Declaration "Together for Life: Mission and Evangelisation in Changing Landscapes".

Responsible Protestant journalism and media work cannot ignore the global contexts and effects of the information society; it should, that at least is my hope, face up to the global questions of justice. What it also needs is a strategic concept of promoting communication in the partner churches, in the sense of diakonia and the World Council of Churches Mission Declaration, as well as contributions to the issues of media ethics.

Dr (h.c.) Karin Achtelstetter, General Secretary
<http://waccglobal.org/home>

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

The Task Ahead is Enormous

“The Bible For All” – this sums up the mission of the United Bible Societies (UBS). The collaboration between EMW, the German Bible Society and UBS helps tens of thousands people each year to access the Bible and to engage with its message.



United Bible Societies

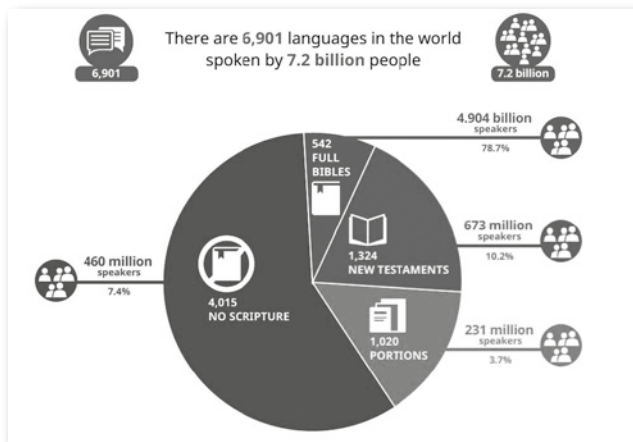
The UBS is a federation of Bible Societies operating in over 200 countries and territories around the world. Our ministry is holistic in the sense that we aim to support churches in every aspect of their Bible based ministry. This includes sponsorship of new translations, quality production and affordable distribution of Scriptures in formats convenient to the users. Bible Societies in the UBS are also involved in advocating for the relevance of the Bible in today’s society, and finding ways to let the Biblical message inspire churches in their holistic ministry to the poor, the disadvantaged and the forgotten. We sponsor among other activities, Bible-based literacy, and ministry to those affected by HIV and domestic violence and those in need of trauma healing. Our involvement in Literacy is the basis for our Consultative Partnership status with UNESCO. And governments in the Nordic countries of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark acknowledge our work with African Churches in HIV prevention with significant financial support.

UBS is a world leader in Bible translation, ensuring that what we translate is of the highest quality and based on the best scholarly versions of the original languages. The Scholarly Editions of the Bible published by the German Bible Society are used worldwide both by Bible translation teams and in numerous theological institutions around the world, often subsidised by grants from EMW and the German Bible Society. We also developed Paratext, the best Bible translation software, which today is the industry standard for Bible translators all over the globe.

Increasingly, Bible Societies include digital media in their publishing strategy and UBS hosts the world’s largest library of digitised Bible translations, called the Digital Bible Library.

The United Bible Societies is perhaps the most ecumenical or inter-confessional organisation in the world. In this regard we feel a close affinity to EMW which is similarly committed to ecumenism. A fundamental principle of our global ministry and the work our member Bible Societies is that we work with Christians of all traditions across the whole Church spectrum – Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical denominations. Often we find that the Bible Society in a given country is the only meeting place for the different church traditions to come together.

The first modern Bible Society began over 200 years ago, and today the UBS family is made up of some 150 Societies. The UBS was founded in 1946 as an umbrella organisation for all Bible Societies, so we will soon celebrate our 70th anniversary. During all these years, working in partnership with other Christian organisation has been a key characteristic of Bible Society work, and with-



out partnership with organisations such as EMW, much of our work would not have been possible. In recent times more than 30 million complete Bibles have been distributed annually, and the number of Bible portions reaches nearly half a billion copies each year.

As we look to the future, we need to accelerate our involvement in Bible translation and complete the task of reaching every tribe and every nation with the Holy Scripture in their heart language. Of the approximately 7,000 languages in the world, less than 3,000 languages have one or more portion of the Bible translated. And of these only 542 languages has a complete Bible. The task ahead is

enormous if we – together with other Bible agencies – are to ensure that the Bible is available to all.

Translations into sign languages is a growing concern for UBS and we have recently increased our involvement in this area. We also maintain a special ministry for the blind and people with other visual disabilities and provide expert advice to Bible Societies and partners. This unit is based at the German Bible Society in Stuttgart and benefits from their long-standing support.

Other opportunities lie in the increased use of digital technology to expand both access and engagement with the Scriptures. Our cooperation with YouVersion and other Bible app developers now means that new channels of communicating the Word are open to over 200 million Bible app users.

We look forward to journeying with EMW in the years to come in order to see more and more people affected by the Holy Scriptures, and wish EMW every blessing for the next 40 years of your ministry.

Michael Perreau, UBS Director General
<https://www.unitedbiblesocieties.org/>



WCC/Annegrit Kapp

At the Bible Society book shop in the church compound in Jebel Ali, Dubai.

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Together on the Journey of Hope

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is a Pan-African Christian organization founded in April 1963. It has 183 member churches representing 120 million Christians in 40 African countries.



AACC's core mission is to help the African people to rebuild their lives, majority of whom have been ravaged by decades of war and conflicts, poverty, corruption and bad governance, displacement, abuse, diseases and also from global economic, social and political exclusion and inter faith relations in contemporary Africa.

The Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW) has supported the AACC in some of its most important missionary and ecumenical work across the African continent. EMW and AACC have forged a powerful partnership in many programs that have changed the lives of the African Christian community by enhancing their peace, justice and dignity as human beings. Such programs include construction of facilities for Christian fellowship as well as capacity building and training of the shepherds involved in theological and ecumenical networks.

EMW, which is celebrating 40 years, has solidly demonstrated its solidarity and partnership with AACC in supporting the AACC. An important example of this was the symposium held in Mombasa in November 1991, which enabled the AACC to shift its strategic focus from liberation to reconstruction of the facilities and networks that are so vital to spreading Christian virtues in Africa. The Symposium was a turning point in the history of AACC, which till then had focused on liberating Africans from colonialism and oppression and now shifted to consolidating African faith and institutions. The current thrust includes sustaining the value of the assets and institutions of AACC and its member churches so that they can productively use them to deliver on the vision and mission of our founders.

With EMW's support, AACC has extensively engaged Christians in Africa through a broad range of programs that have greatly helped communities in



WCC Photo

Opening worship at the All Africa Conference of Churches 10th Assembly in Kampala, Uganda, 2013. The 11th Assembly will be held from 1st to 7th July 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda under the theme "Respecting the Dignity and God's image in every human being"..

vulnerable and fragile environments. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda in which nearly 800,000 people were killed in 100 days is a good example. EMW at that time provided resources that enabled AACC to undertake delicate special missions on peace and reconciliation. AACC also embarked on intensive training of new pastors for its member churches to replace the pastors who were killed in the ethnic conflict. This intervention led to significant accomplishments including bringing the warring communities to live together and forgive each other. By 2001, this new theological training program in Butare had produced many more pastors for the churches in Rwanda than the numbers they had before the genocide. The solidarity of the churches and the people of Germany through EMW made a difference in bringing peace and resettling families in this beautiful "land of a thousand hills" in East Africa.

Training through theological institutions and professional interface programs has strengthened leadership and Christian values across Africa. Since 2009,

AACC has trained over 500 new church leaders in organisational and sustainability leadership. Thanks to EMW's support, these leaders are making a remarkable difference in the management of the churches and their networks. Most of these churches have embarked on the journey of self sustainability by developing their real estates in the wake of dwindling donor support from the west.

AACC has also actively championed the renewal and revival of Christian ministries in fragile and conflict countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. In South Sudan, AACC was the first independent organization to broker a peace agreement between the government and the rebels in 1972. Regular dialogue, which EMW and other donors supported, enabled the peace accord to last for 10 years and avert one of the world's longest and worst humanitarian crises. Even when the situation started deteriorating, AACC remained engaged and became actively involved in the referendum that finally brought independence and peace to the people of South Sudan in July 2011, after two decades of civil war.

Similarly, AACC with EMW's support has remained at the forefront of peace initiatives and humanitarian programs in other countries affected by ethnic, social and political conflicts including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Mozambique, D.R.Congo, Zimbabwe, etc. It was also engaged in bringing peace to Kenya during the 2007/8 post-election conflict. Other interventions are continuing in regions suffering from long term conflicts over natural resources between communities such as in Kenya, especially along its borders with Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

A Platform for Sustainable Change

The success of the peace and reconciliation initiatives demonstrates how AACC and EMW have innovatively engaged the right constituencies and mobilized the necessary resources. In the most difficult of these missions, AACC has deployed eminent persons and peace ambassadors who are sufficiently skilled in negotiations. These are the visionary leaders, including former heads of state and experienced diplomats, who are trusted and capable of winning the trust of the warring parties. This model of constructive dialogue has worked well in most of the African countries that are now enjoying peace, stability and prosperity.

AACC has an Observer status at the African Union and it has used this platform to lobby, influence, engage and mobilize Heads of African States and Governments to work towards ending the suffering of the majority of the African people. The choice of channels of engagement is very important and in difficult situations, quiet diplomacy has proved to be the most effective. Indeed, this is an important character of our intervention since AACC is a non-political organization and remains non-partisan.

Sailing Together to the Promised Land

EMW and other German organisations, like Brot für die Welt and formerly the German Development Service (EED), have immensely contributed to peace and development in Africa through their open and resourceful commitment to AACC's core mission. We salute you, the Christians and the people of Germany as you celebrate your 40th anniversary of missionary, ecumenical and development work. We celebrate with you this historic event and look forward to our long term, sustainable partnership.

EMW has participated, as a partner in programs that have greatly improved the lives of the African people. We have come this far because of your goodwill and our mutual commitment to the dignity of mankind. We will continue to collaborate with you to bring greater peace, justice and dignity for all Africans in the African continent.

Christian virtues are the bedrock of a better understanding and that is why AACC and EMW have joined hands to work together for peace, youth and women's development in Africa. We need to stand firmly together, even in the face of emerging threats including global warming and terrorism.

This article will not be complete without acknowledging the programme officers with whom I have worked and continue to work over the last 10 years: Rev Dr. Lothar Engel, my good friend of blessed memory, Martin Blöcher and Rev. Dr. Owe Boersma.

With God's blessings, we shall build a more integrated and coherent African Christian community and help our people to walk together to the Promised Land.

Dr. Bright Gabriel Mawudor, PhD,
AACC Deputy General Secretary, Finance & Administration
<http://aacc-ceta.org>,

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA

Doing Mission and Witness in Asia

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), based in Chiang Mai is the oldest regional Christian Council and a longstanding partner of EMW. The CCA has 95 member churches and 16 member councils in 17 countries, representing 55 million Christians in Asia. Councils (national councils of churches and national Christian councils) are full members of the Conference along with the churches.



Asia is rich in its history, cultures, pluralism and religious traditions. Asia's multitudes of cultural and spiritual heritages are present in the spirit of her peoples. Christianity has its roots in Asia since the first century onwards, although organised Christian missions by the Roman Catholic missions and the Protestant missions reached most parts of Asia only much later. Today Christianity in Asia is spread across almost all Asian countries. The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) has a constituency starting from Iran in the West to Japan in the East to Nepal in the North to New Zealand in the South. Ever since its founding in 1957 as the first Regional Ecumenical Organisation (REO) in the world, CCA has been engaged in its mission and witness in Asia. The CCA has been in partnership with not only its own member churches and councils, but together with a variety of mission and ecumenical organisations and churches in different parts of the world. Such partnerships mutually helped CCA and its partners in doing mission in unity.

In ecumenical and ecclesiastical parlance, partnership is vital in achieving the objectives and goals. While engaged in mission, mutual recognition, collaboration and commitment are needed in accomplishing the common goal with each one's distinct contributions. Partnership has been defined or understood differently in terms of contexts or involvement. Cooperation between different parties to pursue a set of agreed goals is the core value of any partnership. Partnership affirms a mutual commitment to accomplishing a common goal with each party's distinct contributions. In an increasing globalized world, it is hard to imagine any sector ranging from business firms, or companies, to political parties or economic and trade blocks of nation states operate within the agreed framework

of partnership. Partnership in mission and witness has been amply evident in Christian mission and ecumenical endeavours even before the secular world started emphasising the need and efficiency of partnership. In church and ecumenical arena partnership has been understood as an instrument of working together in complementary relationship for a common purpose. While agreeing to this principle, it also demonstrates a commitment and willingness to learn and grow together while being engaged in a common mission and obedience to God.

For any Christian organisation dealing with its partner's theological emphasis for partnership is a cardinal principle. There are clear indicators evident in the Biblical narratives to illustrate such theological affirmations of partnership. Apostle Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe the unity in Christ as a prime principle of partnership (1 Corinthians 12:12). When Paul refers to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are given to the church, he affirms the concept of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way, and that is for the good of all in a spirit of mutuality and complementarity (1 Cor: 12: 7-11). This makes us understand partnership from a perspective that all of us are participants in God's mission. This also affirms that Christian missions have an imperative to develop and build partnerships. The fact remains that without such partnership the future of missions may not be effective or progressed. The CCA believes that EMW takes seriously these core values of partnership in their dealings and partnership with all its partners in different parts of the world.

EMW's accompaniment with CCA in shaping ecumenism in Asia

The CCA has been privileged to work with the EMW in our common witness and mission in Asia for four decades. When EMW was officially formed, and the then leaders of the new organisation decided to maintain ecumenical relations beyond the borders of the German protestant churches; the Christian Conference of Asia also became a partner of EMW in Asia. It was, in fact, an appropriate decision for EMW leadership to be in partnership with the CCA, which is considered and recognised as the coordinator and facilitator ensuring the coherence of the Asian ecumenical movement. In earlier times, EMW's partnership with CCA was mainly in the areas of mission and evangelism desks as well as CCA's theological commission until the Tomohon Assembly in 2000. In the post Tomohon assembly programme structure EMW supported several activities of CCA in its program Units Faith, Mission and Unity. In the new programme structure introduced after the post Jakarta assembly period, EMW agreed to support some

of the programmes and activities of programme clusters such as Mission in Unity and Contextual Theology” and “Ecumenical Leadership Formation and Spirituality”. It is with great appreciation and profound thanks that ecumenical organisations such as CCA and other regional and global ecumenical bodies value their partnership with EMW. As the ecumenical development agencies in the West face started facing stringent measures in allocating resources to their partners, EMW has been finding ways to be more flexible and lenient to the concerns of the ecumenical and church related partners.

If we look at the core values of the principles of partnership envisaged by EMW and its leadership, it is clearly evident in its regional approaches and ecumenical commitments. I have had the privilege and opportunities to relate with EMW during the past thirty years since my work as a former programme executive of CCA in early 1990s, subsequently in my capacities as the Asia Secretary and Director for International Affairs of the World Council of Churches and in most recent years as the General Secretary of CCA. In my observations and experiences, various staff members of EMW who dealt with Asian churches have always carefully followed the principles to nurture partnership in coherent and cordial ways, especially in understanding particular sensitivities.

It is heartening that EMW’s policies on partnership have been built up on the Christian values and principles. As an organisation initiated by the Protestant mission organisations and churches in Germany, we believe that the EMW primarily values its missiological and theological convictions in dealing with partners and finding new dimensions of involvement in mission and witness in different parts of the world. The CCA has been highly appreciative of its close links and partnership with EMW. The CCA always observed the cultural sensitivity and ecumenical collegiality observed in dealings and the personal warmth demonstrated by various staff members of EMW who have been dealing with CCA at different times. The CCA, being the first and the oldest regional Christian Council in the world, has a vast constituency of membership through its 101 member churches and 17 National Councils of Churches (NCCs) in 22 countries, as well as having partnership with non-member churches and ecumenical bodies in several other countries in Asia. When EMW relates with CCA, it accompanies CCA in its efforts of shaping the Asian ecumenical movement in its vast constituencies with a membership of more than 65 million Christians.

The CCA originally known as EACC (East Asia Christian Conference) was constituted by the decision of churches, national councils of churches and Christian

councils, whose representatives met at Parapat, Indonesia, in 1957. The purpose of the statement adopted states that “the CCA exists as an organ and a forum of continuing cooperation among the churches and national Christian bodies in Asia, within the framework of the wider ecumenical movement, believing that the purpose of God for the church in Asia is life together in a common obedience of witness to the mission of God in the world. In order to be a member of the CCA, churches must ‘confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit’”. National councils or similar bodies joining the CCA must also approve this basis. The CCA strives for the unity of the church in Asia, joint action in mission, Asian contribution to Christian thought and worship, sharing and fellowship among the churches in Asia and beyond, effective Christian response to the challenges of the changing societies of Asia, relationships with people of other faiths in Asia, human dignity and care for the creation. Among the current priorities of the CCA are the strengthening of the koinonia of Asian churches and Christian communities, the healing of divisions in the churches and society, ecumenical formation, the expansion of the ecumenical fellowship in Asia to involve Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, and revitalizing the ecumenical vision, thought and action in regard to the emerging challenges in Asia and Asia’s place in the world.

CCA @60: Ecumenical Journey Continues

The year 2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of CCA. The journey that began six decades ago has been continuing with God’s abundant blessings. As we move forward, we continue to face the enormous challenges and imperatives that emerge from the fast-changing global and Asian realities. In order to address the emerging concerns during the journey, CCA has been envisioning its program thrusts with contextual relevancy. The strategic program plans adopted for a five-year period (2016-2020) identified a number of relevant emerging issues and themes. Within the framework of the new program structure introduced in the post Jakarta assembly period, several issues and themes pertinent in Asian contexts were identified and prioritized. The proposed strategic priorities have been identified and developed for programmatic involvement in the first five years with a thematic focus on ‘CCA: Shaping a New Paradigm for Living Together in God’s Oikos’. While this thematic focus will be the overall framework and emphasis of CCA’s next five years of programs, the strategic program plan specially focuses for the year 2017, sharpened further in the context of two significant milestones of CCA’s life and witness - the Diamond Jubilee of

CCA and the proposed Asia Mission Conference (AMC). Both these events are scheduled to take place in 2017 and will be milestones in the Asian ecumenical history. The theme of the Asia Mission Conference is 'Journeying Together: Prophetic Witnessing to the Truth and Light, in Asia'. Recalling the significance of CCA's journey during the past six decades is also reflected in this theme; at the same time it is an indicator and a reminder to underscore the significance of the mission and witness of the Church in Asia. So, the theme chosen for the mission conference is helpful to interweave the significance of both historic milestones of CCA and recapture the powerful message of the journey and prophetic witness. The proposed plans and activities for the year 2017, by and large, fall within the context and framework of this theme. This theme and its practical applications through programs and activities are knitted.

The metamorphosis and its journey over the past six decades proves that CCA is a matured regional ecumenical organization with integrity and historic contributions; the prophetic witness of CCA has been evident at many stages of its journey. Out of these 60 years of CCA's journey, EMW accompanied and journeyed with CCA during the past 40 years. The Asian churches and the ecumenical movement in Asia are really indebted to EMW for its ecumenical commitment and solidarity with CCA. As we enter into a new phase of its life and witness, CCA continues to be committed to perform its prophetic role and respond to God's call with greater obedience and trust in God's unfailing promise. As CCA moves forward with its commitment, it is our firm responsibility that we must keep the ecumenical movement on track and always remain firmly rooted in our belief that this movement belongs to God and that we are all called to live together in the household of God. In order to reach this goal, ecumenism must be shaped to address emerging challenges in Asian societies and we thus need to equip CCA members to envision a more inclusive and comprehensive ecumenical fellowship in Asia which should be rooted, grown and flourished from grass-root level itself. Ecumenism in Asia can be strengthened in implementing contextually significant programmes as well as new initiatives with relevant theological undergirding.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara

General Secretary, Christian Conference of Asia
<http://cca.org.hk>

MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

“A Lighthouse in the Dark Side of our Hearts”



The Middle East Council of Churches

The Middle East Council of Churches

is an ecumenical organization, bringing together churches in the East for common Christian witness in the region where Christ was born, lived, died and was resurrected. The MECC represents the four families of Christianity present in the region: the Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical/Protestant.

For the past 40 years the EMW has been deepening the Divine Revelation and the Word of God; theologians who research and decipher it into today’s language, pastors who seek in it appropriate solutions for our challenging life and problems. For this reason, I express my deepest gratitude to EMW for being a lighthouse in the dark side of our hearts. It is also a joy to greet with cordial respect to EMW for its support to MECC to remain a regional platform for Christians in the Middle East. Together we have discussed and tackled the sociopolitical threats for the Christian presence in the Arab world and cooperated ecumenically in the biblical context.

MECC’s experiences in the relationship with EMW have been extremely fruitful and insightful, as EMW’s accompaniment for MECC in recent years has been that of providing expertise in matters of organizational restructuring, financial management and directed towards development, relief assistance and advocacy activities for Middle Eastern Christian communities and refugees at large. The cooperation between EMW and MECC has shown how God is at work. Hence, it should continue to grow stronger, more solid and energetically following the mind of the Church, constantly renewing vigor and sharing the abundant wealth of the divine word. We must be constantly renewed and rejuvenated through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, which always guides us to the Truth.

May we together keep the Word of the Lord to reach all people so their hearts are filled and strengthened with hope, and through hope it may come to love each other so “truth shall shoot up from earth, and justice show itself from the heavens” (Ps 85: 12).

Fr. Dr. Michel Jalakh, MECC Secretary General
<http://mecc.org>

CONSEJO LATINOAMERICANO DE IGLESIAS

Para la unidad del pueblo de Dios en América Latina

El CLAI es el organismo formado por sus iglesias miembros para promover la unidad del pueblo de Dios en América Latina como expresión y como signo de contribución de la unidad del pueblo latinoamericano. Esa unidad que el CLAI propugna se fundamenta en la unidad que ya tenemos en Cristo. Al CLAI lo componen más de ciento cincuenta iglesias y organismos ecumenicos en veinte países. ¿Cual es la razón teológica que nos reúne? Es la común pertenencia a la fe trinitaria para juntos cumplir con la vocación y misión para Gloria de Dios Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo.



El CLAI es un organismo de consulta y coordinación de todo asunto que esta determinado en sus objetivos, como tal no tiene autoridad sobre sus miembros para determinar cuestiones de doctrina, gobierno, práctica o culto. La diversidad de nuestros pueblos latinoamericanos y del Caribe hace que nuestros programas reflejen esa diversidad: la necesidad de fortalecer los procesos de democratización, apoyar a las mujeres en su lucha por la igualdad y equidad de género, apoyar y fortalecer a las poblaciones indígenas y afrodescendientes en defensa de sus derechos, su tierra, su idioma y cultura sean respetadas, apoyar e impulsar estrategias formativas para prevenir el VIH-SIDA, acompañar a las poblaciones vulnerables que por motivos de violencia y/o pobreza deben migrar para salvar su vida o en busca de mejores condiciones de vida para sus familias; la juventud y niñez representan uno de los mayores desafíos del CLAI con una enorme población menor de veinte años, articularse con organismos ecuménicos, sociales, iglesias para crear una cultura de paz y un trabajo sostenido en defensa de una justicia ambiental, la salud reproductiva y derechos sexuales poniendo énfasis en evitar los embarazos en adolescentes son elementos importantes de nuestra misión. Nuestro trabajo es descentralizado con oficinas en cinco regiones geográficas.

EMW fue siempre muy respetuoso con la institucionalidad del CLAI. Como Asociación Misionera entendieron que un organismo necesita recursos para su funcionamiento. Las relaciones de cooperación se han dado en términos de misión, esto es, la cooperación fue siempre institucional, nunca atado a proyectos específicos. Dada esa comprensión, el CLAI utiliza los recursos con la mayor responsabilidad sintiéndonos compañeros en la Misión de Dios.

En los primeros años de la década de los ochentas, tanto EMW como CLAI eran organismos jóvenes y juntos fuimos construyendo el camino de cooperación. Los primeros contactos se realizaron con el pastor Norbert Klein a quien recordamos con mucho afecto. Luego fue con el pastor Ekkehard Zipzer quién no solo siguió el proceso iniciado años atrás, sino que en base a la experiencia anterior seguimos colaborando en una relación estrecha de mucha confianza y fraternidad y en la última década con el pastor Christoph Anders que fue edificando sobre la base de sus antecesores con la misma mística institucional de fraternidad y compañerismo. Esta mención a los diferentes secretarios con los que hemos trabajado nos ha mostrado la identidad institucional de EMW: las personas en función de la institución. Nuestras instituciones en América Latina son más frágiles.

El CLAI considera a EMW no como una agencia donante sino como una institución que desarrolló un nuevo sentido de misión. Ese nuevo sentido se refleja en la dinámica de respeto a las contrapartes acompañándolas con afecto y consideración sin faltar a la rendición de cuentas en forma responsable.

Abstract

The Latin American Council of Churches, CLAI, was founded in 1982. The EMW has supported CLAI since the very beginning. CLAI serves to promote the unity of God's people in Latin America and the unity of the Latin American population as a whole. More than 150 member churches and ecumenical institutions from 20 different Latin American countries and the Caribbean are members of CLAI.

CLAI creates a space for advocacy and coordination for its members. The diversity of the Latin American continent together with the Caribbean area has given birth to the many different programmes of CLAI. Among the many aims CLAI is working for are human rights, equal rights and conditions for women and other disadvantaged social groups, democratization processes, and advocacy against violence. CLAI is working to create a culture of peace.

In the 1980s both the EMW and CLAI were young organizations initiating a new cooperation. The first contacts with the EMW were through Rev. Norbert Klein, followed by Rev. Ekkehard Zipser and during the last decade Rev. Christoph Anders. The EMW is an organization which accompanies the institutions with respect and a new understanding of mission.

For more information visit our website: www.claiweb.org



Held under the theme "Affirming an ecumenism of concrete gestures" the general assembly of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) gathered 2013 in Havana/Cuba 136 delegates and over 400 participants.

Como contrapartes de alrededor de tres décadas recomendaría que EMW resista para mantenerse como un Missionswerk ligada a las Iglesias y al movimiento ecuménico en América Latina. De hecho, desearíamos que las relaciones institucionales no fueran solo Norte-Sur. Me resta felicitar a la EKD por la visión de sus fundadores y fundadoras de conformar un organismo que tenga como finalidad la misión con una visión liberadora tanto en teología como en la eclesiología.

Que el Dios de paz los acompañe y los bendiga.

Felipe Adolf, Presidente Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias, CLAI
<http://www.claiweb.org/>

PACIFIC CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Ecumenical Renewal in the Pacific

The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) is the main ecumenical body in the Pacific region and a longstanding partner of EMW. The PCC came into being in 1961 and celebrated its 50th jubilee in 2011 in Samoa. It has 28 member churches and nine member councils of churches in 18 island states and territories. The offices are in Suva, Fiji.



Since the 10th General Assembly in Honiara/Solomon Islands in 2013 the work of the PCC has focused on the theme of Ecumenical Renewal. The PCC has seven program areas: Ecumenism; Stewardship; Self-determination; Women; Youth; Monitoring and Evaluation; Management, Organization and Communications. Their constituency, particularly the leaders of the Pacific churches, has been called in various ways on reviewing the life of the regional ecumenical family and reflecting on its relevance to the lives of the Pacific peoples. Initiatives on ecumenical formation that focus on Ecumenical Renewal have been piloted with church communities.

The Ecumenical Renewal project will be implemented with the churches, national councils of churches, and regional ecumenical organizations within the Pacific region in 19 Pacific Island countries and/or territories. The project also involves engagement with communities and entities not directly falling within the PCC constituency such as organizations of civil society, national governments, and regional intergovernmental organizations. The people of the Pacific Islands share cultural and spiritual values and morals that serve to guide governance practices as well as strengthen social cohesion and community sustainability. However, this resilience is being challenged by the economic order of today's globalized world and its negative impact on development, the environment, social cohesion and sustainability of communities, security, governance, and even on spirituality. The Ecumenical Renewal project has two major objectives:

- Vision: Rethinking and renewal of the Household of God in the Pacific - Pacific "Oikos" - that is defined by ecumenical unity witness and solidarity, on justice and peace and grounded in the vision and values of God's kingdom.

- **Mission:** Lead and coordinate a spirit of ecumenical renewal in the Pacific by facilitating cooperation among member churches to implement programming, education, and research that bears witness to church unity and prophetic witness and voice on issues of morality, justice, and peace.

As a result of these objectives a stronger regional ecumenical movement will be created that will demonstrate a renewed commitment to visible unity of the Pacific churches on ecumenical cooperation in mission work and collaboration in prophetic witness on social justice issues. The Ecumenical Renewal project also will create a network of regional churches and strategic partners that are promoting a renewed vision for practices of hope for Pacific peoples based on the precepts of ‘Rethinking the Household of God in the Pacific,’ which will focus on issues of gender justice, youth empowerment, climate-induced relocation, governance, and self-determination.

EMW is supporting the ecumenical program of the PCC for many years in various ways. The title of the last project in 2016 was “The Changing Tides in Oceania –Pacific hermeneutics, theological education and interfaith relations in



The churches in the Pacific face new challenges: Sea bed mining threatens God’s creation and the livelihoods of people. In April 2017 a consultation of churches and NGOs issued a call to ban deep sea mining.

ecumenical renewal". The project speaks to the shifting religious circumstances and realities in the Pacific and the need to reframe the hermeneutical discourse that is shaping the development, politics, education and theologies that underpins the shifting trends and current realities in the Pacific. The increasing level of interconnectedness of the Pacific islands, not only through trade and technology but also through associated issues of social development and poverty, violence against women and children, impacts of climate change, and uncertainties in political systems, gives rise to certainties in religious convictions.

Religious bodies such as the Mormons and the Pentecostal churches are growing faster in the region both in terms of numbers and political influence. At the same time, traditional religion and spirituality is gaining social "validity" among people as a compelling option to Christianity. Yet in both, the threat of religious extremism is always a present reality. The point is that the people's search for certainty will inevitably direct them to systems of belief that will provide easy answers to their questions whether these are in the form of fundamentalist Christian beliefs or in traditional belief systems and spiritualities. However, the questions for the PCC member churches are equally pertinent and these are in relation to the content of their theological education and their understanding of interfaith dynamics that includes not only other world religions but also traditional spiritualities and belief systems. There are also questions relating to the hermeneutical rationale that grounds how development, politics, gender, human rights and education are read and mainstreamed into theological constructions and teachings. In addition to these key areas, and as the core of this initial phase of the ecumenical renewal process, are questions relating to ecumenical collaboration and solidarity, resource sharing and financing ecumenical institutions, and questions on dialogue on ministry, baptism and Eucharist.

As part of the project, the PCC together with EMW hosted in Papua New Guinea the conference "Rethinking theological education and interfaith relations in ecumenical renewal". The conference gathered the churches leaders and relevant figures from the churches in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and West Papua to a four days consultation to discuss the religious experiences, contexts and issues in the recent past relating to extremism and conflicts in these three countries, in many respects, are more pertinent and urgent than other Pacific Islands countries.

Rev. Francois Pihatae, PCC
in cooperation with Martin Krieg
<http://www.pcc.org.fj/>

ORGANSATION OF AFRICAN INSTITUTED CHURCHES

OAIC and EMW: Partnership in Theological Education

At the formation of the OAIC in 1978, the founding leaders identified theological education as one of the most important issues the African Independent Churches (AICs) had to address. Theological education among AICs was largely based on apprenticeship and mentorship within the churches. The OAIC consulted the WCC with an aim of starting a seminary for training AICs. The advice from the WCC was that using the TEE methodology (Theological Education by Extension) would be more beneficial to the AICs at that time. Thus, the OAIC-TEE programme was started in 1982. EMW was among the partners who from the beginning committed to support the OAIC in this new venture which was to transform the AICs engagement with theological education.



One has to remember that at that time AICs were very suspicious of formal theological education, offered by seminaries established by main line churches. In the founding phase of the programme, students were brought to Nairobi and were taken through a training process that enabled them to acquire skills in facilitating TEE classes themselves. This programme impacted countries in East Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa and West Africa.

The mid-1990s was a period of reflection and revision of the work that the OAIC was doing. The earlier TEE programme had succeeded in engaging AIC leaders in bible studies and development of training materials based on their values of the various churches which participated in the training. The OAIC recognised the fact that the church leaders were looking for an enriched training that would contribute towards ministerial formation. An evaluation was carried out and a pastoral training curriculum was developed. This moved the OAIC training programme from group trainings in churches to training pastors. Again, the EMW

was a major partner in the provision of the resources for the evaluation, development of the curriculum and the implementation that has been taking place.

In 2005 the OAIC started to focus on the place and role of AIC theology in theological education. This was inspired by the need for clarifying the identity of AICs in theological education and a growing demand for higher education among the emerging young AIC-leaders. EMW once again formed part of this journey that started in 2005, and led to the publication of the document “Facilitating AICs to articulate their theologies in the global context”, written by OAIC’s programme staff and a consultant. This led to a consultation on the founding vision, “pursuing the vision: articulating AIC beliefs and values in the 21st century” which culminated to the production of “From founding vision to contemporary mission: A handbook on developing African Independent Church theologies for today” in 2009.

The OAIC is currently involved in a process of developing a Master Plan for Theological Education among AICs. The major outcomes of this process will be:

- A framework for curriculum development
- A strategy for resourcing for theological education
- Production of training materials
- Support for quality assurance in theological education

The master plan focuses on following levels of theological education with emphasis on the raison d’etre of AICs: Certificate, Diploma and Bachelors.

EMW has been once more a key partner in this process. It is around the development of the Master plan that the OAIC has had comprehensive discussions with the EMW staff who have been visiting Nairobi. The discussions have been of great value to us. The OAIC will continue to work with partners as this process moves forward. EMW’s experience in theological education around the world is a benefit to the OAIC. The partnership also provides an opportunity for the EMW to learn from the OAIC and consequently share the OAIC experiences in the depth of your work around the world.

One other area where the EMW has played a role in the life of the OAIC is the contribution which was made by the EMW together with other partners to purchase the property which hosts the OAIC headquarters. This property which was purchased in the year 1986 has contributed towards the OAIC and her sustainability in terms of office space and income from rent of the extra of-



Members of the Holy Spirit Church of East Africa worship in the local school in the village Ebul-Bul on the outskirts of Nairobi.

office rooms. The OAIC is planning to rebuild the property as a way to expand the resource base of the organisation for sustainability into the future.

EMW has partnered with OAIC at the secretariat all along and as AICs continue to grow in the continent and develop theological institutions in various regions we humbly recommend partnering with regions with advice from the secretariat.

We congratulate the EMW for the work it has done in the last 40 years. May the Spirit of God guide you as you reflect on the next period of EMW-involvement in theological education for the coming years.

Rev. Nicta Lubaale, General Secretary OAIC
<http://www.oaic.org/>

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION COLLEGE

“Ministry belongs to all the People of God”

TEE College (Theological Education by Extension College, NPC) in Johannesburg, South Africa, as a registered and accredited higher education provider, exists to provide Theological Education in the Higher Education space with a focus on access and extending Theological Education to those not able to access Higher Education due to disparity and disadvantage. Established in 1976, nearly 40 years ago, by the mainline churches, TEE College was an ecumenical theological education initiative in response to the disparity of apartheid.



The ethos of Theological Education by Extension is to enable ministry that is closely connected to the roots of the people, with the philosophy that ministry belongs to all the people of God and not just an elite few. It is a field-based approach which does not interrupt the students productive relationship to society, it opens up theological education to all of God’s people and opens theological education itself to the life experience and gifts of all of God’s people. The aim of TEE is to ‘take the seminary to the student’ thereby training the church’s leaders who are already in place, and training them where they are rather than extracting them from their local context.

The result is training which is embraced by the churches, where theology takes place in real-life situations and is contextualised, where learning and practice inform each other immediately and personal and spiritual growth occur, where the financial costs are considerably lower than that of traditional training, resulting in a greater retention of pastoral workers rooted and remaining in their local contexts.

EMW has provided financial contributions towards the development and maintenance of student support services, training makers and tutors in the local

context to assist students where they are. These projects have enabled disadvantaged people at grassroots level to study theology and make a transformative impact in their local church and community. This has specifically assisted the many women who are the backbone of the church in their local communities.

There has been a long relationship between TEE College and the EMW. The relationship has been one of partnership and solidarity. It has been so encouraging to have partners who understand the local situation and context and who have worked to bring about transformation in South Africa through the mission and vision of TEE College. We have also valued the opportunity of sharing our experiences and insights with the EMW staff and at conferences arranged by EMW.

We hope for a continued and long lasting relationship with the EMW. The financial contributions are important to our work and for the transformation of South Africa, but the solidarity and accompaniment and the ability to share theological reflection as we do this work is also very encouraging.

Our recommendation for the EMW in future

Keep doing what you are doing – you are making a difference in the world for the Kingdom! My only suggestion would be to perhaps arrange for partners doing similar work to meet up and network with each other for mutual benefit.

Megan Baxter, Director (CEO)
www.tee.co.za

TRINITY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Promoting and Developing Mother Tongue Theology

John David Kwamena Ekem is serving as the Vice-President and is responsible for Academic Affairs at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Accra, Ghana. He is also the Director of the Seminary's Centre for Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics and holds the Kwesi Dickson-Gilbert Ansre chair of Biblical Exegesis and Mother Tongue Hermeneutics.



Trinity Theological Seminary is an ecumenical institution that offers theological training to pastors and lay people from our mainline Ghanaian Protestant Churches as well as those from the 'African Independent', 'Pentecostal' and 'Charismatic' traditions. Established in 1942, it is the only chartered Theological Seminary in Ghana authorized to run programmes and award degrees up to the Doctor of Philosophy (Theology) level. It also serves a number of countries in the West African sub-region.

It was while serving as a Teaching Assistant in New Testament Studies and Early Church History at the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon, that I was introduced to the Missionsakademie, Hamburg, where I could pursue further theological studies through the University of Hamburg with a scholarship offered by EMW. I commenced my Doctor of Theology program at the University of Hamburg in the Winter Semester of 1989 after taking a German Language course at the Ökumenisches Studienwerk, Bochum. I also benefitted immensely from programs at the Missionsakademie that were coordinated by distinguished scholars such as Dr. Erhard Kamphausen, Dr. Karl Rennstich, Frau Barbara Maubach, and Dr. Dietrich Werner, among others.

These programs facilitated fruitful dialogue between Theologies of the Western and non-Western worlds and they broadened my horizon. Interaction with colleagues and EMW fraternal workers from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America was also very enriching. As a registered student at the University of

Hamburg, I had the rare privilege of sitting at the feet of renowned scholars like Professor Dr. Theodor Ahrens († 2015), Professor Dr. Henning Paulsen (who sadly passed away in 1994 when I had just completed my doctoral studies), Professor Dr. Klaus Koch, and Professor Dr. Otto Hermann Pesch. I completed the doctoral program in June 1994, having specialized in New Testament Studies, Missions and Ecumenical Theology.

Back in Ghana, my original intention to teach Biblical Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, and Trinity Theological Seminary had to be put on hold because I had been seconded to The Bible Society of Ghana as Translation Consultant responsible for the quality checking and completion of the Society's Bible translation projects in a number of Ghanaian languages. This new assignment enabled me to transfer knowledge acquired through theological studies in Germany to people at the grassroots. The EMW can, in this regard, be described as the organization which contributed significantly to this vital transfer process through its provision of a scholarship to study in Germany. By the time I moved on to Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Accra, in January 2007 to serve as full-time faculty member, I had assisted the Bible Society of Ghana to complete several Translation Projects.

It is my sincere hope that EMW will continue partnering with us to promote and develop Mother Tongue Theology and especially, sound biblical interpretation for people at the grassroots who are vulnerable to unwholesome theologies being paraded by some so-called 'pastors' of mushrooming churches and representatives of the so-called 'prosperity gospel'. This can best be accomplished in the mother tongues of our people. The Centre for Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Accra, Ghana, could be considered by EMW as a major Resource Centre that would serve countries within our West African sub-region where similar challenges are being encountered. The Centre has benefitted from grants provided by EMW since 2011 and we look forward to many more years of fruitful collaboration.

I wish to congratulate EMW on its 40 years of productive existence and holistic engagement with partners from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Oceania, including our Seminary in Ghana. This is indeed an important milestone and I pray that EMW will rise to greater heights in the next 40 years.

Very Rev. Prof. Dr. theol. **John David Kwamena Ekem**
<http://new.trinity.edu.gh>

PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Resurrected from Ashes

PIASS is an organization of Higher Education belonging to six Protestant Churches of Rwanda (Presbyterian, Anglican, two Baptist Churches, Methodists and Pentecostal), mirroring the Protestant rainbow. It is proof and witness of solidarity and the ecumenical spirit within Rwandan Protestantism, says the institute's leadership.



PIASS at the moment (2015) comprises three Faculties: Theology, Education, and Development Studies, providing so far Honors' Bachelor degrees. It intends to move to a full fledge University once a fourth Faculty will be opened. It counts more than one thousand students following mainly evening and week end classes and resides on two campuses: Butare/Huye (Southern Province) and Rubengera/Karongi (Western Province).

Financially, PIASS is able to cover on its own strength 85% of its budget through tuition fees, consultancy services, room renting, and membership fees. Even though PIASS is fully accredited by the Government of Rwanda, it does not receive even a small contribution from the state.

Project Cooperation with EMW

Since the 1980ies, EMW is supporting the Faculty of Theology by funding part of the overall PIASS running expenses (core budget). In other words, EMW was willing to invest in brain and management, and thus facilitate theological high level education and service to its constituency in Rwanda. It is not an exaggeration, when we say, that it was the unyielding support of EMW, which made possible the resurrection from ashes of the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Butare after the events of 1994.

The Faculty of Theology now particularly trains future pastors who are able to:

- interpret the Bible accurately in different and changing contexts and account for it

- take stock of Churches' traditions diversity and build up unity out of such a diversity
- meet the present needs of Churches and the society in a pluralistic and changing world
- contribute to the holistic development of the society, taking into account its physical, economical, social, spiritual and ethical dimensions, in an innovative way
- effectively serve in different areas as Church ministers, social workers, chaplains and religious instructors
- actively contribute to the process of reconciliation and sustainable peace building in Rwanda and in the Great Lake Region.

PIASS does emphasize a close cooperation between the Faculties. That is displayed through an annual scientific week but also when it comes to designing new programs. For example the newly-designed Master's programs in Theology will integrate developmental, socio-economical and ecological issues as well. A strong inbuilt ethical component is part of the running programs in Education and Development studies. There is also a full module of a Master's program in Psycho-traumatology planned.

PIASS and its Journey with EMW

The most visible and essential feature of our journey together is trust and long-term predictability. We can continue to count on EMW support even if we understand that it is bound to decrease over time. At present, financial support spans over phases of three years, which helps managing in a medium term perspective. The second feature, less visible, is the low level of paternalism. EMW is among the few «donors» that can share our strategic plan and trust us, with a minimum of administrative bureaucracy, disagreeable remarks or prejudices that management in the South can never match the professionalism as in the North. The third characteristic of our journey is its «lean bureaucracy», the effort to reduce complexity and bureaucracy in application, monitoring and evaluation.

Meetings in Hamburg are usually featured by solid experience-sharing, relevant questions, simple processes and rapid decision making. A lot of trust and empathy is encountered during those encounters. Even when in the past a misunderstanding about support to a short term project came up, it could be settled rapidly, and without a lot of fuss, minimizing the level of frustration soon.

Desiderata for PIASS-EMW cooperation

The PIASS management team wishes to even increase the level of communication, especially taking a view to regular field visits. The first and last EMW-visit goes back to 2008 already!

Based on experience, financial support from partners can be reduced or stopped at any time. The EMW could help the Faculty of Theology of PIASS to develop mechanisms which could help it continue its activities when external financial support could be reduced or stopped

Recommendations or suggestions for EMW

We propose to improve the exchange of experiences over the continents and between North and South on a reciprocal basis. For instance, when we are asked to increase the number of women in jobs with high responsibility, we would like to know what experiences and achievements have been made in Germany? When the recruitment for solid pastors' education seems suffering because of the low level of pastors' salaries in Rwanda, we would be interested to learn from experiences made elsewhere in Africa, in Asia, or Latin America. Such comparisons could help. The same could be said of mobilizing supports from well off Church members without competing with and encroaching on Churches' interests.

Our second recommendation is that we encourage EMW to go on being a learning organization, the third one is to maintain a lean and flexible structure, able to thwart the current trend towards more bureaucracy as well as to adapt to surprises and events.

Prof Benoit Girardin and **Prof Viateur Ndikumana**,
respectively PIASS Rector and Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs
<http://www.piass.ac.rw/>

CENTER FOR TRAINING AND DOCUMENTATION

Reconciliation and Unity for Rwanda

The Center for Training and Documentation (CFD) was founded by the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda. It cooperates with Protestant Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Association of Muslims in Rwanda (AMUR).



The mission of CFD is to reinforce the abilities of different leaders of religious denominations so that they can become catalysts and promoters for a comprehensive and sustainable development. The structure of CFD is made up of two decision making councils: The Synod Council of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, its founder, and the Administration Council of CFD itself. The work is divided into six Departments: (1) Coordination, (2) Finance, (3) The Theological Training Program and the Fight Against HIV/AIDS Program, (4) The Program of in-service Training for Pastors, (5) The Program for Christian-Muslim Relations, (6) Research and Documentation.

CFD works in the offices of the Presbyterian Church In Rwanda. Additionally, it has a multi-purpose conference hall at its disposal intended for conferences, trainings and weddings. The bulk of support for this multi-purpose hall was provided by EMW.

CFD started its work in 1996 under the name “The Ecumenical Center for Research and Theological Popularization” (Centre œcuménique de recherche et de vulgarisation théologique. CORVT). The objective of this center was, on one hand, to contribute to the reconstruction of the vitality of religious denominations after the 1994 Genocide tragedy, and, on the other hand, to serve as a cornerstone to the unity and reconciliation process for the people of Rwanda.

To achieve this objective, The Ecumenical Center for Research and Theological Popularization (CORVT) created three distinct programs, namely:

- The Theological Training Program, whose participants are pastors, evangelists and lay preachers without formal bible training.

- The Program for Christian-Muslim Relations, whose main mission is to help established religious denominations in Rwanda to break denominational barriers. This program also aims at promoting peaceful coexistence and bringing about the holistic development of Rwandan people. This program has achieved the above-mentioned objectives by organizing training workshops and conferences as well as publishing booklets of information.
- The Research and Documentation Program, which carries out research on theological and pastoral challenges. This program publishes its results in order to serve as a valuable source of information to others.

Since 2001, decision-making councils have looked favorably upon limiting COVRT's scope of work to training and documentation. The work of theological popularization was reserved for the Protestant Faculty in Butare, which was reconstructed and resumed its activities. Thus, the previous name of COVRT was changed to its new and current name of CFD (Centre de Formation et de Documentation).

From that time, the Center for Training and Documentation has adapted its activities so as to meet the challenges that churches and the country are facing. With this objective in mind, the Theological Training Program was created along with The Fight against HIV/AIDS Program, in 2001. In 2004 the in-service training of pastors began with two objectives. The first was to help the ecclesiastical staff from Protestant churches in Rwanda to reconcile the theories learnt with the pastoral practice on the ground. The second was to help them be efficient in their work.

At the moment, the aforesaid programs are still operational and play a big role in reinforcing skills and in collaborating between different religious denominations in Rwanda.

In the centre of our cooperation with EMW stands its support of our Theological Education by Extension (TEE) programme. The programme shows an increasing number of graduates, pastors as well as lay preachers and leaders. An important milestone in our cooperation was the construction of the multi-purpose conference and training hall, which is used for central programme units of CFD, and used as well for the purpose of income generation.

The Africa Secretary of EMW was in the position to visit our programme in

Spring 2009, and was impressed by the high level of commitment of trainers and trainees, the good cooperation with government offices, and the combination of development and theology. It was impressive to see how organically theological courses could also include very practical development issues such as hygiene, prevention of HIV-Aids, community building, and combining all this with reading and discussing scripture on a solid curriculum in the local language. The distribution and logistics are very well organized indeed, and often used in the All African TEE Association to give guidance to upcoming TEE-Programmes in other countries. Now, after now 20 years, CFD still fullfills an important training methodology into the churches´ leadership level.

The CFD wishes to express its desire to continue the good and fruitful relationship with EMW. The exchange of information, mutual visits, joint prayer and an ongoing financial support of this wonderful TEE-programm, aimed to build up society and the churches in Rwanda.

<http://cfd.epr.rw/index.php/en/>

WCC/Mathews George



Rev. Yusuf Ibrahim Wushishi, General Secretary of Christian Council of Nigeria, addresses the consultation on “Peace and Security in Africa: Ecumenical Response”, organized by the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). It took place from 28 January to 1 February 2012i n Kigali, Rwanda. From left to right: Dr Agnes Abuom, Rev. Suzanne Matale, Rev. Ibrahim Wushishi Yusuf, and Joy Kwaje.

DIYAR/INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF BETHLEHEM

The Birth of a new Palestinian Church-Related Organization

Following the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993, on September 28th 1995, a new center was inaugurated in downtown Bethlehem at the crypt of Christmas Lutheran Church, with the aim to be a place for local, national, regional, and international encounters. The name chosen for this new center was “Dar Annadwa Addawliyya” known also as The International Center of Bethlehem, known as ICB.



The work of the ICB is directed towards building a civil society and a sustainable economic development while taking Palestinian cultural heritage into consideration. Founding a civil society and a sustainable economic development depends primarily on the availability of a highly qualified and engaged people. The focus was on youth exchange, women’s programs, and reintegration program.

With the beginning of the second Intifada in late September of 2000, a new context emerged in Palestine. The invasion of Ramallah, Bethlehem, and many other Palestinian cities in 2002 called for a new strategic direction for ICB. Its tagline became: Creating our future...Imparting new hope: Destruction May Be...Continuity Shall Be”. The revised mission statement read: “The ICB is committed to continue to build and rebuild, to train and educate, to empower, to create life in the midst of despair, and to continue to call for justice and reconciliation in the midst of conflict and violence”. While celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2005, Dar Annadwa also celebrated an incredible history of growth. Its programs branched in different directions, and so a new umbrella organization was created: Diyar, meaning home/homeland. In the same year, Diyar received the accreditation to start a new institute of higher learning focused on art and culture: Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture.

The Diyar vision statement was chosen from John 10:10: “That We Might Have Life and Have It Abundantly,” while its mission statement reads as follows: “DIYAR is a Palestinian institution with a focus on the arts and culture, and

is committed to discovering and nurturing potential, providing quality higher education and lifelong learning, and making spaces for creativity through programs that are contextual and holistic in nature.”

Over the past twenty years Diyar has become the fastest growing church-related organization in the entire Middle East: In 1995, an abandoned rundown building of 3,767 square feet was renovated to become the initial building of the ICB. Since then, the facilities have expanded so that a total of 191,359 square feet have been constructed so far. The staff has grown from just four in 1995 to over 110 in 2015, making it the third largest private employer in Bethlehem. The overall operational budget has also grown. The initial budget was \$88,095 in 1995, and it is now \$2.78 million in 2015. Since 1995, projects totaling more than \$40 million were implemented, with \$15m designated for construction and \$25m designated for operation and programs. The outreach ministries have expanded tremendously. The number of direct beneficiaries grew from less than 1,000 persons in 1995 to almost 60,000 in 2015, of which a total of 2,713 are registered members in its programs. Geographically speaking, the ICB started in Bethlehem city, expanded to the whole Bethlehem region, and started working on becoming a national player throughout the West Bank. International outreach has widened as well. Friendship associations were created in Denmark in 2000, Germany in 2001, USA in 2004), and Sweden in 2014. Since its establishment in 1995, the ICB had undergone a continuous restructuring process as well as growth. This growth is expressed in the number of new facilities created within this two decades.

Its value is what made DIYAR special: In a context of too much politics, DIYAR believes in caring for the polis and city. In a context of exclusive forms of religion, DIYAR believes in investing in culture of inclusion. In a context of disempowering aid, DIYAR believes in empowering the individual and the community. In a context of segregation, DIYAR believes in building bridges for intercultural dialogue. In a context of despair, DIYAR believes in creating room for hope. In a context of deteriorated human values and conditions, DIYAR believes in offering space for a culture of life. In a context of high unemployment, DIYAR believes in empowering the individual through quality education, enhancing their employability.

The main goal of DIYAR continues to be “to work with the individual and the community to be proactive in shaping the future and to have more abundant living,” with a focus on human development, community empowerment, and cultural encounter.

DIYAR's special approach has to do with empowering people in a context of continuing conflict. This approach is important in both a Palestinian and global context. DIYAR's vision is related to influencing people's transition from a stance of reactivity to one of pro-activity, from being victims to becoming visionaries, from waiting to creating, and from surviving to thriving. This vision is in line with DIYAR's assessment and understanding of the Palestinian context, in which after more than 48 years of Israeli Occupation both the Palestinians and the international community are stuck in a reactive "survival mode." Any Palestinians rely on international aid organizations who give handouts, which essentially has the effect of managing the conflict so that conditions are not so unbearable that neither the Israeli government nor the international community has to take concrete steps to end it. Due to this effect, many Palestinians have resigned. On the part of the Palestinians, many have resigned themselves to living as victims of the conflict, relinquishing power and becoming objects only weak stakeholders in peace negotiations and treaties. What is needed is a completely different approach to the problems and challenges that face the Palestinian community, one in which theology is key. Instead of merely responding to the status quo, DIYAR seeks to actively develop a new Palestinian vision, a new hopeful narrative based on a dynamic identity.

In the past ten years EMW has partnered with DIYAR in two main areas:

■ International Conferences on "Land, Peoples, and Identities": The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza continues for two main reasons. Firstly, the International community continues to provide Israel with the hardware; for example the F-35 jet fighters, the Iron Dome, the submarines, and the latest technologies. Secondly, churches and Christian seminaries provide Israel with the software: a theological overcoat that hides and excuses all the human right violations against the Palestinian people. When the State of Israel is described as the "Sign of God's faithfulness," when the occupation of Palestinian land is presented as the fulfillment of prophecies, and when today's Israel is naively connected with the Israel of the bible, the plight of the Palestinian people becomes part of a divine will and plan that justifies the land grab. The divine rights trump over the human rights. The "good news" of the scripture become "bad news" for the Palestinians.

It was therefore important to start an interdisciplinary process that examines the prevailing narratives regarding Israel and Palestine and deconstructs them while at the same time assists in constructing a genuine Palestinian narrative that is positive, holistic, and hopeful. Towards this end, EMW helped fund

several major conferences: “Land, Peoples, and Identities,” “The Invention of History: A Century of Interplay Between Theology and Politics in Palestine,” “The Biblical Text in the Context of Occupation: Towards a New Hermeneutics of Liberation,” and “Palestinian Diaspora.” The proceedings of these conferences were published by Diyar Publishing and were made available through Amazon and Kindle. It is not an overstatement to say that these conferences and publications have contributed to a more balanced and nuanced theological reflections and also have provided theological students and seminaries with new and much needed materials. Without the support of EMW, this process would not have been possible.

■ **Conferences and Research on the Relationship between “Religion” and “State”:** Three years before the start of the so-called Arab Spring, DIYAR launched a program on “Religion and State.” We were already of the opinion that an unhealthy relationship between both entities will lead to a lack of development and crisis. At that time, many people discouraged us, arguing that this issue is not important. However, EMW was willing to partner with us on a first of its kind international conference, followed a few years later with a regional process that culminated in the drafting and launching of the first Middle Eastern public theology document entitled “From the Nile to the Euphrates: The Call of Faith and Citizenship.”

A concluding remark

On its 40th anniversary, I would like to thank EMW for being such a faithful and long-term partner, for being prophetic within the German church landscape, and for being pioneers in the field of ecumenism, new understanding of mission, and for supporting emerging theologies in the South. Now we turn to the future, and we ask what will the next ten years bring? How will EMW together and its partners respond to the changing landscape in Europe and the shifts that are happening from North to South? How can we continue to think strategically as we face immense challenges but also endless opportunities? Though we do not know what the future will bring, we face this future together and must not lose sight or heart.

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb is Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, as well as the President of Diyar Consortium and of Dar al-Kalima University College in Bethlehem.

www.diyar.ps

SAT-7

Christian Broadcasting in the Middle East

Satellite TV is *the* media of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). More than 300 million Arabic speakers have access to this free and uncensored media. On top of this come more than 50 million Turkish and Farsi speakers in Turkey and Iran. In many MENA countries only few would read a newspaper whereas 95 % would watch satellite TV on a daily basis.



The Middle East churches have had difficulties in expressing their views in the public media. Often there have been misunderstandings in other medias and even propaganda against them. Therefore satellite TV became a completely new tool where the churches could freely express themselves to their own members as well as to everyone interested.

SAT-7 was therefore launched in November 1995, after consultation with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). SAT-7 has an independent International Council made up of Middle Eastern Church leaders from a variety of denominational backgrounds (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant). The Chairperson is Dr. Habib Badr, Beirut (senior pastor National Evangelical Church of Beirut and lecturer in church history at Near East School of Theology).

SAT-7 is serving the church in its widest meaning. As it represents all Christian traditions, it is also a singular sign of Christian unity. SAT-7 sees the Gospel of Christ to be relevant to the whole person and therefore has many social programs.

Over 75 % of SAT-7's broadcast schedule is made up of indigenous material (with the rest being appropriate programming, professionally dubbed). All staff and freelancers at the studios in Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey are born in-country and therefore know the local context and "the talk of the street".



Rooftop satellite television dishes are typical in the Middle East and North Africa. SAT7 can be heard and seen in 22 countries of the Middle East.

SAT-7 broadcasts in Arabic, Farsi and Turkish on five 24/7 TV-channels. SAT-7 has 178 staff coming from 22 different countries. The budget of SAT-7 for 2015 is 13,9 million €. The budget is covered by partners and donors over the world including several churches and organizations in Germany. According to independent surveys SAT-7 has around 15 million viewers. SAT-7 also uses social media and has had more than 8 million views on YouTube in 2014. Many programs are broadcasted live. This allows interaction with the audience from all over the MENA region. Our flagship live program “Bridges” is a current affairs program broadcasted prime time every Saturday night. The vision is to build bridges between especially Muslims and Christians and to promote dialogue and inclusion of minorities and under-privileged groups. This program has won two human rights awards for being among the most balanced TV- programs in the region.

Cooperation with EMW

SAT-7 has been cooperating with EMW for many years on our many Women’s Programs. These programs are produced in Egypt by a team of brave, young women from different backgrounds. One of the programs is “Needle and Thread” produced by the award-winning producer and film instructor Maggie Morgan. The title is a metaphor, showing its intention to bring isolated women into the whole social fabric and also to unpick some of the ingrained values and attitudes

that affect them. “Needle and Thread” covers subjects which are taboo in the Middle East such as sexual assault and harassment, divorce, domestic violence, depression, image, cancer and childlessness.

The presenters of the program do not claim to have all the answers, rather they open up about their own vulnerabilities and encourage viewers to do likewise, thus helping each other and creating a platform where women’s voices can be heard. “Needle and Thread” is broadcasted live which allows women and men to call in to tell their stories and give their comments.

Experiences and insights

SAT-7 is working in this fast changing and very difficult arena. SAT-7 is also a ministry many churches and missions have little knowledge about. EMW clearly understood our mission and vision right from the beginning. EMW have offered their insights and networks to create more understanding and awareness about SAT-7 among the German member organizations and the wider audience. This has been a great help for us.

EMW has been a strong encourager especially in times of difficulties. EMW has always showed and promoted a sincere and deep understanding of our role to serve the peoples of the MENA region through mass media.

Wishes for the ongoing cooperation

We wish that EMW will continue its role as a moderator and a catalyst of inspiration and innovation. We also wish that EMW will be more active in one of the largest problems of our times: the lack of religious freedom for minorities. Especially in the Middle East and North African the Christians and other minorities have a very difficult time and in some places in danger of disappearing. There is a need as ever before for them to use the mass media to be light and salt in their society bringing love, forgiveness, dialogue and reconciliation to the peoples. We hope that SAT-7 and EMW can continue join hands to provide the Churches and Christians of the Middle East and North Africa an opportunity to witness to Jesus Christ through inspirational, informative and educational television services.

Kurt Johansen, Executive Director for SAT-7 in Europe, Asia and Pacific
www.sat7.org

AMITY FOUNDATION

Partnership in Love, Faith and Hope

The Amity Foundation has been in partnership with EMW for 30 years now as we are celebrating Amity's 30th anniversary in 2015. This is to say that EMW has been accompanying Amity from its inception in 1985 and was always a key European church-based institution that has supported Amity's growth and development in China. Qiu Zhonghui, Amity Vice President, reflects on the journey together over these years.



Amity has come a long way from being a team of three to becoming one of China's largest and most respected Christian-initiated NGO with around 200 staffers today. We could not have reached this stage without the sharing of valuable resources, personnel, expertise, concepts and values from our ecumenical partners around the world. Today, I want to pay tribute to EMW whose leaders and staff have committed their time, energy and resources to helping the weak and marginalized in China through the work of Amity. I believe it is the unwavering support and people-to-people exchanges that have developed strong bonds between our people and yours. One of our earliest projects was the Teachers' Programme that brought teachers of English to remote areas in China to train Chinese teachers. EMW recruited teachers who could teach German in institutions where this was needed. It has also helped recruit teachers of English, many of whom have served in China for many years. Such an exchange has provided opportunities for deep cross-cultural encounters that have contributed to the building of mutual understanding, trust and respect between our people. We believe that such people-to-people exchanges provide the building blocks for peace.

I remember stories that our late colleague Mr. Gu Renfa used to tell of his trips to remote areas in China with ecumenical partners, including staff from EMW. He was impressed and deeply inspired by their commitment and dedication when they insisted on visiting some of the poorest and remotest areas in China. In his mind, they really did not need to climb steep mountains and cross deep rivers,

to visit these sites. There were more accessible places. Gu Renfa said he could then imagine how much hardship and sacrifice early missionaries must have endured when they first arrived in China in the very old days. Mr. Gu was not a Christian but the personal example, the love and faith of our overseas partners touched him deeply.

Love, Hope and Change

It is your love and faith that has given hope to people in remote areas of China and to those who have been left behind by rapid economic growth. Through your support and the hard work of Amity staff, we have made a difference to many people's lives. Tens of thousands of people have been able to get an education where it was previously not available, better health care and access to life-giving water. Amity has trained thousands of village doctors, farmers, especially women, and schoolteachers so that local communities can lift themselves out of poverty and hopelessness.

Through our participatory approach to development, we have planted the seeds of democracy in local communities and even in the minds of local officials. Through working with Amity, local officials learnt how to consult people and to implement participatory rapid appraisal. They began to understand that projects succeed only if people have a sense of ownership. Their perspectives were radically changed and many have become strong advocates of participatory development. Through our local partners, we have promoted gender equality and developed women's leadership at the grassroots. Amity has also quietly championed the rights of the disabled and the less privileged through programs for the hearing and sight impaired, for the physically disabled and more recently, for autistic children.

Church and Diakonia

Our work has inspired churches and congregations to serve the poor and to develop social services in local areas such as in Hunan, Shaanxi and Yunnan. More churches now want to partner with Amity as they become more involved in social service. Amity is now cooperating with churches in 18 provinces in China, implementing a variety of social service projects. It was the local churches that pioneered in HIV-AIDS education in Henan Province. After being trained by Amity, the Christian trainers were able to share their knowledge and skills with the Muslims who had sought their help. The other major religions joined in.

Building a better world

Today, China is no longer seen as poor and needy. It is the second-largest economy in the world. Even if this is true, the per capita income is still lagging far behind. There may be 400 billionaires in China today but the rich-poor gap has widened alarmingly, sowing seeds of social conflict. Today, we are in a better position to help grow more NGOs and strengthen the diakonal work of local churches. We have begun to do this through our new NGO Development Center in Nanjing.

We will strengthen our advocacy of the rights of the disabled through work with the hearing and vision impaired, the mentally challenged and children with autism. At the same time, Amity will continue to contribute to capacity building in churches for diakonal work. It is important that I mention Amity's work on the environment. Amity was one of the earliest Chinese NGOs to promote environmental preservation through planting trees, advocating the use of biogas, solar and wind energy. Today, more than ever, we continue to work on these projects and in the near future, we hope to share some of our best practices with other NGOs in Asia and Africa. The world is God's creation and it is through God's grace that we enjoy the earth's resources. We have a deep responsibility to preserve these resources.

Through our actions together we have given hope to people in situations of hopelessness, expressing God's love for humanity. Jesus Christ said "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Mathew 25:40). Through our services, we have sown, bit by bit, the seeds of love, bearing witness to our Christian faith. These services build a bridge of love between church and society. Christianity is now seen as making valuable contributions to social development in China. Chinese people are beginning to better understand and appreciate Christianity.

Last, but not least, I want to express my deepest appreciation to EMW for having coordinated the European Network of Amity Partners over so many years, this has given Amity a strong sense of support, friendship and solidarity in the midst of new challenges. We need to continue working together as partners in mutuality. We have not yet reached the stage where there is real reciprocity but we can continue to strengthen a partnership that is founded on mutual respect and solidarity.

Qiu Zhonghui, Vice-President & General Secretary, The Amity Foundation
www.amityfoundation.org/eng/

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN PAKISTAN

»Together Equipping People to Nurture Children for Christ«

NCC-Pakistan is a united expression of the Protestant churches in Pakistan. It is an Inter confessional autonomous Council which embraces, promotes and coordinates the various forms of the Church Ministry for the people including



the Churches and Christian Organizations. NCC-Pakistan's main focus of work is to bring in notice of the Pakistani government the issues that involve or affect all churches as well as the promotion of Human Rights to improve the present condition of Christians in this society.

In last 68 years of our faithful ministry has developed many different projects like Human Rights, Position of Churches and Blasphemy Law, Peace and Harmony, Prison Ministry, Interfaith Relations, HIV aids women empowerment, youth capacity building and Sunday School Ministry which have indeed helped as an eye opener to the churches.

It is my immense pleasure to share that NCC-Pakistan is equipping people to nurture the children through Sunday schools since about last a decade. During these years of collaborative ministry, NCC-Pakistan is grateful for the continuous guidance of its Sunday School Committee and continuous partial but generous financial support of EMW for this desk and we can be able to achieve the required goals.

NCC-Pakistan does not find itself alone in the ministry of transformation of the Church through equipping the youngsters, men and women ministering in Sunday Schools and study groups. We want you to know that we have appreciated your ministry and your prompt support. Your cooperation has helped our programme run smoothly and has led to a respectful ministry relationship to edify the Church.



International public hearing on the Misuse of blasphemy law and religious minorities in Pakistan, organized by the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), September 2012. From left to right: Bishop Samuel Azariah, Moderator of the Church of Pakistan; Moulana Qari Hanif Jalandhari, President of Pakistan World Council of Religions; WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit; Mr I.A. Rehman, Director of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

We have achieved many fruitful results through Sunday school desk but still we look forward to many more years of mutually beneficial and ministerial association and wish EMW the success. NCC-Pakistan says it “Together Equipping People to Nurture Children for Christ” and the essential factor is our togetherness which helps to have meaningful changes in mindset of the untrained people in the ministry to enable them more useful and effective. It is as clear that trained teachers are the builders of the nation. For this purpose NCCP does not want to stop its efforts for their caring and wishes to have you still with us in future.

In Pakistani context we can find untrained, uneducated and non-visionary people (even among leadership). The mass community of the Pakistani Church still in need of spiritual, theological, mental, educational and professional growth. NCC-Pakistan as representative organization of Church in Pakistan hopefully suggested to EMW for initiating more projects in Pakistan to enable Pakistani Church to face challenges and propagate the gospel for Kingdom of God. It is recommended through awareness programmes on Child Abuse, Human trafficking, Identity Crises of Christians, spiritual uplift, youth empowerment, Education (Theological and Secular) EMW can serve God with us.

Mr. Victor Azariah, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Pakistan
<https://www.facebook.com/National-council-of-churches-in-Pakistan>

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA

Playing the Role of Light and Salt of the Earth

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) is an ecumenical expression of Protestant and Orthodox Church Traditions in India as well as of ecumenical organizations, councils and agencies in the country.



It was established as the National Missionary Council, affiliated to the International Missionary Council, in 1914. In 1923, the Council reconstituted itself as the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon from which the Councils of Burma and Sri Lanka separated later. The NCCI in 1979 transformed itself into the National Council of Churches in India. Today it has 30 Churches, 17 Regional Councils, 7 Related Agencies, and 17 All India Christian Organizations as its constituent units. The NCCI works through 7 important commissions (Unity, Mission and Evangelism; Justice, Peace and Creation; Policy, Governance and Public Witness; Youth, Dalits; Tribals and Adivasis; and Communication and Relations), 3 Autonomous Bodies (All India Council of Christian Women; India Peace Centre; and Urban Rural Mission), and 2 Secretariat projects (Ecumenical Solidarity with HIV and AIDS) and Vidarbha Centre for Labour Concerns).

From a body which was largely dependent upon support of mission bodies, the NCCI has endeavoured to become a council of churches, being run by the Indian Christian bodies and with the good will partnership of ecumenical bodies abroad. It is in this context that the partnership with EMW has been very significant.

The NCCI has been blessed through all our relationships and partnerships with EMW. We have found EMW concerned about Christian mission and ministry in India with:

- the challenges of religiously pluralistic society;
- justice for people who are oppressed, particularly Dalits;
- encouragement and empowerment of marginalized communities such as women, children and youth; and
- the facilitation of transparency, accountability and responsibility in ministry.

We have been greatly comforted and strengthened by EMW during the critical phase (the first decade of the 21st century) that NCCI passed through. We have found in EMW, persons who are warm, friendly, supportive and encouraging.

As we look to the future, NCCI is focussed on the following concerns:

- just and inclusive communities for dalits, tribals and adivasis, the disabled, people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, and persons with different sexual orientations
- empowerment and greater space for youth women and children in the church and society
- ecumenical formation in a situation where confessionalism and communalism is on the rise
- wider ecumenism and ecumenism at the grassroots
- freedom of religion in society and mutually edifying dialogue
- ecological integration and earth care,
- transparency, accountability and responsibility
- building up second and third line leadership

In addressing the above mentioned concerns, NCCI would want to play the role of accompanier of churches and communities in India, of a gardener cultivating the Indian soil of ministry (laying new nurseries as well), of a catalyst encouraging the processes of transformation, and of a facilitator contributing mutual edification of churches through their best practices.

While much has been envisaged about the work of the NCCI in the future and the possibility of EMW's partnership with NCCI, we need to be aware that times are changing. The Church in Germany and indeed all European countries is undergoing transformation. So EMW would have to play an important role in making the churches in Germany to reconceive their Christian faith and way of life. If there is any way by which NCCI could participate in that process we shall be willing to humbly partner. At the same time the situation in India and Asia is undergoing decisive changes. We have to encourage the Indian churches to stand on their feet more firmly than before and play the role of light and salt of the earth more meaningfully. EMW could also think of ways in which this process could be facilitated. It goes beyond financial partnership to positive constructive partnership for core transformation.

Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, General Secretary, NCCI
www.nccindia.in

SENATE OF SERAMPORE COLLEGE

Ecumenical Theological Education in India

“The support we received from EMW has fostered ecumenical theological education which bridges various contexts and traditions, creating conditions for the mutual interaction of various contextual theologies” writes Bishop Dr. John S. Sadananda, Master, Serampore College.



On behalf of the Council and Senate of Serampore College and its affiliated Colleges let me extend my warm greetings and congratulations to the EMW, Germany on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. My special felicitations to all those who contributed in different ways to the growth of this mission organisation for its dedicated service. During this 40th year while we celebrate God's acts in and through the EMW, we thank God for its vision, look back on major events in the growth, and develop a sustainable future which require involvement and commitment from everyone. The EMW has been an Accompanying Enabler, supportive of the labours of the Senate of Serampore College and its Board of Theological Education (BTESSC) to bring meaning and substance to the great ministry of Theological Education in India and its neighbouring countries. We especially want to share the stories of our institutions with which the EMW accompanied and express our gratitude for its continued support and cooperation by providing a great service to the Indian Theological Education through the Senate of Serampore College.

Profile of Senate of Serampore College, Serampore

The Serampore College was established in 1818, in the Danish settlement of Serampore, by three pioneer western Christian missionaries, William Carey (1761-1834) Joshua Marshman (1768-1837) and William Ward (1769-1823) to promote piety and learning, particularly among the native Christian population of India. In 1827, the College was incorporated by a Royal Charter, granted by King Frederick VI of Denmark, with University status and powers under the authority of an independent College Council. The Master of the College is

the President of the Council and the final authority in all matters related to the College, its management, general order and government is bestowed on the Master and the Council of Serampore College. In 1845 in the Treaty of Purchase, which transferred Serampore from the Danish government to the British, it was provided that the rights and immunities of the Serampore College should not be interfered with. In 1915, the Serampore College Charter was utilized, for the first time, for the conferring of degrees in Divinity. In 1916, the Licentiate in Theology (L.Th.) was instituted. In 1918, the Centenary year of the College, the Serampore College Act was passed by the Bengal Legislative Council, confirming the powers of Serampore College to confer degrees and to enlarge the College Council. It created a College Faculty for the internal governance of the College. The Act also provided for the constitution and appointment of a College Senate. The College Council appointed members of the Senate, as per the provision of the Act, representing various Christian Communion. Subsequently, the Serampore College Act 1918 (the Bengal Act IV of 1918) was adapted in 1937 and 1950, and is in the law book of the Government of West Bengal as modified in 1951 and 1997 respectively.

Senate of Serampore College (University) and it's Degrees and Diploma

The Serampore College Act of 1918 assigns in. Article 11 to the Senate the duty to frame courses of study and make rules for the conduct of examinations and empowers the Senate subject to the control of the Council to determine the eligibility of candidates for degrees, diplomas and certificates to be conferred by the Council. In exercising its rights the Council of Serampore College through its Senate confers its own diplomas and degrees, namely, the Diploma in Christian Studies, Diploma in Clinical Pastoral Counseling, Diploma in Bible Translation, Diploma in Worship and Preaching and the Degrees of Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Divinity, Bachelor of Christian Studies, Master of Theology, Master of Christian Studies, Masters in Counselling and Psychotherapy, Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Theology. Serampore College also confers the degree of Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) Honoris Causa.

The Senate of Serampore College has 55 affiliated Colleges in India. This is the only University of its kind which caters to the theological education and ministerial formation of the Protestant, Orthodox, Independent and other non-Catholic Churches in India.

Areas, Programmes and/or projects cooperated with the EMW

We are thankful to EMW for journeying with the SSC for the last four decades in advancing Theological Education in Indian sub-continent. EMW has immensely helped in developing our advanced theological education particularly the doctoral programme through the South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI). Because of its active participation and support we have been able to train more than 150 D.Th. candidates in the last 25 years of the existence of SATHRI. The EMW has been the main contributor of Scholarships for of the doctoral students right from the inception of SATHRI in 1989 in Bangalore. SATHRI has made the best efforts to make scholarships available to the doctoral students, particularly women and disadvantaged groups and thus helped faculty development in different colleges. Currently SATHRI has been relocated in Serampore and a separate building for Research/SATHRI with all the facilities for the research scholars is under construction with the active support of the EMW which is expected to be completed by December, 2015.

EMW also supported the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) in conducting various programmes for the pastors and theological educators. The BTESSC as an advisory body to the Senate is involved in developing theological perspectives on various contextual theologies. It strengthens theological education in India through consultations, seminars and staff institutes and promotes ecumenical concerns. BTESSC has been successful in raising Dalit, Adivasi, tribal, women and ecological concerns in the Churches through its programmes and contributed a great deal to strengthen the witness of the Church. We were also supported by the EMW in our Theological Text Book programme in regional languages.

The Senate Centre for Extension and Pastoral Theological Research (SCEPTRE), Kolkata caters to the Theological education by extension. With the help of EMW it has been able to prepare study materials and publish 36 books for Dip.C.S. and BCS programmes during the last three years. EMW also supports the MCS programme for lay leaders. The SCEPTRE is planning Theological Extension Programme in neighbouring countries, in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

The Senate of Serampore College with the help of EMW successfully completed BD curriculum revision and recently it has undertaken the MTh curriculum revision. In future, we are planning to produce theological resource books for the BD students by inviting Indian writers to contribute.



This student hostel on the on the large grounds of Serampore College.

The EMW has been sympathetic to our requests for the infrastructure development in constructing new Office block to the Senate, repairs and renovation of the buildings of Serampore College. The affiliated colleges from all over the country have been benefited immensely by the help of the EMW in their times of need. We are happy to state that the EMW has recognized the effective voice of the Senate while allotting grants on the request of the affiliated colleges.

Experiences and insights from this relationship with EMW

The relationship with EMW has strengthened our dialogue, deepened our partnership and built the trust. Together we have been able to promote theological education at every level. The EMW has always been helpful in connecting with other Church organizations including the Churches of the Scandinavian countries. We have been able to talk with openness and share our needs and challenges with mutual respect and acceptance. The bilateral discussion that takes place every two years is productive and meaningful in planning and visioning the future. The last bilateral meeting that was held in April 2015 was initiated by EMW to bring together all partners from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and WCC.

Through the ecumenical endeavor the EMW has consulted and cooperated with us for common witness in India. Its meaningful accompaniment has enabled and built up the theological fraternity in India for multiple forms of ministry in Christian community as well as wider society. The support we received from the EMW has fostered ecumenical theological education which bridges various contexts and traditions, creating conditions for the mutual interaction of various contextual theologies. It has struggled with us to identify both external and internal problems and challenges faced by our theological colleges by raising pertinent questions and seek ways and means of sharing our resources with a due sense of distributive justice and thus strengthening the witness of our churches and institutions. Owning theological education by the churches has always been emphasized in our discussions.

We are glad that attempts have been made in India to create an awareness to attain sustainability of Theological education. Collaboration and Net-working with other institutions, Theological streams and Academia which are involved in the field of education is the need of the hour. This will also help us to undertake study and research in new area of studies with an ecumenical vision in a wider sense.

Wishes of SSC for ongoing cooperation with the EMW

In our meeting in April, 2015 we reiterated our continued collaboration with the EMW. On our request the EMW gathered many ecumenical partners and it was a great opportunity for us to share our vision and mission of higher theological education. As Serampore College is celebrating its Bi-centenary in 2018 it is important that we work together in order to promote Theological education in the Indian sub-continent.

At the event of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the EMW we have many reasons to be thankful. It has been a journey with our partners for wholeness and inclusivity. It is our sincere wish and prayer that as accompanying enablers the EMW will continue to stand at our side to take bold steps in imparting Theological education together with all God's people.

Bishop Dr. John S. Sadananda, Master, Serampore Colleges
www.senateofseramporecollege.edu.in

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA

Three Decades of Partnership in Christian Education

Sunday schools and religious education – these two topics are the focus of the cooperation of the EMW with the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka. Its General Secretary, Reverend Ebenezer Joseph, explains why this is so important in his country.



The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) is privileged to have associated with the EMW, an expression of ecumenical endeavour and partnership in Germany. Our Council is an ecumenical expression of nine historical main-line churches and eight ecumenical organizations, instrumental in facilitating the ecumenical pilgrimage in the island since 1914. Our Council is witnessing in an island that has experienced a cruel war that brutalized the nation for over thirty years and placed in a multi-religious setting where Christians are a minority. The Council is involved in a variety of activities clustered as Mass Communications, Justice and Peace, Christian Education, Social Empowerment and Ecumenical Relations, all of which are inter related and mutually enriching each other.

Our associating with EMW spans over two to three decades of continuous and enriching partnership in the areas of Christian Education, an important aspect of the life and witness of the Council which has many challenges in a country like Sri Lanka. This ministry is focused primarily to strengthen the faith commitment of people to be an authentic disciple of Christ and to increase the knowledge of the Holy Bible and of the Christian faith. This also becomes the platform to be a continuing catalyst for ecumenical formation among the diverse expressions of the Christian faith in the country.

The partnership with EMW, has consistently addressed two specific areas of Christian Education. The first is to sustain the work among the Sunday school children, which is directly linked, not only to the increase of knowledge but to strengthen the faith commitment of a child as well. The Council has formulated

Sunday school syllabus, commonly used by all denominations, and produces Teacher Guides, Children Work Books while conducting training programmes for Sunday School Teachers as well. The materials produced are now being used by many churches who are not members of the council. This work which has been continuously supported by the EMW and has evolved to be an important area of expressing the ecumenical commitment of the constituent Churches.

The second area is the teaching of Christianity in State Schools. In Sri Lanka, it is compulsory for all children to follow religious instruction in schools up to the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level). The Christians being a small minority in the Island, and spread out in many parts of the island, in many instances have numerically few Christian children in rural schools. Hence the availability of teachers to teach Christianity has become a huge challenge over the years. In the absence of a Christianity teacher, the child is forced to study another religion, alien to her faith. The Council has embarked on a volunteer teacher programme and establishing special coordinating centres to address this challenge with the approval of the government, while the Council is responsible for the preparation and revision of the government syllabus and text books as well.

The impact of this partnership cannot be quantified as it has influenced generations of Christian students both in Sunday Schools and State Schools for well over three decades. It could be safely concluded that there is a vibrancy among the youth in our Churches which is evidently seen and experienced today, in all over the island, and the EMW has significantly associated and contributed to this phenomenon in our island, while it has also been part of the process where the ecumenical spirit has been passed on to the future generations.

The unique characteristic of this partnership is the consistency that the EMW has maintained. They identified and supported one area of the ecumenical witness of the Council, over a long period of time that enabled consistency and sustained effort which brought about these positive results. The EMW needs to be congratulated for not swinging with the popular or populist programmes that the contemporary social organizations identify and address with a 'quick-fix' solution, but was consistent in supporting one vital area of the council's work, which we appreciate and remain grateful for.

The second uniqueness of the EMW partnership is the flexibility of the grant receiving body to prioritise its activities according to the resources allocated. This

is a significant departure from the mechanism adopted by many donor agencies who insist on activities they prioritise. This trust and confidence displayed no doubt, respects the wisdom and understanding of those who really work and toil on the ground.

The third unique characteristic of this partnership is the respect EMW holds to the special characteristics of the Church and Church related agencies than merely clustering them in categories of social service organizations. The church is unique, as it is the people of God ever present and active within the community. It cannot withdraw or have a temporary concern on its neighbours like NGOs. This characteristic has to be sustained in order to exemplify the discipleship of Christ. This is something that was never undermined in the partnership with EMW.

As we reflect on the partnership and as EMW completes 40 years, a biblical fullness (now probably enters the land flowing with milk & honey), attention must be made to have a visible symbolic dimension added to this partnership. In a country like Sri Lanka, where peace and reconciliation are essential components ministering in a multi faith content, the local churches are encouraged by visible signs of mutual solidarity, concern and prayers. The EMW, could explore the possibility of facilitating a goodwill visit of its constituent churches to visit Sri Lanka, to visibly express to our people your love and compassion. This will visualize the human face to the partnership and will contribute to the expression of mutual support and inner motivation, that we all belong to the 'One body of Christ'.

We pray for God's continued guidance and empowerment, on the EMW, as they look into the future with gratitude and thank God for all that was possible in the past.

Rev W P Ebenezer Joseph, General Secretary,
National Christian Council of Sri Lanka
www.nccsl.org/en

ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE FOR STUDY AND DIALOGUE

Justice as a Religious Imperative

In the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society in Sri Lanka, dialogue is a difficult but necessary mission. Marshal Fernando, Director of the Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue in Colombo, depicts the situation and what is taking the Institute to promote dialogue.

The Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue (EISD, the present name) started in 1951 and was formerly established in 1953 at the present premises by the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka as a Study Centre for the benefit of Lay and Clergy interested in building good interfaith relations, ecumenism and study of socio political issues. With the advent of political Independence in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) there was a revival of Buddhism as a majority religion of the country. The Independence created an environment for Buddhist majority to claim their legitimate rights which were denied to them during the colonial period. This resulted in tensions and the enlightened Christians (like the two pioneering Directors of the Institute, Rev. Basil Jackson and Rev Dr. Lynn De Silva) realized that the claims of the Buddhist majority had legitimacy and therefore it was important to listen to them and build good relationships with them for constructive living. In keeping with this perspective the Study Centre initiated a constructive dialogue with the Buddhist from its inception.

Thus interfaith dialogue occupied a very important component of the Institute. In 1977 the Methodist Church by resolution at the annual conference decided to give autonomy to the Study Centre and named it the Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue under an Independent Board of Management with representatives from all Christian denominations including Roman Catholics in Sri Lanka.

Currently the Institute engages in study programs on interfaith relations, ecumenism, theology, political and social issues that affect our society. The purposes of these programs are to sensitize those who participate in these programs, to engage constructively and creatively in Religion and society, and to stand for Justice as a religious imperative. The Institute also publishes serious material on major issues in Sri Lanka to educate the masses. "Dialogue" journal on Interfaith Dialogue is published annually uninterrupted for 40 years, which goes abroad

to universities, study centres, churches and individuals. Two other journals, “Chinthana” (Sinhala) and “Gleanings” (English) are published 4 times a year as educational resources for Christians and others.

The Institute has gone beyond Inter-Church ecumenism and work in solidarity with civil society organizations as well for many years on social justice issues. These relationships have strengthened the efforts of the Interfaith Dialogue work of the Institute.

Substantial reason for some of the problems we face today in Sri Lanka is that there is a wide gap between the reality and consciousness. For example the demographic distribution of Sri Lanka indicates that Sri Lanka is a Multi-ethnic and Multi-cultural society. Different ethnic and religious groups live all over the country. Demographic reality cannot be fully explained in terms of simple majority-minority perceptions. However, this reality is not correctly perceived by a large section of our people and the result is the conflictual claims made by the ethnic groups on various aspects of Social and Political life. For democracy to become an achievable proposition the people of this country have to bridge this gap between consciousness and reality.

The EISD take this perspective seriously and try to facilitate the process of “bridging” the gap between consciousness and reality. Thus broadening of the horizon of consciousness raising work is as important as other “good causes”. Because, in the long run sustainability of the results of “good causes” depends on whether there is a reasonable space for democracy and freedom to enable exchange of ideas in this country. Then most other issues could be tackled creatively, intelligently and humanely through interaction of ideas, whether they are secular or profane. The Biblical spirituality of getting involved with human history is the locus of our saving encounter with God is the implicit principle guiding the activities of the Institute.

The EMW established very cordial relations with the institute right from the inception of the EMW. The institute received a very generous annual grant from EMW. Besides the annual grant the EMW helped in the infrastructural development of the institute. Particularly in 1994, 1995 and year 2000, EMW support helped the institute to make a turnaround in its financial capacity. The EMW helped generously to strengthen the capacity of the Institute to raise funds locally by helping to build a small endowment fund and to improve infrastructural facilities.

Endowment fund generates a reasonable amount of interest. The church organizations and civil society organizations utilize EISD facilities regularly for their study programs and the Institute earns a reasonable income from this source as well. These two sources generated about 80 percent of the annual budget of the institute. Under these circumstances in the year 2000 the EMW annual grant was stopped on mutual agreement.

However, up to 2012 EMW provided help to carry out some of its special projects. The results of the EMW support can be seen in the premises and our publications. In fact the EISD may be one of the success stories of the results of financial support of the EMW as the Institute developed local capacities to finance its annual budget.

May God bless the EMW, its staff and all those church leaders who help to sustain the work of the Organization. We hope and pray that God will strengthen you to maintain a humble and committed service in furtherance of kingdom values around the world.

Marshal Fernando, Director, Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

Theological Education in the Asian Context



To develop Theological Education and to contextualize it for Asia are the objectives of the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA). Limuel Equina, the Executive Director, gives an overview of the Association's working areas which has today 90 members from various denominational backgrounds.

Founded in 1957, the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), formerly known as the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia (ATSSEA) was established with the following aims:

- to provide facilities for its members to confer concerning matters of common interest related to theological schools;
- to consider any problem that may arise as to the relations of such institutions to one another or other educational institutions;
- to recommend standards of theological education and maintain a list of member institutions; and
- to promote the improvement of theological education in such ways as it may deem appropriate.

Since its founding, ATESEA has pioneered an ecumenical venture of cooperation among the theological schools in the areas of consortium programs for advanced studies, seminar-workshops for lecturers and heads of schools, research, and other forms of innovative programs. As an accrediting body, ATESEA has established a set of standards as a means of assisting the schools in leveling up and improving the quality of theological education in the region, thereby bringing integrity to the status of the schools. To date, the Association has ninety (90) members coming from different protestant denominations—mainline protestant churches, pentecostal and evangelical churches.

All through the years, EMW has been ATESEA's constant partner in accompanying the Association in capacity building of the lecturers and academic leaders

through skills development and professional advancements. This relationship has also provided the synergy for empowering leadership and for stimulating theological thinking through the various initiatives of ATESEA.

The cooperation between ATESEA and EMW focuses primarily on Faculty Development which includes the following activities:

- Teachers' Academy. This program has been designed to provide lecturers updates on current trends in their areas of expertise. It also aims at developing the teaching skills of the lecturers including some strategies for demonstrating classroom assessment, and student learning.
- Scholarship Assistance for doctoral students under the ATESEA Theological Union (ATU) program including the ATU Methodology Seminar on the Guidelines for Doing Theologies in Asia.
- Conferences for Academic Deans. These provide opportunities for the academic deans to be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills in understanding and exercising their roles as leaders of the academic programs in the light of the school's vision, mission and goals including assessments of the school's degree programs.
- Scholarship Assistance for the Master in Library and Information Science with Specialization in Theological Librarianship. The purpose and goal of this program is to prepare students for professional leadership in the management and operation of theological libraries. The first batch will be graduating in 2016.
- Publication of the ATESEA Hymn Collection. This is a special project of the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music (AILM) supported by EMW through ATESEA. The purpose is not to replace the present hymn books used in seminaries but to enrich and provide an Asian spirit in the worship life of the different seminaries and churches. AILM aimed to publish the ATESEA Hymn Collection in 2015.

The Nature of Relationship

The relationship between ATESEA and EMW has not been defined as a relationship between two unequal parties, like EMW seeing itself as the donor and ATESEA as the beneficiary of the donation. Rather, the relationship has been based on trust and accountability. By this it means, EMW serves as the trustee which

oversees the resources while ATESEA is the manager which manages the resources in such a way that they serve the purpose for which the resources have been intended. The collegial relationship between EMW and ATESEA should be encouraged and strengthened. One learns from listening to each other in achieving the purpose in which this cooperation has been established.

The Relevance of the Programs

One way of measuring the impact of the programs is through evaluation conducted at the end of the activity. Overall, more than 70% of the participants considered the programs initiated by ATESEA in partnership with EMW as relevant and use-

ATESEA-Website



Participants from eight countries convened in the 2017 General Assembly of ATESEA on March 21-22, 2017 at Central Philippine University. The gathering also marked ATESEA's 60th year in its engagement with seminary education.

ful to their pedagogical, administrative needs and professional growth. The result is inspiring. For instance, in the seminars conducted, two of the participants wrote, "In the past, I have always felt that there is something missing to tie the loop of our curriculum and the existence of the school. The presentation has answered the missing part of the puzzle." "The most significant point of the seminar was giving chances to experience different angles and tastes of theological studies. It provided an awareness for having different perspectives for learning and doing theologies. I love the ATU seminar and it was a great benefit for my study."

If there are encouraging outputs that one can glean from the impressions of the participants about the seminars and scholarship assistance that ATESEA in partnership with EMW provide, they include:

- enhancement of knowledge on current trends in their areas of expertise and new ways of teaching approaches, thus, improving their skills and student learning;

- increased appreciation of the value of the Scriptures and their continuing relevance to the challenges of Asian realities through various methods of biblical interpretation; and
- creating a community of theological educators whose diversity in cultures are assets in preparing future leadership and building robust theological institutions committed to academic excellence, contextuality and intercontextuality.

Recommendations for the EMW in future

If there is a possibility, an occasional participation by an EMW's representative in any of the ATESEA event would be helpful. Its value is not only to understand the partner's context more fully and evaluate the impact of EMW's contributions. A conversation with the partner on matters of special interests can also open new ways of expanding the scope of partnership, if not introducing creative innovations of service, in the future.

EMW has been ATESEA's companion in the theological education engagement in Asia. May this relationship continue to build stronger theological institutions and produce more respected Asian scholars in the region.

Limuel Equina, PhD, Executive Director
<http://atesea.net>

MISSION FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

A Partnership bound by Love, Faith, Solidarity and Justice for the Marginalized

The Mission For Migrant Workers (MFMW) prides itself as the leading service and advocacy institution for migrants in Hong Kong and is the longest existing in Asia and in the world. This we owe to the migrant workers we serve and to our partners who have walked with us through the years including the EMW.



MFMW is a charitable ecumenical institution established by churches and church-related groups in Hong Kong and was adopted as an outreach program of the St. John's Cathedral. Indeed, MFMW, more popularly known as *the Mission*, has provided unwavering assistance for migrants, especially women, who have labor problems, personal crisis, health issues, and other emergency needs. The Mission's brand of transformative service has made a mark among the migrants community, local civil society organizations in Hong Kong, and government authorities both of Hong Kong and of sending countries.

The credibility of *the Mission* was most recently shown in its successful handling of the iconic case of abused Indonesian migrant worker, Erwiana Sulistyarningsih, whose travails, courage and triumph has earned the notice of the world and even made her one of the top 100 Most Influential People of 2014 by the Time magazine. But Erwiana was just one of the numerous more lives the Mission has touched through the Crisis Intervention and Prevention through Migrants Empowerment or CIPME program that the EMW has been supporting.

CIPME is both a strategy and a program aimed to lessen the vulnerability of migrants, improve their living and working conditions, and enable their empowerment. This is done through the following interconnected programs that are hinged on delivering timely, quality and empowering welfare assistance to our service constituency, and on developing the support constituency of the Mission for its work among the migrants:

- Labor Employment Assistance Program (LEAP) that provides access to justice and direct emergency relief for migrants in crisis;
- Pastoral Care and Social Welfare (PCSW) program that addresses the personal, spiritual and social needs of migrants;
- Education Training Organizing and Campaign (ETOC) that involves human rights based education, capacity building of the grassroots migrants community, and support to the rights campaign of migrants;
- Women's Initiatives Towards Empowerment (WITE) that interconnects with other programs to address concerns on violence against women and delivering women focused welfare services;
- Documentation, Research and Information Dissemination (DRID) that conducts relevant researches and publishes materials to shape inclusive social attitudes, provide the public with credible information, and provide baseline facts for policymakers and changes, and;
- Institutional Promotion and Migrants Advocacy (IPMA) that endeavors to develop and strengthen network of service providers, partner with and expand the ranks of the Hong Kong people that are supportive of the rights of migrants, and enhance the advocacy work of the Mission that serves the calls of the grassroots.

It can be said that the Mission has effectively delivered on its commitment, rooted in Christian beliefs and values, to serve the migrants on their immediate needs and be an advocate for their human rights. In 2014 alone, more than 4,100 migrants in distress were provided direct welfare assistance including paralegal counselling, case assistance referrals to professional services, and temporary shelter. In addition, more than 8,000 migrants benefitted from mobile counseling and other services through our innovative and trailblazing Give Care to Our Caregivers program where individual supporters and professional groups share their time and skills to make migrant domestic workers feel they are cared for also by the Hong Kong people.

Our work to empower migrants has as well borne fruits as we see grassroots organizations we are partners with continue to actively work towards the promotion of the rights and wellbeing of their community, including acting as front-line service providers to their fellow migrants. After more than three decades of work and several years of partnership with EMW on the CIPME, the Mission has reaffirmed the importance and interrelations of direct service provision with advocacy for migrants as a marginalized and vulnerable sector of Hong Kong.

With the steady increase and quick turnover of foreign domestic workers mostly women from underdeveloped or developing countries like Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, the condition of FDWs has not drastically changed as policies reflecting adverse social attitudes towards migrants continue to dominate their living and working condition.

The Mission believes that what happened to Erwiana is not an isolated event as what was projected by Hong Kong authorities. Rather, it is an extreme case allowed to happen by rules that perpetrate exclusion and marginalisation, and by social relationships that put migrants as second- or even third-class disposable people in Hong Kong. The fact that a yearly increase in the number of cases and inquiries that the Mission is handling points to the sad reality that the crisis condition of migrants goes unabated, if not deteriorating. As a Hong Kong NGO, it is the Mission's thrust to not only conscientize the public but also encourage and enable positive social actors to contribute towards the promotion of human rights of migrants and the creation of a truly multicultural and harmonious community.

As the Mission embarks on further developing its crisis response service, improving initiatives to empower the grassroots, and scaling up advocacy – especially social advocacy – among positive sectors in Hong Kong such as supportive employers, church parishioners, service-oriented groups, the academe, media and official circles, the challenges are great and even daunting. While the economic and political rights of migrants must be advanced, social advocacy to transform outlooks, reform values, and effect shifts in attitudes must also be carried to make changes genuine, comprehensive and lasting.

We see this as a possible EMW role that while the root causes of international labour migration is glaringly rooted in the home countries, it is as important to address the realities of migrants in their worksite. We wish to see EMW spreading the view of inclusiveness among its partners in receiving countries where they are forced to travel for better life.

Bound by the love for our fellows, our Christian faith that abhors abuses and exploitation, our spirit of Christian solidarity with the oppressed and downtrodden, and the struggle for justice, the partnership of the Mission and the EMW towards common goals for migrants, we look forward to taking this meaningful journey together.

<http://www.migrants.net/>

CONSELHO NACIONAL DE IGREJAS CRISTÃS DO BRASIL

CONIC – uma voz profética das Igrejas Cristãs do Brasil

O Conselho Nacional de Igrejas Cristãs do Brasil é uma organização religiosa, formada por cinco Igrejas e organismos ecumênicos para a promoção do ecumenismo no Brasil. Nossa missão para o período 2014 a 2020 é: fortalecer o testemunho ecumênico das Igrejas-membro, fomentar o diálogo inter-religioso e promover a interlocução com organizações da sociedade civil e governo para a incidência pública em favor de políticas que promovam a justiça e a paz.



A missão está fortemente relacionada com o atual contexto social, religioso e político do país. Há alguns anos temos assistindo a ascensão de um discurso religioso prioritariamente cristão com forte viés fundamentalista. Inicialmente, este discurso estava muito ligado às Igrejas de tradição pentecostal e neopentecostal. Atualmente, percebe-se que sinais de fundamentalismo religioso estão diluídos em todas as Igrejas, inclusive naquelas inseridas no movimento ecumênico. A relação entre religião e política representativa é forte. Atualmente, 70 parlamentares federais formam a frente parlamentar religiosa e 280 parlamentares, incluindo evangélicos e católicos, integram a Frente Parlamentar Mista em Defesa da Vida e Contra o Aborto. O atual presidente da Câmara dos Deputados, Eduardo Cunha, é evangélico e tem atuando fortemente contra direitos individuais, entre eles das pessoas de orientação homossexual e mulheres. Estas Frentes religiosas têm se unido a outras frentes parlamentares, entre elas, a que defende interesses do agronegócio e de empresas de armas. Em função disso, muitos direitos conquistados pela população brasileira estão com sérios riscos. Destacam-se o Estatuto do Desarmamento. Há um forte lobby de parlamentares militares e das empresas fabricantes de armas que querem rever o Estatuto do Desarmamento com o objetivo de desconstituí-lo.

Outro debate tem relação direta com os direitos de trabalhadores e trabalhadoras. É a Lei das Terceirizações, que facilita a contratação de mão-de-obra por

Abstract

The National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil, CONIC, is a religious organization founded by churches and ecumenical organizations to promote ecumenism in Brazil. The mission of CONIC in the years 2014-2020 is to emphasise the ecumenical testimony of its member churches, to extend inter-religious dialogue and to strengthen exchange with other organizations in the civil society and the government in order to work towards justice and peace.

This mission is closely related to the present social, religious and political context of our country. In Brazil fundamentalist Christian discourse began to spread some years ago. Initially this discourse was mainly linked to the Pentecostal and Neo-pentecostal churches, but nowadays you can find fundamentalism in any church, even in those belonging to the ecumenical movement.

CONIC endeavours - within its limits - to be a dissonant voice in its environment, providing the churches with spaces for discussion and giving a public voice to those churches which are closely linked with the human rights movement. We want to demonstrate that the ecumenical movement can have a prophetic voice in this critical moment in Brazilian history. CONIC's last assembly in April 2014 focussed on the situation of fundamentalism in Brazil and published a final document listing some important principles.

CONIC also organizes the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Brazil and participates in public dialogues, raising its voice for fairness and equality. In 2014 CONIC was part of the EMW process on "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" and held a seminar on this subject.

For more information visit: www.conic.org.br

parte das indústrias via empresas de terceirização. A Lei impacta diretamente na garantia de direitos de trabalhadores e trabalhadoras e desmobiliza a organização sindical. Outro tema é a redução da maioridade penal de 18 para 16 anos, que afeta diretamente o Estatuto das Crianças e Adolescentes. A bancada religiosa é uma das mais ativas para a flexibilização desses direitos. A regulamentação de terras indígenas é outro ponto de tensão com essa frente parlamentar. Há uma forte preocupação por parte de organizações da sociedade civil com o aumento do conservadorismo político e religioso.

O CONIC tem, na medida do possível, procurado ser uma voz dissonante, colocando-se em espaços de discussão e apresentando uma voz de Igrejas mais próximas aos movimentos de direitos humanos. Há clareza de que o movimento ecumênico pode ser uma voz profética nesse momento delicado da conjuntura brasileira.

Existem muitos projetos tramitando na Câmara de Deputados com conteúdos religiosos. O mais recente é o da "Cristofobia" que está tramitado, com o apoio do presidente da Câmara dos Deputados, em caráter de urgência. O Projeto prevê oito anos de detenção por crime de ultraje a culto religioso. Esse projeto é uma resposta a um ato realizado na Parada Gay em que uma travesti encenou a crucificação para

denunciar o número de travestis violentadas no Brasil. Há significativa simpatia da parte da população brasileira pela aprovação da Lei contra “Cristofobia”.

Há certa perplexidade em relação a esse aumento conservador e a força que essa onda tem ganhado em nosso país. Pesquisa recente da World Values Survey mostrou que 49% dos brasileiros acreditam que “políticos que não crêem em Deus não servem para trabalhar no serviço público”. Ficamos atrás do Iraque (87%) e da Turquia (55%).

Compreendemos que o pano-de-fundo dessa tensão é também econômico. O crescimento do Brasil como sétima economia do mundo não foi algo consolidado. Foi um crescimento econômico pautado no consumo. As empresas que mais ganharam financeiramente foram as da construção civil com contratos caros feitos com o Estado. A dívida pública brasileira é alta. Em 2014, o governo federal gastou R\$ 978 bilhões com juros e amortizações da dívida pública. Esse valor representa 45,11% de todo o orçamento federal efetivamente executado no ano e corresponde a: 12 vezes o que foi destinado à educação, 11 vezes aos gastos com saúde, mais que o dobro dos gastos com a Previdência Social. Esses dados são da Auditoria Cidadã da Dívida Pública.

Este foi o tema principal da Assembleia do CONIC realizada em abril de 2014. A partir disso, aprovou-se um documento chamando a atenção para o fato de que as Igrejas, para fazer contraponto ao fundamentalismo, precisam redescobrir sua voz profética. No documento final da Assembleia chamamos a atenção para que as Igrejas voltem a assumir pautas como:

- a defesa dos Direitos Humanos para todas as pessoas;
- a promoção de ações de economia solidária que diminuam o agravamento da desigualdade social;
- denúncia de todo o tipo de violência sócio cultural, econômica e religiosa;
- a atuação em defesa de um Estado laico, contra qualquer tipo de teocracia;
- o fortalecimento das iniciativas de diálogo ecumênico e inter-religioso;
- o engajamento efetivo na Campanha da Reforma Política;
- a proposição de uma campanha para auditoria da Dívida Pública Brasileira;
- a defesa da infância e da juventude em seus direitos abordados no ECA, opondo-se à proposta da redução da maioridade penal.

A cooperação entre CONIC e EMW

A cooperação entre CONIC e EMW se realizam em duas áreas. A primeira é na vivencia na comunhão e da espiritualidades ecumênicas e inter-religiosas, que promove e fortalece espaços de vivência ecumênica e inter-religiosa. Destaque para a Semana de Oração pela Unidade Cristã. Esse ano avalia-se que foi uma das melhores Semanas de Oração pela Unidade Cristã que já aconteceram em nosso país. Justamente por causa do aumento do fundamentalismo, grupos cristãos se organizaram em diferentes estados para celebrar a Semana como forma de oferecer um testemunho público aberto ao diálogo. Foi uma grande surpresa para nós.

A segunda área é a presença pública em diálogos em torno dos valores que fundamentam a perspectiva da equidade. Destaca-se o Seminário realizado em 2014 sobre Testemunho Cristão em um mundo plural, cujo tema segue em discussão. As presenças em vários ambientes que mostram uma posição mais crítica e profética das Igrejas, com destaque para os documentos públicos e presença em seminários e entrevistas. Vale destacar a participação dos regionais

Tatiane Duarte/WCC



Visit of church leaders. organized by WCC in 2015: On September 1, the WCC delegation visited the headquarters of CONIC in Brasília and met with representatives of its member churches and partners. The day ended with an ecumenical service at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Brasília in which the WCC general secretary preached.

ecumênicos que, em diferentes regiões do país assumem agendas com temas de direitos humanos. Nesse sentido, o apoio dado para a realização do novo Plano estratégico foi muito importante, pois contribuiu para reposicionar o CONIC no cenário nacional.

EMW apóia o CONIC desde que o Conselho surgiu, ou seja, mais de 30 anos. É uma cooperação pautada no diálogo, na confiança e em uma compreensão comum sobre a missão do movimento ecumênico na vida das Igrejas e no seu testemunho público. Das experiências recentes, sem dúvidas, o destaque é o Simpósio Ecumenismo e Missão em um mundo plural. Foi muito relevante o debate sobre o sentido da presença das Igrejas em ambientes cada vez mais plurais e seculares. Na época da realização do Simpósio, o conservadorismo religioso era uma variável já presente, no entanto, não se imaginava que haveria um crescimento assim tão rápido. O Simpósio contribuiu para que refletíssemos sobre nosso papel. Os resultados do Simpósio estão pautando nossos posicionamentos atuais.

¿Qué es lo que requieren para la cooperación con EMW em adelante?

O que pedimos é a continuidade dessa cooperação em um sentido também de troca de experiências e reflexões. A conjuntura é complexa. As religiões estão muito vivas e presentes no ambiente público. Essa presença, provavelmente, é muito diferente da Alemanha. Poder trocar informações, análises e experiências é importante para um testemunho coerente com a proposta ecumênica e com o evangelho. A América Latina foi protagonista na experiência de um cristianismo que não temia a reflexão crítica da própria religião. O engajamento das Igrejas com a luta dos pobres foi referência para o mundo inteiro. Muita teologia boa saiu de nosso chão. A conjuntura atual exige esse testemunho novamente. Ter a parceria, a confiança e a cooperação de EMW para isso é muito importante.

Recomendação para EMW

Que EMW siga sendo essa organização solidária e comprometida com um agir missionário crítico das igrejas. Nosso reconhecimento pelo trabalho realizado. E, como dizem os movimentos sociais: Vida longa para EMW.

Pastora **Romi Márcia Bencke**, Secretária Geral do CONIC
www.conic.org.br

FRATERNIDAD TEOLÓGICA LATINOAMERICANA

Reflexiones desde América Latina sobre la cooperación de EMW con movimientos protestante-evangélicos de los Dos Tercios del Mundo

Ruth Padilla de Borst, Costa Rica-based theologian, posts outlines from a Latin American perspective of EMW's cooperation with three evangelical organisations of the two-third world.



¿Qué tiene que ver la fe cristiana con las realidades de nuestro contexto? En medio de la pobreza, la injusticia social, la corrupción, ¿presenta la iglesia alguna alternativa? ¿Es pertinente la Biblia como revelación de Dios para las problemáticas actuales? Preguntas como estas condujeron a líderes protestante-evangélicos de América Latina a fundar la Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana (FTL) en 1970. Desde entonces, este movimiento se ha esforzado por promover la reflexión teológica bíblica y contextual, por servir como plataforma de diálogo entre quienes confiesan a Jesucristo como Señor y Salvador, y por contribuir a que la iglesia viva la misión integral de Dios en medio de las culturas latinoamericanas.

Desde su compromiso con las realidades del contexto, la FTL ha entablado relaciones significativas con movimientos afines en otros continentes. Esto la ha llevado a ser miembro fundador del Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) y de INFEMIT –inicialmente conocido como International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians y hoy International Fellowship for Mission as Transformation. OCMS le ofrece a estudiosos de los Dos Tercios del Mundo la oportunidad de acceder a un doctorado en instituciones educativas de Inglaterra.

Mientras tanto, INFEMIT se identifica como una comunidad que, centrada en el Evangelio, procura contribuir al compromiso integral de las comunidades cristianas como expresión del Reino de Dios y su justicia en las diversas regiones que componen nuestro mundo. OCMS e INFEMIT juntas auspician diversas pu-

blicaciones, como la serie Regnum en relación con Edimburgo 2010, y el Foro anual Stott-Bediako sobre asuntos candentes en la misión cristiana. Como ejemplo, el Foro más reciente se realizó en Amman y versó sobre “Respuestas cristianas al extremismo religioso”. INFEMIT también auspicia el Centro de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios en América Latina que, mediante sus programas de Maestría y Diplomatura, acompaña a pastores, líderes y laicos del continente a integrar su fe con sus disciplinas académicas, su vida profesional, familiar, eclesial y social. Este programa está siendo adaptado en otras regiones bajo el sello “Faith and Life”.

Hace varias décadas ya que la EMW coopera con estas tres organizaciones que se han movido prioritariamente en medios eclesiales evangélicos y pentecostales en América Latina y el resto del mundo. Varias razones explican el valor de la cooperación entre EMW e INFEMIT, la FTL y OCMS en estos 40 años y con vistas al futuro. Aunque ninguna de estas organizaciones se encuadra perfectamente dentro del esquema eclesial ecuménico, todas ellas promueven la unidad de la iglesia por encima de las diversas lealtades denominacionales. Fomentan el encuentro de cristianos de varios trasfondos alrededor del compromiso con la práctica de la misión integral. Por su respeto a la centralidad del relato bíblico en la vida y misión de la iglesia, estas organizaciones logran vincularse a los sectores conservadores más abiertos y servir como fermento de concientización. A su vez, y por su compromiso con la integralidad del Evangelio y su expresión concreta en medio de las problemáticas sociales, estas organizaciones logran acompañar a los sectores ecuménicos más abiertos y servir como fuente de inspiración bíblica y espiritual.

La FTL, INFEMIT y OCMS se presentan en el escenario eclesial como movimientos mediadores entre tendencias polarizadas y polarizantes. Al afirmar el señorío de Jesucristo, la autoridad de la Biblia, el poder de la oración en el Espíritu, y el valor de la piedad personal, con frecuencia son tachadas como irremediabilmente retrógradas y conservadoras por sectores autodenominados ecuménicos. Al entablar una reflexión y práctica misionera integral, comprometida con las realidades sociales, políticas y ecológicas actuales, son rechazadas como izquierdistas por el ala autodenominada evangélica. La FTL, INFEMIT y OCMS se resisten a categorizaciones rígidas y limitantes. Se identifican tanto como radicalmente evangélicas y como orgánicamente ecuménicas, es decir, comprometidas con la unidad de la iglesia desde su membresía. Al acompañar a estas organizaciones mediante el apoyo a sus publicaciones, consultas y conferencias locales, regionales y globales, EMW se tiende como un

necesario puente y un gestor clave de la unidad de la iglesia en misión alrededor del mundo.

Hoy nuestro pequeño planeta se debate entre la vida y la muerte. Los mitos sobre los cuales ha descansado la civilización occidental se están desmoronando. El mito del capitalismo moderno, del crecimiento neutral e ilimitado, ha encadenado a la humanidad a un nivel de consumo alienante, ha dejado atrás a las grandes mayorías y ha depredado la buena creación a un extremo insostenible. La maquinaria armamentista, la corrupción, y el terrorismo de estado han resquebrajado el mito de la civilización cristiana. Las instituciones eclesiales tradicionales con frecuencia han demostrado mayor interés en retener el poder y la hegemonía social de antaño que en pastorear a sus miembros y contribuir al bien común.

En el contexto latinoamericano las iglesias históricas, que en sus inicios contribuyeron significativamente desde el Evangelio a las sociedades en las cuales se insertaron, están muy debilitadas. Y mientras las iglesias pentecostales y neo-pentecostales crecen a paso agigantado, el incremento en el número de personas que se identifican como cristianas poco contribuye a que se evidencien en la sociedad los valores del Reino de Dios y su justicia. En medio de este cuadro desalentador, el aporte de los seguidos-

Abstract

Ruth Padilla de Borst, Costa Rica-based theologian, posts outlines from a Latin American perspective of EMW's cooperation with three evangelical organisations of the two-third world that are mission and education-related: the "Fraternidad Teológica Iatonoamericana" (FTL), the Oxford Centre of for Mission Studies (OCMS), and the International Fellowship for Mission as Transformation (INFEMIT). In addition to the profiles of the three organizations another connecting point is identified: they are bringing people of different religious backgrounds outside firm Ecumenical structures together, which, focusing on Christ and the Bible, and in expectance of the power of the Holy Spirit, are involved in socio-political matters and are standing up for the unity of the churches and an integral mission. The main task of these organisations is to build bridges between extremely conservative or radical Ecumenical agents.

EMW in turn becomes a necessary bridge for the global unity of the churches in mission activities by supporting appropriate activities, such as conferences, publications, etc.

In the midst of a Latin American scenario, where historic churches are rather weak and where members of the growing (neo-)Pentecostal churches help little to promote the values of the Kingdom of God and his righteousness within societies, there are small and fragile movements such as FTL, OCMS and INFEMIT that uncover existing myths and help to raise alternative communities at the base due to their radical commitment to the Gospel.

EMW's support of these networks enables them to continue to remain faithful to the God of life and to provide relevant answers to questions today.

res de Jesús de Nazaret descansa en la fe en un Dios vivo que actúa mediante su Espíritu y crea una comunidad alternativa que desenmascara los mitos mediante su compromiso radical con el Señor del cosmos. Aunque pequeños y frágiles, movimientos como la FTL, INFEMIT y OCMS impactan las bases orgánicas de las comunidades de fe con un evangelio y una práctica misional integral comprometida, y de este modo sirven como fermento de vida dentro de las estructuras existentes y más allá.

Ciertamente, estos movimientos son minoritarios y poco protagónicos en el escenario ecuménico mundial. Pocos nombres sobresalen en el mapa de quién es quién en círculos del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias. Sin embargo, como la grama que extiende silenciosamente sus raíces por debajo de la tierra, estos movimientos entrelazan a seguidoras y seguidores de Jesús de múltiples denominaciones, etnias, y lenguas alrededor del mundo, nutriendo encuentros transformadores y raíces profundas en la Palabra de Dios. A la Comunidad-de-Amor, Padre, Hijo y Aliento de Vida, el agradecimiento por la cooperación de EMW que contribuye a que esta red siga dando frutos de compromiso radical al Dios de la vida en respuesta a las preguntas candentes del día de hoy.

Dr. Ruth Padilla de Borst

Director, Center für Interdisciplinary Theological Studies (CETI) in Costa Rica
<http://ftl-al.org/>

SEMINARIO ANABAUTISTA LATINAMERICANO

A EMW en su XL Aniversario

Queremos compartir que el Seminario Anabautista Latinoamericano (SEMILLA), fundado en 1983, surgió para facilitar educación teológica y pastoral para líderes y agentes pastorales, tanto de iglesias anabaptistas/menonitas como de otras expresiones cristianas. Su misión es: “Preparar a hombres y mujeres para seguir y servir fielmente a Jesucristo y vivir el Reino de Dios, su justicia y paz hoy”.

Estas tareas se hacen posibles por medio de los siguientes programas:

- Formación Teológica y Pastoral, mediante la educación presencial y a distancia, en los niveles de Diplomado, Bachillerato y Licenciatura.
- Instituto de Justicia y Paz, que se enfoca en la capacitación e investigación en los temas de paz, justicia, no violencia, transformación de conflictos, reconciliación y convivencia ecológica, con el objetivo de potenciar la misión de iglesias y organizaciones comprometidas con la cultura de la paz desde la perspectiva del Reino.
- Centro de estudios interculturales, para estudiantes de diversos países que quieren aprender el idioma español, conocer la historia y cultura centro-americana, hacer amigos y tener la oportunidad de servir en este contexto. Esto incluye la concientización sobre la justicia y paz en perspectiva latino-americana.
- Ediciones SEMILLA es un centro de producción de literatura y recursos educativos en temas de teología, pastoral, educación, justicia, paz y reflexión social.

De esta manera, SEMILLA contribuye a sustentar la identidad, vida y misión de las iglesias, comunidades de fe e instituciones con las que coopera, fomentando en ellas la fidelidad a los principios y valores del Evangelio, el compromiso de anunciar el Reino en toda su radicalidad, y su vocación por trabajar para la transformación humana y social.

Y EMW participa en esta tarea. Su cooperación ha sido una bendición en la vida y misión de SEMILLA. Su acompañamiento y apoyo han ayudado al florecimiento de nuestro ministerio en las tierras latinoamericanas. A lo largo de los años, su contribución ha sido significativa en las siguientes áreas:

- Consolidación y expansión de los programas de educación bíblico-teológica
- Formación y capacitación de líderes y pastores por medio de becas educativas
- Fortalecimiento de nuestra biblioteca y otros recursos
- Implementación y desarrollo de la Escuela de Estudios de Justicia y Paz
- mejoramiento del edificio y las facilidades educativas
- Fortalecimiento de las capacidades de nuestros docentes o maestros.

En la jornada de caminar con EMW, hemos cosechado experiencias y aprendizajes valiosos. Uno de ellos es el valor del respeto y el diálogo abierto, horizontal, en las relaciones de cooperación. También el sentido de caminar y trabajar unidos por una misión común. Caminando con EMW hemos aprendido a tender puentes de encuentro y relacionamiento con gentes de diversos continentes,

culturas e idiomas. Así también ha sido significativo para profundizar nuestra vocación social, nuestra identificación con la justicia y la vida, y nuestro llamado a trabajar con los más pequeños y necesitados del mundo.

Abstract

Semilla is the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary which was founded in 1983 in order to provide biblical, theological and pastoral education for leaders and lay workers in the Anabaptist/Mennonite Churches as well as for churches of other Christian denominations. SAL-Semilla's programmes are alternative in the sense that they help to incarnate faith and commitment for the Gospel in the present context. The mission is "to prepare men and women to follow and serve Jesus Christ faithfully and thus to live out the reign of God with justice and peace today". SEMILLA challenges students toward an attitude of constant conversion, demonstrated in a commitment to preaching the Gospel and serving in his or her community in the midst of contemporary challenges.

www.semilla.org.gt

En el futuro esperamos seguir trabajando juntos. Queremos estrechar nuestras relaciones, fortalecer nuestros vínculos de cooperación y seguir trabajando en un espíritu de diálogo, solidaridad y hermandad. Nos interesa que EMW sea un canal para el compartimiento, el intercambio de experiencias y la construcción de relaciones con otras iglesias y organizaciones en los diversos continentes.

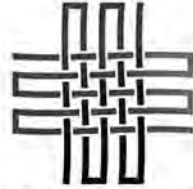
También sería importante promover más relaciones entre las contrapartes de EMW para compartir visiones, intercambiar metodologías y recursos, y construir vínculos de solidaridad. Puede ser valioso escribir un libro que recolecte y documente las principales experiencias de las contrapartes con las que EMW coopera.

Willi Hugo Pérez, Rector

UNIVERSIDAD BÍBLICA LATINOAMERICANA

Caminata juntos: EMW y UBL

La Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana (UBL) es una institución de educación superior universitaria. Brinda programas de Bachillerato, Licenciatura y Maestrías en Ciencias Bíblicas y en Ciencias Teológicas. La UBL nació en 1997 como universidad, pero es parte de un proyecto educativo que da continuidad a las labores iniciadas por el Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano en 1923.



UNIVERSIDAD BÍBLICA
LATINOAMERICANA
 PENSAR • CREAR • ACTUAR

Bajo la inspiración de Susana y de Enrique Stracham (misioneros escoceses radicados en San José, Costa Rica), nuestro proyecto educativo dio inicio en 1923 con un Instituto Bíblico. En sus inicios, el Instituto Bíblico (1923-1941) se perfiló como una institución evangélica de alcance continental con sede en San José, Costa Rica, y nace en búsqueda de métodos creativos para la mejor formación de obreros/as capacitados/as para el pastorado y la evangelización.

En el año 1941 el Instituto Bíblico se transformó en el Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano (SBL). Desde un principio tanto el Instituto Bíblico como el SBL tuvieron proyección internacional latinoamericana y caribeña, capacitando estudiantes y liderazgo eclesial para todo el continente. Posterior a la segunda guerra mundial, el SBL desarrolló mucho interés en continuar formando cuadros para las iglesias pero potenciando la excelencia académica. Fue a partir de los profundos cambios socio-políticos y económicos en el mundo y en particular en América Latina y el Caribe de la década de los 60 y años sucesivos, que “el SBL se fue definiendo más como una institución latinoamericana, en su dirección, en su pedagogía, en su vida estudiantil

De esta forma, hacer teología contextual y leer la Biblia desde América Latina y el Caribe (desde nuestras realidades socio-culturales y sus desafíos) se constituyó en un valioso rasgo de nuestra identidad. Además, el SBL se enriqueció con una apertura ecuménica al incorporar a estudiantes de todas las iglesias cris-

Abstract

The UBL is an institution of higher education at university level offering Bachelor, Licenciante and Master's degrees in Biblical and Theological Sciences. The UBL became a university in 1997 but still remains a part of the educational project initiated by the Latin American Biblical Seminary in 1923.

Since their foundation the seminary and the UBL have had an international and Caribbean orientation, educating students and church leadership for the whole continent. After the II. World War the seminary enhanced its academic theological education. In the 1960s and the following decades, which brought profound socio-political and economic changes to Latin America and the Caribbean, the seminary came to understand itself more and more as a truly Latin American institution. Teaching contextual theology and reading the Bible from the Latin American and Caribbean perspective (from the point of view of our social and cultural realities and challenges) became a distinguishing mark of our identity. Also the seminary also stands out because of its ecumenical openness to students from other Christian churches (Protestant and Catholic). We also have a profound respect for the equality of all people, inclusion and diversity, and justice and respect for God's creation. All these aspects of our identity are expressed in our motto chosen by our University Council in 2014: "Think, create and act".

UBL will be holding a special lecture series on the occasion of the Reformation Jubilee.

<http://ubl.ac.cr>

tianas (protestantes y católicos) lo cual configuró otra característica importante de nuestra identidad.

Otro rasgo de nuestro perfil, es la constante preocupación por desarrollar una educación diversificada y descentralizada que llegue a todos los rincones de nuestras selvas, costas y montañas de la vasta América Latina y el Caribe.

Además, otras cualidades de nuestra identidad son: un profundo respeto a la equidad, la inclusión y la diversidad, así como a la justicia y al respeto por la creación y llevar a cabo nuestro quehacer teológico desde un punto de vista contextual y transformador. Todos estos rasgos de nuestra identidad institucional como entidad académica, se recogen y sintetizar en nuestro nuevo lema establecido en e 2014 por el Consejo Universitario, que corto pero agudo: "Pensar, crear y actuar".

La cooperación de EMW con la UBL se ha dado durante muchos años de ministerio en América Latina y el Caribe. Las áreas o programas de cooperación entre EMW y la UBL están relacionadas con Becas para nuestros/as estudiantes que provienen de casi todos los países de América Latina y el Caribe. La beca les permite pasar períodos académicos en nuestra sede en San José, para avanzar o culminar sus estudios. En conjunto tenemos la política de becar al 50% de mujeres y el 50% de varones. Otra área importante de colaboración de EMW es con nuestro

presupuesto general, lo que nos permite operar y servir a más estudiantes y así fortalecer el liderazgo eclesial y social en la región.

Sin duda, otra gran contribución valiosa y significativa para nosotros, ha sido la cooperación con nuestro proyecto de Educación Virtual. EMW ha financiado en gran parte este proyecto y gracias a esta cooperación nos encontramos en el diseño de los programas de Bachilleratos y Maestrías en forma virtual, lo que nos permitirá llegar a más estudiantes en la región. Estamos en el proceso de autorización de esta modalidad educativa por parte de las autoridades de educación de Costa Rica. La misma se implementará como una modalidad en conjunto con cursos presenciales y a distancia, para diversificar así los caminos para llegar a más y más estudiantes en nuestro vasto continente latinoamericano y caribeño.

A pesar de que en la UBL hacemos un gran esfuerzo por gestar recursos propios, dadas las condiciones de nuestras sociedades latinoamericanas y caribeñas, siempre se hace necesaria la solidaridad y cooperación internacional porque las organizaciones basadas en la fe necesitan de la educación teológica para gestar su misión y desarrollarla. En esa perspectiva esperamos continuar con la valiosa colaboración entre EMW y la UBL.

Recomendaciones

Nos hace falta un diálogo más amplio sobre la eclesiología en América Latina y el papel de la Reforma como movimiento socio-eclesial inspirador de cambios y transformaciones sociales y eclesiales. Quizás EMW y la UBL podríamos realizar algo en conjunto. En esa perspectiva y para el 2016 queremos celebrar una Cátedra de Teología Latinoamericana, como un evento importante que convoque a iglesias e instituciones en nuestra región y en el mundo. La conmemoración de los 500 años de la Reforma Protestante sería el telón de fondo para esta cátedra. Estamos articulando todo el proyecto de manera tal que podamos compartirlo y enviarlo a ustedes y a otras agencias hermanas para recibir colaboración y llevarlo a cabo.

Dr. Edwin Mora, Vice-Rector UBL

CENTRO INTERECLESIAL DE ESTUDIOS TEOLÓGICOS Y SOCIALES (CIEETS)

Una caminata juntas

La Facultad Evangélica de Estudios Teológicos del CIEETS nació en 1982 como una iniciativa de las iglesias evangélicas en Nicaragua en el contexto de un proceso político revolucionario y donde las iglesias buscaban responder con pertinencia a los desafíos novedosos que les planteaba ese momento histórico.



El perfil de la FEET desde sus orígenes ha sido formar bíblica y teológicamente a los pastores y laicos para ejercer sus ministerios diaconales, pastorales y misionales en una Nicaragua hasta ese momento influida por iglesias provenientes de las misiones de EEUU, con un pentecostalismo bastante joven y con seminarios de teología denominacionales mayoritariamente. Actualmente somos una Facultad Evangélica con carácter ecuménico, miembro de la comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana y Caribeña (CETELA) que busca formar líderes para el diálogo, pensamiento crítico, encarnada en la realidad cotidiana en la que la iglesia realiza la misión y busca hacer presente el Reino de Dios.

Ahí nos encontramos en la mesa teológica que desde 2012 venimos compartiendo. Hemos nombrado así a este espacio porque nos sugiere el lugar de la casa donde podemos vernos a los ojos, a partir de la necesidad de compartir el pan mutuamente. Ha sido enriquecedor para la comunidad de estudiantes y docente en la FEET compartir la visita de hermanas y hermanos que se han dispuesto a conocer la realidad nicaragüense, escuchar los desafíos que vive EMW desde Alemania y su propuesta de misión y cooperación con las iglesias en todo el mundo; escuchar y tratar de comprender desde las voces de nuestros estudiantes cómo la educación teológica ha transformado sus vidas, les ha ampliado su horizonte y les ha servido de impulso para asumir con mayor compromiso los diversos ministerios en sus iglesias.

Actualmente la Facultad Evangélica de Estudios Teológicos trabaja hacia direccionar su propuesta pedagógica en el nuevo paradigma ecológico de educación que permita procesos donde los saberes sean integrados, abandonando modelos fragmentarios de gestionar el conocimiento. Buscamos con humildad motivarnos

en comunidad hacia este paradigma que plantea con urgencia la realidad global y planetaria, con respeto hacia la naturaleza, sabiéndonos parte del entramado vital; con visión ecológica de los problemas que afligen a nuestro continente como la violencia, la inequidad de género, la pobreza que provoca desplazamientos migratorios alarmantes, entre otros problemas para poder responder con pertinencia, para que la educación teológica tenga sentido y sustento liberador.

Anhelamos que EMW profundice su acompañamiento a nuestros procesos educativos en reciprocidad, en diálogo mediado por el contexto. Planteamos la urgencia de acompañar procesos de búsqueda de sostenibilidad de las instituciones de educación teológica en América Latina considerando que somos un continente que ha aportado fuerza y vitalidad a la reflexión teológica y que vivimos de manera directa los efectos de procesos económicos injustos. Desafiamos a nuestros hermanos de las iglesias en Alemania a compartir la misión en solidaridad, potenciando los intercambios de doble vía sur-norte, norte-sur, para que las iglesias alemanas también sean enriquecidas con los aportes que surjan desde América Latina e igualmente nosotros podamos recibir de la experiencia que vienen de contextos que viven procesos sociales complejos.

Lic. Blanca Cortés, Directora
Facultad Evangélica
de Estudios Teológicos (FEET)

Abstract

FEET – the Protestant Faculty of Theological Studies of CIEETS (Inter-Church Center for Theological and Social Studies) was founded in 1982 as an initiative of the Evangelical churches of Nicaragua in the context of the revolutionary political process where churches were searching to respond with pertinence to the new challenges planted by the historical moment.

Since it was founded FEET has been educating pastors and lay workers in biblical studies and theology. The aim is that they can fulfil their pastoral and missionary ministry in the context of a Nicaragua under the influence of many American missions, new Pentecostal churches and theological seminaries which are mostly denominational. Today we are an ecumenical Protestant Faculty and a member of CETELA (the Ecumenical Theological Education community of Latin America and the Caribbean). CETELA aims at educating church leaders for dialogue and a critical way of thinking about the contemporary reality in which the church realizes its mission in order to further the Kingdom of God.

Presently FEET is changing its pedagogical approach along with the Ecological Faculty to introduce a more wholistic form of learning. In view of the problems which are affecting our continent like violence, gender inequality and poverty which have led to an alarming number of migrants and displaced persons, we are trying to respond with an ecological vision so that our theology will have a sustainable and liberating significance.

www.cieets.org.ni

INSTITUTO SUPERIOR ECUMÉNICO ANDINO DE TEOLOGÍA

Teología en los Andes

El ISEAT ha sido fundado 1994 con el objetivo de brindar formación integral en aspectos teológicos, pastoral, espiritual, social y cultural a los y las líderes cristianos/as, desarrollar programas y actividades de capacitación teológico-ministerial, y producción y publicación de literatura y uso de otros medios de comunicación.



En la actualidad el ISEAT basa su trabajo en la formación de líderes eclesiales, religiosos y sociales a través de procesos educativos, de investigación y producción de conocimiento en temas religiosos, teológicos, espirituales, sociales y culturales. De esta forma, el ISEAT espera contribuir al fortalecimiento de las relaciones interculturales, ecuménicas, equidad de género y cuidado del medio ambiente / ecología, tomando conciencia sobre nuestras espiritualidades y los principios de descolonización para que las iglesias, comunidades eclesiales y la sociedad boliviana sean más justas e incluyentes.

Al ser una entidad ecuménica, el ISEAT no solo ha trabajado y trabaja de forma cercana con la membresía de iglesias metodistas y luteranas, sino que también apoya la formación de miembros libres de iglesias católicas, presbiterianas, nazarenas, pentecostales, bautistas u otras. Del mismo modo, nuestra opción intercultural trata de responder a la compleja dinámica multi y pluricultural de la sociedad boliviana, pues ésta desafía constantemente a nuestro quehacer teológico y a la formación teológica y social en nuestro complejo contexto .

La cooperación de EMW ha apoyado principalmente al trabajo del Programa de Ciencias de la Religión y Teología (PCRT) y de la Formación Bíblico Pastoral (FBP). Ambos programas están dedicados a la formación teológica y ministerial, y están dirigidos a estudiantes de iglesias cristianas tanto en la ciudad de La Paz como en otras regiones de Bolivia. Con este trabajo se espera fortalecer el liderazgo eclesial desde una perspectiva ecuménica e intercultural.

El PCRT se encarga de brindar una educación teológica académica formal a través del dialogo e interconexión entre sus cuatro áreas de reflexión: Teología

Practica y Pastoral, Teología Sistemática e Historia, Biblia, y Ciencias de la Religión. Este programa educativo está amparado por el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, pues los diplomas que extiende son válidos a nivel nacional

La FBP está orientada a un público diferente . Esta área incide en la formación de comunidades eclesiales en su propio contexto, pues genera las condiciones necesarias para compartir temas bíblicos y pastorales en cualquier lugar de Bolivia. Es por esto que se han tenido CEBIPAS (comunidades educativas bíblico-pastorales) en distintas ciudades y provincias de los nueve departamentos de Bolivia, las mismas que han contado con estudiantes de diferentes niveles de formación académica (desde educación primaria hasta universitaria).

El apoyo de EMW nos ha permitido a tomar conciencia de algunos problemas contra los cuales nos resta seguir trabajando, por ejemplo:

- Autoritarismo de líderes eclesiales sin formación académica en lo teológico, bíblico y pastoral, hecho que incide en la desestimación de la

Abstract

ISEAT (the Higher Ecumenical Institute of Andean Theology) was founded 1994 to offer integrative theological, pastoral, spiritual, social and cultural training to Christian leaders and people working in education, research and publishing in these areas. The institute works towards strengthening intercultural and ecumenical relations, gender equality, care for nature, consciousness of our spiritualities, and the principles of de-colonization in relation to the churches and church communities, with the overall goal of making Bolivian society more just and more inclusive.

As an ecumenical entity, ISEAT not only works in close cooperation with its member churches, the Methodist and the Lutheran Church, but is also open to members of the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Church of the Nazarane, Pentecostal, Baptist and other churches. Our intercultural emphasis is

a response to the dynamic complexity of the Bolivian society, because this is constantly posing a challenge to our theology and social and theological formation.

ISEAT provides different types of education; the EMW has supported the following programmes:

1. PCRT is our religious studies and theology programme. This is a formal academic theological course with four areas: practical and pastoral theology, systematic theology and church history, biblical and religious studies. The multinational state of Bolivia recognizes this degree.

2. FBP is our programme for pastoral and biblical formation. It has a different target group, aimed at training local church communities in their own context, and the courses are conducted at their own locations.

www.iseatbolivia.org

educación teológica integral como una necesidad para sí mismos o para su membresía.

- Intentos de imposición de contenidos doctrinales denominacionales a expensas de la línea ecuménica del ISEAT, y a expensas de la realidad contextual propia de las iglesias cristianas en Bolivia.
- Interpretación literal y fundamentalista de la biblia en contraposición a la reflexión crítica de los textos bíblicos que busca afirmar la vida en comunidad.
- Restricción en el acceso a la formación, educación y participación activa de las mujeres en las iglesias aun sabiendo que ellas son mayoría en las comunidades eclesiales.
- Primacía del estereotipo que afirma que lo religioso es un aspecto privado de las personas, obviando así su carácter relacional público capaz de transformar realidades.
- Desvalorización de las espiritualidades indígenas y negación de su valor como fuente para alcanzar cambios y transformación positiva en las comunidades eclesiales.

Desde la perspectiva del ISEAT, la labor de EMW es altamente valorable. Esperamos que su cooperación permanezca con nosotros y nosotras. Proponemos que la visión de apoyo y cooperación de EMW pueda abarcar temas de investigación e implementación de proyectos culturales y espirituales contextuales, ya que son estas dimensiones las que en gran medida determinan los alcances y limitaciones del trabajo teológico y pastoral que realizamos.

Juan Carlos Chavez Quispe

Director de los programas de educación teológica superiores

SEMINARIO EVANGÉLICO DE TEOLOGÍA DE MATANZAS

Un contexto especial

Somos la única institución ecuménica en Cuba que está dedicada a la educación teológica combinada con el servicio social. El SET está gobernado por una Junta Directiva, con funciones representativas, legislativas, consultivas y directivas.

La Facultad está integrada por profesores titulares nombrados por cada una de las iglesias fundadoras. El Claustro está integrado por la totalidad del cuerpo docente, que incluye a profesores titulares, invitados y visitantes, todos de un alto nivel profesional dentro de su respectiva especialidad.

Trabajamos en la formación académica, ecuménica, ética, moral y espiritual de aquellas personas que se sientan llamadas por Dios a ejercer el ministerio ordenado, y otros ministerios en la Iglesia, así como en la capacitación de los fieles que deseen servir en la obra del Señor a través del más amplio ministerio universal de los creyentes, mediante cursos regulares y especiales, en residencia permanente o por encuentros, entre otros. También estamos comprometidos en el desarrollo de una cultura ética, teológica y bíblica y, con esta finalidad, estamos abiertos a personas que no tengan la intención de ingresar en el ministerio cristiano en cualquiera de sus formas.

El SET ofrece los siguientes programas de postgrado de nivel universitario:

- Maestría en Teología y en Ciencias de las Religiones
- Ofrece además los siguientes programas de grado de nivel universitario: Licenciatura en Teología y en Ciencias de las Religiones
- Al finalizar el tercer año de la Licenciatura se obtiene el título de pregrado de: Bachiller en Teología y en Ciencias de las Religiones
- La Escuela de Educación Cristiana del Seminario ofrece el título de pregrado de: Bachiller en Educación Cristiana
- También se ofrece los siguientes programas que otorgan certificados o diplomas: Capacitación Bíblico-Teológica; Estudios Pentecostales; Diaconía; Instituto Bíblico-Pastoral.



Graduation ceremony at the Matanzas Theological Seminary.

Durante todos estos años, más de 30, EMW ha venido apoyando a nuestra institución en todos sus programas. Además de eso ha apoyado a la formación de su profesorado. En mi caso particular fue EMW la organización que costó mis estudios de doctorado a través de una beca en Tubingen, Alemania y desde entonces, además del apoyo general a presupuesto del SET, sostiene la Cátedra de Teología Sistemática que yo ocupé desde 1993.

Por otra parte, por su visión amplia y ecuménica de la formación teológica en América Latina, EMW ha ayudado a la colaboración entre las instituciones teológicas, en nuestro caso, ha apoyado desde hace varios años el intercambio entre el Facultades EST de San Leopoldo en Brasil y nuestro Seminario. Estudiantes y profesores de ambas instituciones han podido hacer estancias que no solo han ayudado a su formación sino que han profundizado los lazos de hermandad entre nuestras seminarios.

La cooperación entre el SET y EMW durante todos estos años ha sido ejemplo de cómo Iglesias y organizaciones eclesiales y ecuménicas pueden establecer relaciones de hermanamiento y colaboración mutua. El apoyo de EMW al SET no se ha limitado al campo económico sino que reamente ha sido un acompañamiento mutuo de apoyo y ayuda en ambos sentidos.

Cuando en ocasiones no se han entendido las razones para la implementación de un programa siempre ha existido la disposición de dialogar. (...) Importante para nuestra institución ha sido que el apoyo en este caso financiero, ha sido para el presupuesto general de manera que hemos podido nosotros decidir donde se ha hecho más necesario el uso de estos recursos de acuerdo con los programas que en un momento determinado más lo necesitan.

Otro aspecto importante de la colaboración ha sido que a través de EMW hemos conocido de la vida de las Iglesias alemanas, así como también a través de ellos hemos establecido relaciones con otras instituciones de formación teológica y misionológica.

PP. **Dr. Carlos Emilio Ham Stanard**, D.Min,
Rector
www.setcuba.org

Abstract

The SET (Protestant Theological Seminary) is the only ecumenical institution in Cuba which offers theological education together with training in diaconia. The board of directors is composed of ten members provided by the two founders, the Episcopal and Presbyterian Church of Cuba, and the two associate members, the Association of Baptist Churches and the Society of Friends (Quakers).

The Faculty includes teaching staff from the member churches and guest lecturers, all of whom are highly qualified in their special area of study.

The SET provides academic, ecumenical, ethical, moral and spiritual formation to persons who feel themselves called by God to the ordained or lay ministry, and regular and special courses are held for this purpose on the campus or at different locations throughout Cuba. The SET also aims at developing an ethical, theological and biblical culture and is therefore also open to Christians who want to serve society outside the church.

Degrees offered at the SET at postgraduate level are the Masters in Theology and in Religious Sciences. At undergraduate level courses leading to a Licenciante in Theology and in Religious Sciences are available. A Bachelor in Theology and in Religious Sciences can be obtained at the Christian Education School. Certificates or diplomas are possible in the subjects Biblical-Theological Education, Pentecostal Studies and Diaconia.

www.setcuba.org

AMERINDIA

Una red de 19 países

Amerindia es una red de católicos con espíritu ecuménico, abierta al diálogo y cooperación interreligiosa con otras Instituciones. Se propone como prioridad reafirmar la opción preferencial por los pobres y excluidos, inspirada en el Evangelio para responder a los nuevos desafíos planteados a nuestros países por la globalización neoliberal. Esto implica reafirmar la opción por nuevos modelos de iglesia comunitaria y participativa y abierta al diálogo ecuménico e interreligioso.



Sus objetivos son promover la participación activa y comprometida de los cristianos en los nuevos movimientos sociales para construir, con ellos, una nueva realidad social en el Continente.

Nuestra red se encuentra presente en 19 países de América Latina y el Caribe a través de Grupos Nacionales Locales, incorporando también a grupos de hispanos de América del Norte. Está conformada por personas e instituciones que, desde el paradigma de la solidaridad, trabajan por 'otro mundo posible' en distintas instancias y espacios de la sociedad civil y dentro de la comunidad cristiana.

A través de sus grupos nuestra red busca escuchar, hacer visible y apoyar tanto los esfuerzos de liberación como la generación de nuevas alternativas al interior del mundo de los excluidos por pobreza, género, raza o cultura. Este espíritu y el correlativo modo de inserción en la sociedad civil y en nuestras iglesias forman parte de nuestra identidad, intentando ser testigos cristianos en un mundo de pluralismo interreligioso.

Se ha colaborado en el "porvenir de la teología en América Latina" con una mirada prospectiva y relevando temas y prácticas. En este sentido se ha colaborado en la reflexión sobre temáticas específicas como ecoteología, sustentabilidad, medio ambiente, pueblos originarios, las luchas de los indígenas y migrantes, así como se ha trabajado sobre los nuevos escenarios y desafíos teológicos para

Amerindia hoy, “la cuestión de la vida y de la liberación” que nos permite ensanchar los espacios de nuestra reflexión.

Diálogo profundo intergeneracional: Apoyo a teólogos jóvenes a partir de la construcción de una red virtual y del desarrollo del Encuentro de Juventudes y Espiritualidad Liberadora

Luchas en Protección de la Madre Tierra: Aporte de teológico desde la Eco-teología a los procesos de sustentabilidad del ambiente, contra la minería y en una nueva concepción del ambiente y la naturaleza como sujeto de derechos y como integrante del nuevo paradigma civilizatorio. Participación activa en evento Iglesias y Minería

Organización del 1er Congreso Continental de Teología (2012): El evento significó un esperanzador impulso para la teología del continente. A través del mismo se confirmó que la teología de la liberación ‘está viva y continúa inspirando búsquedas y compromisos de las nuevas generaciones. (...)

2do Congreso Continental de Teología titulado “Por una Reforma con Espíritu y desde los Pobres” en octubre 2015,

Articulación con redes sociales y eclesiales del continente. A partir de estos programas se apoyó la unidad e integración latinoamericana basada en un modelo de vida alternativo, sostenible,

Abstract

AMERINDIA is a Catholic network with an ecumenical spirit, open to dialogue and interreligious cooperation with other organisations. AMERINDIA's main priority is the preferential option for the poor and the excluded inspired by the Gospel; this is how we wish to respond to the new challenges faced by our countries because of neoliberal globalization. The option for the poor plays a role in the search for a new model of the Church as a communitarian and participative body which is open to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

The aims of AMERINDIA are to promote active and committed participation of Christians in the new social movements so that we can create a new social reality on our continent together.

Our network is located in 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean through local and national groups, including hispanic groups in the United States. These groups are made up of individuals and institutions who are living in solidarity and struggling for “another possible world” in different locations and areas of civil society and within the Christian community.

Through this kind of cooperation our network tries to make the efforts of these committed groups known. AMERINDIA also supports alternative forms of life for the marginalised in the midst of a society which excludes them because of poverty, gender issues, racial or cultural identity. This community spirit and engagement to civil society and in our churches are distinguishing marks of our identity and our striving to be Christian witnesses in a multireligious world.

www.amerindiaenlared.org

sustentable y solidario. Los grandes ejes de reflexión fueron la dignidad humana, la soberanía de los pueblos y el futuro de los movimientos sociales, la inmigración, la trata de personas, la justicia climática. Estas coordinaciones se realizaron a partir de la participación en la Asamblea de Movimientos Sociales.

Publicaciones: Servicio de la Biblioteca Virtual con un boletín que llega todos los fines de semana a más de cinco mil personas, con ocho mil artículos y más de doscientos cincuenta autores registrados en todo el mundo. Continuamos también con la edición de libros, reflexiones, y aportes para grupos y comunidades que ha sido uno de los aportes característicos de Amerindia con la colaboración de varios teólogos y teólogas sobre todo del continente, pero también de otras partes del mundo. (...)

¿Qué experiencias/conocimientos importantes se han sacado por la cooperación con EMW?

La asociación con EMW es importante porque sentimos que en relación a los contenidos y procesos significativos que se han desarrollado desde América Latina, siempre hay desde EMW una valoración positiva y apoyo a los mismos.

Entre los conocimientos importantes ha sido la generación de una relación de alteridad y reciprocidad en donde nos sentimos como verdaderos partners y hermanados en este proceso de humanizar las estructuras, vivir la justicia y continuar trabajando por hacer presente el Reino.

¿Qué es lo que requieren para la cooperación con EMW en adelante?

Quizás sería interesante poder contar con la participación directa en alguna de nuestras actividades, asambleas, plenarios, congresos en donde se tiene un contacto directo con los grupos nacionales y es una excelente experiencia de comunidad y espiritualidad de la liberación vivida desde lo concreto.

Rosario Hermano, Secretaria Ejecutiva Amerindia

SOUTH PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

Advocator of the Ecumenical Movement

The EMW 40th year celebration is a historic point in the life of a committed mission partner that SPATS has indebted to over the past 20 years. The South Pacific Association of Theological Schools is grateful for the coordination and consultation in the financial support to SPATS mission in the Pacific region. The association consists a total of 26 members of interdenominational colleges across the 13 Pacific island countries.



Throughout the years, SPATS have always strived to ensure financial soundness at all times, even in the most turbulent of environments. The commitment of EMW as a partner of SPATS in the enhancing of the theological education remain a key partner of SPATS existence. We thank the outstanding leadership and the support from an international agency of promoting theological education in the pacific region.

EMW has shaped SPATS to be a strong advocator of the ecumenical movement and despite the challenges of the ecumenical movement today. The ongoing dialogue for an Pacific Ecumenical Cooperation remained a key ongoing discussion for a strong ecumenical family. The deliverables of SPATS mission in supporting theological education enhancing the 26 member schools and support some of the most underprivileged part of the Pacific islands. This solidarity remain the visibility of ecumene to the churches in this part of the global south.

Another major highlight has been on addressing the financial struggle of the organisation. The purchasing of the SPATS building in 2002 was a key milestone of the partnership. EMW spearhead the fundraising and a key player in the financing of SPATS. The SPATS Secretariat building and the establishment of the endowment fund was established through EMW contributions. Both are part of the sustainability initiatives of the Secretariat to be self-sufficient in her mission in the future.

We are privileged to have EMW which have been instrumental in driving the development of SPATS in the past to present. The self-running of some member colleges have demonstrated what can be achieved when SPATS financial system is manageable. A much brighter future is ahead and look forward of improvement with our partnership.

SPATS must redesign its mission to the new challenges and opportunities that the organization faces. Our new Five Year Strategy provides a sound platform of anticipating a fruitful golden jubilee celebration in 2019. We must constantly rethink our tools, our systems, our responses.

We must continue to be at the center of spiritual and educational transformation, that provide equal opportunities for all.

As the winds of change inevitable, economic change, blow across the global south, we are at the same time confronted with the financial struggles of TE of our members. Let me close by thanking the Hamburg office for nothing would have been possible without the inexhaustible role of keeping us running.

I expect that between now and in the future, EMW will be exploring all these matters. When that times comes our mandate remains as relevant as ever where new frontiers will open and the old will be transformed.

Rev. **Rusiate Tuidrakulu**
<http://spatsfj.org>