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Voices of Companions in the Ecumenical Journey

This chapter contains a selection of voices from friends in the ecumenical world, who have accompanied the EMW the during various stages of its development.

JACQUES MATTHEY

»A Gift for the World Wide Church«

The Swiss theologian Jacques Matthey was a member of staff, later the General Secretary of the Department of Mission of the French-speaking Churches of Switzerland, until he came to the World Council of Churches in 1999. There, as Secretary of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) he was responsible among other things, for the preparation of the World Mission Conference in 2005.

“Arme und Reiche in der Mission. ,Ob auch Reiche im missionarischen Stande seyn können“ (Poor and Rich in Mission. „Whether the Rich can also be part of the Mission”) was the title of one of the publications of the EMW that caused much disturbance in German theological and church circles - it offered pointed information on a problematic issue for Germany, one of the main topics of the World Mission Conference of Melbourne in 1980 (EMW Information No.30, October 1981). In the European church landscape of that time, ideas about the priority of the poor and exploited in God’s Mission were not recognised by all as good news. As a relatively young missiologist, employed in Geneva as Secretary for the preparation of the Melbourne conference, I experienced the EMW in the late Seventies as an innovative partner of the WCC, providing solidarity on issues of Theology, Church and Mission. Martin Lehmann-Harbeck represented at that time the EMW in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). I experienced the EMW as an honest but not uncritical partner, who in the World Council of Churches spoke out for a better understanding of the European Christians with their historical inheritance, but even more raised its voice in Germany and also towards the EKD on behalf of the ecumenical movement that was undergoing great changes at that time; experiencing as a result some strong, and in parts stormy opposition, not least from the evangelical side.

After the Melbourne conference many years passed before I was able to have closer contact with the EMW again, as I was more active in the French-speaking part of the world. As the person in charge of the Mission Association of French-speaking Protestant churches in Switzerland and President of the Swiss Protestant Mission Council I took part in the Nineties in the meetings of the European

Mission Councils (EEMC), where we carried out important discussions on issues, but also took time to build up informal personal relationships.

There I got to know Herbert Meissner, and discovered that we could share many common theological and practical experiences of mission agencies - both good ones and problematic ones. For me this was a very exciting and supportive experience. Institutionally significant at that time was his vehement commitment within the WCC to keep or rather to recreate the CWME. At the Mission Conference in Salvador de Bahia in 1996 there were restructuring plans floating around, that could have led to the Mission Commission being done away with. Together with other Mission Council members in the CWME, the EMW was able to create enough pressure to prevent this.

Shortly afterwards I once more took up a new position in the World Council of Churches, as the person responsible for the programme of mission studies, secretary of the CWME and Editor-in Chief of the magazine *International Review of Mission* (IRM). To be quite honest: without the EMW I would not have been able to take on that task. Of course that had to do with the financial support, which the EMW sent with remarkable constancy to the Mission Department of the WCC. But I also learnt a lot about ecumenical openness. What pointed the way for me was the publication, "Geistbewegt und Bibeltreu - Pfingstkirchen und fundamentalistische Bewegungen - Herausforderungen für die traditionellen Kirchen" (Moved by the Spirit and True to the Bible - Pentecostal Churches and Fundamentalist Movements - Challenge for the Traditional Churches; *World Mission Today* No. 19, 1995). The open attitude of the EMW, in the sense of a critical dialogue towards Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, encouraged me also to give stronger representation to such dynamic positions within the CWME and the WCC. I had developed enough trust in the wisdom and prophetic strength of the EMW, and particularly in Herbert Meissner and Klaus Schäfer, to open up the ecumenical movement as a whole at that time to this rather new direction. The questions around the understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the churches of the world were of course not new, but I would like to bear witness here, how important for me personally the openness and challenge of the EMW was. Even in later years it decisively encouraged the CWME to take seriously the voices of the Churches and Christians of the so-called extended ecumenical movement. This was all the more important, as at that time in Germany the debate between the Evangelical side and supporters of the Ecumenical Movement was causing great conflict.

The list of topics that we worked on together cannot be presented here at length. Questions of salvation and healing with the Pentecostal churches among others, also in collaboration with DIFÄM, wrestling for true partnership in post-modern society, debates about power and misuse of power in Mission and Church, the meaning of Mission in the Ecumenical Movement (Mission and Unity) and thinking over the *missio Dei* approach are only a few of the questions which led to a constant exchange of ideas with the EMW. In addition there was the close contact with Herbert Meissner and Klaus Schäfer in the joint planning of the preparation processes for the Mission Conference in Athens (2000 to 2005) on the subject of Pneumatology – Healing – Reconciliation and the cooperation that followed also with regard to the Jubilee of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. Christoph Anders particularly supported this under sometimes difficult circumstances. All these processes were also supported journalistically in an exemplary manner by the EMW, so that with regard to ecumenical mission concerns the public in Germany was better informed than in many other countries.

We could trust in their financial solidarity as already said. The EMW of course also demanded that we support them with the necessary reports, but without the extreme demands that one experiences from “development bureaucracy”. What was most important for CWME was to be able to build up possible reserves for conferences over several years - as Mission conferences were and still are for the CWME the key milestones to determine missiological positions. The EMW was flexible and willing to talk about joint programmes, which we from the Mission organised together with other WCC teams, but they could also demand very strictly, that the specific concerns of Mission and Evangelism were to be considered, which for us within the WCC was a question of survival. I was personally very impressed how staff members from Hamburg were very careful with their own travel expenses - in order to be able to give as many resources as possible to the partners.

The EMW could also put critical questions, for example about the treatment of evangelism in the Commission and in the priorities of the World Council of Churches, or about a certain neglect of challenges in a secularised Europe. Christoph Anders and Michael Biehl were also strong partners in the debate about the new Mission document of the CWME that I was part of at the beginning. May the EMW also continue in future to be able to take on this prophetic office in solidarity, to support the apostolic task of the churches in Germany and the whole world.

I have been much enriched through the many years of my relationships with you colleagues from EMW (also with those whom I have not named), and I truly value your hospitality and personal commitment to me on my visits to Hamburg or when questions came from Geneva. I declare openly to you also that I have grown spiritually thanks to you, and have been able to deepen my understanding of many questions, on account of your creative inputs. Friendships have also remained, even across the border of retirement.

For all that and much more, for the personal and the institutional sides – many, many thanks, also to the Triune God for the gift of an EMW to the worldwide Church, and to all those, who in the service of God’s mission try, in and in spite of our weaknesses, to combine wisdom with prophesy, and respect for others with credible witness.

KONRAD RAISER

40 Years EMW - Observations of an Ecumenical Companion

Konrad Raiser, born in 1938, came to the World Council of Churches in 1969 and was made Deputy General Secretary in 1973. In 1983 he became Professor for Systematic Theology at the Ruhr University Bochum. From 1993 to 2004 he was General Secretary of the WCC and since then lives in retirement.

In the many years of my work for the World Council of Churches the EMW was always one of the most important and encouraging contacts among the partners in Germany. I remember well that during the early plans for restructuring the EKD, there were attempts to create a comprehensive agency for Mission and Ecumenism, in which Mission, Ministries Abroad, Ecumenical Diaconal Work and the Church Development Services were to be brought together. However this was in the end unsuccessful. For us in the WCC the predecessor organisation of the EMW, the Protestant Liaison Board for World Mission (EAGWM), was an important partner for consultation and action on account of its membership in the Liaison Group for Church Development Service (AG-KED). The Rogate Sunday study materials, published annually by the EAGWM from 1971 onwards, became a crucial instrument in taking up ideas from the ecumenical movement and making them known in Germany. After the EMW was founded in 1975, it successfully took over this role and continued it. For the financial support of programmes and projects of the World Council of Churches with its member churches, the “Statement of Needs” and particularly the Programme for Services to Society were reliable partners.

With great interest and personal sympathy I followed the efforts of the EMW in its early years to formulate a holistic understanding of Mission in the context of ecumenical discussions. Exemplary for this was the dispute about the report of the EMW to the EKD Synod in Garmisch in 1980, which focussed on the interpretation of Mission in the context of poverty, in preparation for the World Mission Conference in Melbourne. The position paper that was written after this, “On the Question of Understanding Mission Today”, the agreement reached at the EKD Synod in Osnabrück, which corresponded with the later declaration of the WCC on “Mission and Evangelism” (1982) mark important positions in the

understanding and practice of Mission and formed a base for the close connection between the EMW and the WCC.

It was especially important for me, both in my work in Geneva, as also from 1983 onwards in my lecturing in Bochum, to combine the emphasis in the work of the EMW on issues of justice and solidarity and the conscious effort to bring together Mission and the issues of development cooperation. This found expression in a number of publications of the EMW Information series, which became irreplaceable tools for study and work. We regretted the fact and considered it a loss to a holistic understanding of Mission, that later on the fields of work that had so far been covered by the EMW, particularly with regard to services to society, were taken out and integrated into the Protestant Development Service (EED).

All the more important was the strong involvement of the EMW within the framework of the ecumenical commitment against apartheid and in solidarity with the churches in South Africa and the South African Council of Churches. The comprehensive documentation "Confession and Resistance (Bekenntnis und Widerstand). South African Churches in conflict with the state", that was published in 1983 (in German) by the EMW, contributed decisively in Germany to an awareness of the conflict in South Africa. Important was also that in 1987 the EMW made the second revised edition of the South African "Kairos Papers" together with additional comments from South Africa available for discussion in Germany. No other church institution or agency was as involved in solidarity with the churches in South Africa as EMW was.

The EMW has in the meantime gained recognition as the umbrella organisation and the professional organisation for ecumenical mission work in Germany. Its specific profile, together with the regional mission agencies, is the holistic and global approach of its work in study processes, publications, public relations work and in active cooperation and support for ecumenical partners, for example in the field of theological training or the work of regional ecumenical organisations. In numerous publications the Theological Commission of the EMW has encouraged and deepened discussion about a Mission Theology with an ecumenical profile. I would like to name just a few contributions, which have been published in the series "World Mission today": A Call for Mission. Contributions on the Understanding of Mission Today (No.35); Mission as Provocation. Learning Experiences from Worldwide Mission (No. 40); Missio Dei Today. The Actuality of a Theological Key Concept of Mission (No.52); and then above all the huge compendium: "Mission Explained. Ecumenical Documents from 1972 to 1992".

In the same series "World Mission Today" the EMW made important texts on social responsibility available to the churches of the worldwide ecumenical movement, and in country reports presented the church and the social situation of important ecumenical partners. As an example I mention here the early texts on "Human Rights in Asia" and "Namibia in the Eighties". This continued with country reports about selected countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East etc. A particular focus developed through several reports on the Development of Church and Society in China. This ecumenical missionary information work of the EMW continued to give the churches and mission institutions in Germany new input for their work as part of the worldwide ecumenical community of churches.

A very special gift of the EMW for all those who try to bring the ecumenical mission fellowship with the Christians and churches of the world into their parish work at home, are a number of booklets "Prayers from the Ecumenical Movement" (Gebete aus der Ökumene), which have been published since 1985. They were supplemented in 1995 by the ecumenical song book "Thuma Mina", published together with the Basel Mission.

These highlights of selected aspects of the work of the EMW over 40 years should show very clearly, that the EMW has always provided me with decisive input for my ecumenical commitment. In conjunction with the Association of Christian Churches (ACK) with its concern about the German ecumenical situation, the EKD offices with their responsibility for Ministries Abroad, the new Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development, and the regional Mission Agencies, the EMW has the unique function of making people aware that Mission and Ecumenism belong together in a global perspective, and so to fight the tendency of churches to be self-centred and self-concerned.

The annual report of the EMW 2013/2014 under the title "From all the Ends of the Earth. The new Landscapes of World Christianity" allows us to recognise already that the EMW is beginning to adjust to the changes in the profile of World Christianity and the challenges that this brings with it for the understanding of Mission and Ecumenism. The new Mission Declaration of the World Council "Together Towards Life. Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes" attempts to give an answer to these challenges. The convictions formulated in this paper will occupy the work of the EMW in coming years. This applies also for the other key text on "Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World", which was at the centre of the international ecumenical congress "Mission Respect". For these new directions of its work EMW deserves all our support.

CARLOS E. HAM

»Faithful to God's Mandate«

Dr Carlos Emilio Ham is the Rector of the Protestant Seminary for Theology (SET) in Matanzas, Cuba. He has a long history with the EMW.

God has blessed my work so that in four different organisations within the 40 years of the existence of the EMW I have remained in intensive contact with the Mission Association. The organisations for which I have worked within this period are the Student Christian Movement of Cuba (Movimiento Estudiantil Cristiano - MEC), the Presbyterian Reformed Church (IPRC), the World Council of Churches and at present the Protestant Seminary for Theology (SET) in Matanzas/Cuba. In the following I would like to describe four outstanding characteristics of the EMW in its relationship to the individual institutions.

During the Seventies, the Eighties, and at the beginning of the Nineties I was active in the student movement in Cuba. I had taken on various responsibilities, including the chairmanship, and advisory capacities at a national level, which enabled me to make direct contact with the staff of the EMW. From this experience we learnt to respect and value tangible declarations of solidarity - at a time when on the one hand, our country was suffering under the effect of the blockade by the United States, and is still suffering from it now; on the other hand it was our interest as young students to proclaim our Christian faith in a time of propagated materialistic atheism on the part of the Cuban state, which I am glad to say could since be overcome. Even though the Socialist State had set up free education for all people in Cuba, certain courses of study were not open for students who had confessed to having a religious faith. In situations such as these, the knowledge was invaluable to us, that we were not alone, but that God accompanied us through the solidarity of our sisters and brothers of the EMW.

Later, when I served in our Presbyterian Reformed Church for eight years as pastor and General Secretary, I was able to continue the relationship with the EMW from a different perspective. It always impressed me that this partner organisation worked in close connection with the churches, both in Germany and also in other countries. In this way the EMW is not a non-government organisation, which supports the churches from a secular spectrum, but rather it contributes

in theory and practice to Mission and a prophetic ecclesiology. The EMW is truly the missionary arm of the German churches and as such it plays a “Papal” role – by building bridges between the German churches and the churches abroad, as well as between the Church Councils of the Oekoumene, in order to fulfil together God’s mission for the whole of creation.

This leads me to the third organisation, the World Council of Churches. In the WCC I first had the opportunity to work as Programme Secretary for Evangelism. Later among other things I coordinated the work of the teams for Mission and Ecumenical Training. These responsibilities allowed me to work more closely with the EMW and to get to know it better - for example by taking part in General Assemblies of the EMW, through visits to the office in Stuttgart, later in the administrative office in Hamburg, and also through the relationships of the WCC to the churches and congregations, with whom the EMW also closely cooperates.

In the past the EMW gave special support to the work of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC and worked together with them to develop a holistic liberating concept and practice of the *missio Dei*. This helped to strengthen the profile of Mission and Evangelism in the Ecumenical Movement. Or to put it in other words, the colleagues of the WCC were strengthened to understand and carry out their work as a commitment to the values of the Kingdom of God - which was not always easy - in order to achieve “justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14, 17), as an expression of God’s Mission.

During the time that I worked as Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, I not only witnessed the commitment of the EMW with regard to the financial issues of ecumenical theological training, but also their concern about the concepts for curricula and their discussions about the content, both at an international and also at regional levels on the various continents. In various countries this work continues also in the close relationships of the EMW with the theological training centres (seminaries, institutes and universities) and with the various associations in which they have joined together in order to strengthen their South-South relationships.

These experiences at the WCC led me to the fourth organisation in which I am at present employed, as Rector of the Protestant Seminary for Theology (SET) in Matanzas on Cuba. The EMW has been close to the SET ever since its founding.

The SET has always tried to offer a solid, profound and contextual theological training in close cooperation with the Mission of the Churches of our country. This was of great importance for us, especially in times when various fundamentalist groups with a sectarian mentality tried to establish themselves on Cuba and propagate what we considered to be a distorted interpretation of the Gospel. Besides this, they have a way of giving academic diplomas and qualifications quickly and in an improvised way, without any great effort being required by all concerned.

On the other side, the SET is the only theological training centre on Cuba with an ecumenical focus. The EMW supports and goes along with us in our efforts for a Vision and a Mission for theological training, which is directed towards a real and permanent integration of theology and life, theory and practice, interpretation of the Gospel and pastoral action, and has a focus on ecumenism and social diaconal work.

These are the four stations, which have linked me with the EMW. Beginning with an accompaniment in absolute solidarity, followed by a committed ecclesiology, a holistic mission and the ecumenical theological training. The EMW was not free from mistakes and partly had to work under difficult conditions, with limited financial means. It got involved in risky situations in various countries - but I have always experienced the EMW as an institution that has remained faithful to God's mandate: "Therefore go and teach all peoples and baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28, 20). Let us thank God for the fruitful work of the EMW and pray to the Triune God, that he may make Oekoumene possible, so that for many years to come we can celebrate the success of the EMW in our common commitment to Koinonia, this community of the Kingdom of God, that God has planned for the whole of creation!

RENÉ KRÜGER

40 Years EMW, as seen from Rio de la Plata

Prof Dr. René Kruger is a pastor of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP, Iglesia Evangélica del Rio de la Plata) and Professor emeritus for New Testament at ISEDET and at the Theological Faculty of the Argentinian Catholic University (UCA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The IERP is a three-country church in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, whose congregations stem from Protestant German-speaking immigrant families from Germany, Switzerland, the Volga area in Russia and from Brazil.

A forty year long road reminds me of the exodus from slavery into the Promised Land, into freedom and self-responsibility. On the far horizon also shimmers a rain of 40 days and 40 nights, judgement and at the same time a new beginning. The number also reminds me of Jesus' preparation-time before he began his work in public, and then also the time of Lent leading up to Jesus's death and resurrection that we remember every year. Reflection, remembering God's intervention, giving thanks for the new beginning and new perspectives - perhaps we can keep this at the back of our minds, when we celebrate the 40 years anniversary of the EMW.

As a student of theology (1970 to 1974) I had of course frequently heard of EMW, but during study times one does not take too much notice of the international relations of one's faculty. It was the same when I was working as a pastor. From 1984 onwards however as a lecturer I became much more aware of the EMW. But I did not really come into contact with them until I became the Rector of the ISEDET (Protestant University for Theological Studies) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The EMW has supported theological training throughout the world for many years in a number of countries, including at the ISEDET.

With the extensive correspondence, with communication on the annual reports of ISEDET and on my annual information tour to Hamburg, the brothers and sisters in the EMW never made me feel that they were the "haves" and we were, or are the "beggars", or that our relationship was just limited to the transfer of funds - the annual support of the EMW for the ISEDET. In Hamburg I always

met people who were alert, who were open for our situation, who expected detail reports and just as detailed accounts and wanted to have them explained, in order to represent the concerns of theological training in Latin America to all the committees who were responsible for granting the subsidies. In Normanweg they were not only interested in ISEDET, its difficulties, problems, steps and small successes; but also in the life, suffering and hope of the supporting churches and in the general situation at La Plata and in Latin America. At coffee time with biscuits or at our joint lunch, our conversations often also veered towards the other theological institutions on our continent, which were dependent just as ISEDET on the support of the EMW and other institutions.

We learnt a lot from this: taking steps towards raising more funds ourselves, being able to communicate with each other about setbacks, using the means available to us in a responsible and careful way, building up courage to try out new things, improving on the exchange of ideas with each other, becoming part of international networks; and above all knowing that we in the global South do not stand alone at the foot of a huge mountain of tasks and have to deal with everything on our own. There were and there are brothers and sisters in the North, who help us out and give us a hand.

Now, in June 2015, the structure of the ISEDET, which has existed since July 1969, is being demolished or rather given up on account of many difficulties; the churches will have to set up a new theological training structure and institutions. I hope very much that the new efforts, both in my IERP (partner church of the EKD) and also in renewed ecumenical cooperation, will continue to be backed up theologically and supported financially by the EMW.

But I am thinking of more. Because from my own experience I know that the EMW will not consider thoughts and direct suggestions from the South as being paternalistic, I allow myself to make three suggestions (the same ones by the way that I always make at the different levels of the Gustav Adolf Werk (GAW, Gustav Adolf Association for Diaspora Churches):

The EMW is in the very privileged position of being able to bring together and link up churches, theological training centres and other church institutions and organisations in the South. Often we from the South have far more relationships in South-North directions than in the South itself. Here EMW can help us in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Pacific to get to know each other better, to intensify our theological exchange, to learn about each other and from each other.

The EMW is in the very privileged position of being able to extend the theological exchange between North and South, and to a much greater extent than has so far been the case. We maintain various contacts to universities, faculties and institutes in Europe; but these are usually only bilateral, rarely multilateral. For this it would be necessary to have forums and platforms, which can only be created by those institutions that think and work in a truly multilateral way.

The EMW is in the very privileged position of being able to take stock of the present-day church situations in the South, and above all the missionary input that is being tried in the South, and should be able to bring these into the theological landscape of churches in Germany. Throughout Germany we usually only hear of processes of shrinking, loss of members, shrinking congregations, reduction of pastors' positions, resignation, frustration, secularisation etc. If we try to talk about a new Christian Mission Campaign for those ex-Christian or non-Christian masses in Germany, it often feels like there are "static electrical charges" between us. The term Mission has a bad name, it is said. That is sad enough! But why? Because of a few negative experiences in the past? Or is it ineffectiveness or even your uncertainty in faith, which allows such theologically empty and even totally wrong prattling against Mission? Can a church without Mission be called a "church" at all?

Would the drafting of a strategy for a Mission Campaign in Germany not also be a task that we could all tackle together with the EMW? That Mission is not a one-way street we have known for a long time: that Mission Associations do not only pass on money, but also (wish to and should) exchange experiences is great; but what can the EMW, what can we together with the EMW do concerning Mission in Germany? There are people, experiences, theology, means and opportunities for it, more than enough!

MARTIN SCHINDEHÜTTE

The EMW – a Unique and Independent Place for Ecumenical Dialogue

Martin Schindehütte was from 2006 until 2013 Bishop and Head of the Department for Ecumenical Relations and Ministries Abroad at the Church Office of the EKD. In this time he was a member of the Board of the EMW.

The EMW acts as an intermediary and a place for ecumenical encounter. Its base is the mandate and support of its members and partners. However it has to work independently and occasionally take a stand against them. It does not belong to anyone and yet is there for everyone. It has a unique task, which cannot be fulfilled in this way by anyone else in the church context.

This abstract of my work in the EMW as EKD Bishop for Ecumenical Relations and Ministries Abroad was at the beginning, anything but a matter of course. It required an intensive process of clarification and communication, until a period of high conflict in the relationship between the EKD, as the “heavyweight” among the members, and the EMW, was transformed into a trustful and extremely fruitful cooperation. The reason for the profound disagreement were the efforts on the side of the Church Offices of the EKD to integrate the EMW into their own working structure. Even if there might have been some reasons of synergy and cost efficiency - I was very thankful for the fact that at the beginning of my time in office this question of an “integration” had been decided, and the EMW had retained its independence.

What is the indispensable “Added Value” of an EMW as an independent institution in the sense described above? The broad ecumenical membership is of decisive importance: the twelve Mission Agencies, five Federations, five Free Churches, and the EKD form a broad ecumenical network and are an indispensable platform for an open theological dialogue on central questions of Mission and Ecumenism. The Mission Agencies and Churches constantly find a balance between their quite different emphases in church, missionary and ecumenical contexts. This means that the EMW is an important place for the protagonists in Germany for exchange and finding common ground on Mission and church concepts. The

EMW has played an important role in the debates on a Mission Concept in Dialogue and in drawing a line against Mission concepts, which consider their own belief to be the sole truth and defend it “aggressively”. It has also proved itself to be a place where the broad reception of the key Mission Paper of the WCC, the Vatican and the WEA, “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World” could be organised, and an inter-religious dialogue prepared. For the EKD the Council considered the platform of the EMW to be the most suitable platform and requested the EMW to organise this reception process.

All the members of the EMW have global contacts and are in close cooperation with their ecumenical partners. They can be a productive and dependable network together, also in their international context, on account of the fact that the EMW does not only stand for a certain form of Church and its concept of ecumenism and Mission, but rather values and makes use of the creative diversity of its members. As the person responsible for ecumenical relations in the EKD I learnt to appreciate the extraordinary value of these possibilities of the EMW. On the one hand, the EKD itself is an institution with intermediary character and has an extensive coordinating role. On the other hand however the EMW also has other Protestant member churches, who do not belong to the EKD. This creates a greater atmosphere of trust and ecumenical cooperation than is possible for the EKD.

How can and how should the EMW make use of this special constellation for its work? What special tasks grow out of it? The EMW has the unique opportunity to become a place for the systematic reflection and the continual dynamic exchange on an ecumenical theology in the context of different denominational Protestant traditions and even more different cultures. This offers us the opportunity to recognise our own theologies and ecclesiologies that have been formed and influenced by European culture, not to try to overcome them, but rather to qualify them in dialogue, and for a dialogue with theologies and church life that have developed in different cultural contexts. At the same time a reflection of our own cultural formation and bonding is necessary, so that our ecumenical partners can integrate the European constructs from their mission history into an independent theology and Christian life in their own context.

The EMW remains an important sponsor and partner for theological work in many churches throughout the world. This does not only apply to securing the existence of many theological seminaries and institutions. This applies above all to theological exchange itself. Together with the Academy of Mission and its link to the University, the EMW can on the one hand, together with all its members,

support independent developments with regard to theology and church life of ecumenical partners; at the same time, in a mutual process on an equal footing it can also learn from them and introduce into the dialogue its own profile of a theology in the European context, without any special claim and in a relaxed manner.

In this situation the EMW takes on a task to which the EKD is also committed. Therefore the EKD can on the one hand profit from the work of the EMW. On the other hand it can itself contribute considerably to how these tasks are perceived. And so the EKD can make its own global ecumenical contacts fruitful for the work of the EMW. The frequent close cooperation between EMW and EKD in relation to the Churches in China is one of many such good examples. Both for the ongoing work in China itself, and also on the special occasions when visits of church delegations from China or delegates from Germany to China take place, there is close cooperation particularly with regard to theological dialogue and theological training. The China-Information Desk, which was established for this reason, is very helpful here – just as other advisory positions and networks for other regions of the world.

It was and is of great interest for the EKD to draw on the competence of the EMW and make it fruitful, especially for the work of the more recently founded Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development (EWDE), and of course vice-versa for the work of the EWDE for the EMW. Both of them work with a different mandate, but often with the same partners in many regions of the world. Coherent concepts for their mutually complementary work and communication are therefore of the greatest importance. I am very thankful that a regular exchange between the EMW and the EWDE has been installed at the level of strategic planning.

The work of the EKD abroad with its 150 German-speaking congregations throughout the world offers great potential, which could be drawn on even more. The role of these congregations for development cooperation and the work of the mission agencies and the EMW can be defined in more detail both in theory and practice. In the fields that I have mentioned, we can see how the coordinated networking of the EKD and the EMW can intertwine, while each retains its own identity.

It only remains for me to say, that my work together with the EMW in the reliable cooperation with the staff and governing bodies has personally enriched me in many ways. The many aspects of church life and theological perspectives that we encountered were stimulating and opened up wide ecumenical horizons. May there be many more such experiences in the indispensable work of the EMW in the future.

AMÉLÉ ADAMAVI-AHO EKUÉ

Relationship Work

Amélé Adamavi-Aho Ekué is Professor for Ecumenical Ethics at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey and in charge of programmes for the ecumenical theological training of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. From 1994 to 1999 she was a tutor at the Academy of Mission in Hamburg and was a member of the Theological Commission of the EMW from 1996 to 2007.

Wisdom is, in the context where I come from, like a Baobab tree, one arm (i.e. one person) alone cannot embrace it. With this picture before me, I look back with thankfulness on my companionship with the EMW. This began, when I took up my first professional position as tutor at the Academy of Mission (*Missionsakademie MA*) in 1994. Especially in the first years of my work there, the close working relationship with the EMW was very important for me. Taking part in meetings, annual General Assemblies and staff meetings were a great learning experience for me; and I remember how much I admired the professionalism of the preparation of the meetings (agendas with exact time slots for every point on the agenda!). It was clear to me then, as it is today, that behind this professional meticulousness there was more than bureaucratic administration, it was rather that people and their concerns were taken very seriously and also the global relationships arising from these common issues.

For me, the work in and with the EMW has (had) always a reliable framework, a contour and visibility: to reflect on God's Mission together in ecumenical responsibility and to interpret it continually anew against the background of our experiences in this world. This applies to the close neighbourhood in which the links to the MA, the students from all over the world and the tutors there were looked after with particular care, and also to the relationship with churches and agencies in various regions of the world.

That the EMW understands itself as a learning community with people from quite different cultural and confessional backgrounds, became particularly clear to me in a second phase of my connection with them. When I, together with other colleagues from the MA, the University for whom I later worked and the Ecumenical Desk of the North German Church, initiated an educational

and further-training programme for members of African congregations in the North German area. I remember clearly the scepticism that we faced at the beginning, even from the EMW. Can such a project succeed with people without any academic theological training? Does it make sense to include Independent Churches that are not members of the World Council of Churches? What will such a training programme mean for ecumenical relationships?

These were justifiable questions, to which we as those responsible had to find answers in order to be able to include them in our concept and translate them into practical steps. However the EMW in spite of their critical feedback, never refused support and guidance for the project. And today the EMW, as also many mission agencies and churches in Germany, belong to the circle of those who agree with this form of theological training and support it, because it not only leads to theological qualifications for members of migration congregations, but rather to ecumenical relationships on an equal footing.

Partnership with Christians from all over the world who live in the neighbourhood, became for the EMW an ecumenical learning experience of their own; and as I see it, it also had consequences for their continued care for “distant” partnerships. This is most certainly one of my experiences with the EMW, which today is still very present in my memory. The Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany has maintained its identity as an institution that is committed to Mission in ecumenical responsibility, in that it understands itself as “a learning agency” and together with others strives for an interpretation of God’s Mission in our world that is appropriate to the Gospel. For partnership does not mean a one-sided giving and taking, but rather an openness for the gifts on both sides of those, who according to the prayer of Jesus should be one. It was always very important for me to recognise that the EMW not only looked at this question of the relationship between partners in the ecumenical world, but also looked self-critically at itself. Church partnerships, just as those in secular contexts, are not free from asymmetric elements. Economic disparity, different plausibility in their view of the world, theological differences, and last but not least the inheritance of Mission History demand sensitive approaches to the relationship, where the participants turn to each other in a respectful and open way although aware of often hidden snares.

In the last few years, in which I have been working for the World Council of Churches, the question of theological training has once more come to the fore in this inspiring community. In the EMW Commission for Theological Training,

in which I am allowed to take part as a representative of the World Council of Churches, but also in joint conference projects, such as recently in the so-called Twin Consultations on "Reformation - Education - Transformation" for the occasion of the Reformation Jubilee, I have sensed how common concerns to prepare people for ecumenical dialogue and encourage cooperation across denominational borders could be driven forward with great trust and commitment.

Perhaps I can adequately interpret my relationship to the EMW with the current picture of the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace in the Ecumenical Movement. On such a pilgrimage people are on the move together for a long time, sometimes they interrupt the joint journey, but without losing sight of each other; the reliable companionship remains, in which both sides provide substantial support for each other. What is important in order to bear witness to a better human reality in this world with all its shortcomings and inadequacies, where Christians and members of other religions suffer? How can we express our hope in the face of hopelessness, and at the same time remain attentive to our own vulnerabilities? This reliable companionship has in the end kept me connected with many colleagues in the EMW throughout the years. The cooperation and mutual support even in times when rough institutional winds are blowing, is a strong mark of solidarity that I have learnt to value very much.

Guidance and reflection on many subjects, relationship work and companionship today shape my memories and my present relationship to the EMW. I hope and wish, not only for myself, that the relationship that has grown over the years with the people who make up this association, can remain and be consolidated. Ecumenical work needs reliable relationships. I congratulate the EMW on its 40th anniversary and hope that it continues to be a learning community and a companion community with many people and churches; and that this companionship mirrors something of that hope against hope, which is promised to us by the One to whom we are on the road as sisters and brothers.

ANDRÉ KARAMAGA

Partnership with EMW

Rev. Dr. Andre Karamaga is General Secretary of the All African Council of Churches.

EMW has become part and parcel of my professional journey and I am full of deep gratitude for its contribution to ecumenical theological education, especially for the development of the Church in the world. It is with profound admiration that I salute numerous achievements, especially in the life of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). I have been serving the AACC with its 183 member churches as General Secretary since January 2009. AACC represents about 120 million African Christians living in 41 African countries and has been in partnership with EMW for many years.

I came to know EMW in 1990 when I was appointed as Director of the Selfhood of the Church unit of the AACC and Executive Officer for the Theology programme. But later on, I came to learn that EMW contributed through WCC to my theological training in Cameroon, when I got my Master's degree in theology. EMW took seriously the proposal we made of shifting from the paradigm of liberation to the one of reconstruction in the African theological reflection.

This shift was motivated by the fact that the theme of liberation, borrowed by Africans from the Latin American context, was used in connection with the colonial legacy. The focus of our interpretation was mainly based on the reading of the book of Exodus, comparing our situation with the oppression of the children of Israel. When we got our independence, we found it inadequate to continue complaining against colonialism, while we had taken the destiny of our nations into our hands. The AACC Symposium which took place in Mombasa in November 1991, with a strong support from EMW, proposed to move from liberation to reconstruction and many publications focusing on the reading of Nehemiah "Let us rise and rebuild" were produced in that regard.

After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, my Church called me back to Rwanda to deal with the many post genocide challenges. From 65 pastors my Church had before the genocide, only 25 survived and our first action was to call upon EMW to support us with a special programme adapted to the situation. EMW respond-

ed efficiently with extraordinary understanding and we launched that special training which had concrete results, because most of the leaders of churches in Rwanda are the product of this programme. In fact, I left the leadership in my Church in 2001 with 75 pastors, more than the number we had before the genocide. Thanks to EMW for that. What would we have done without the visible and eloquent solidarity of churches in Germany through EMW?

We are aware that EMW was supporting us in Rwanda, but also doing the same in other countries in Africa, in Asia, Latin America, etc. When we talk about the current world Christianity, we need to value and salute the great contribution of EMW.

From 2002 to 2008, I served as WCC Executive Secretary for relations with Africa and collaborated with EMW, especially in favour of AACC when it went through some turbulences and the contribution of EMW for the stabilization of AACC cannot be forgotten. Once again, my position gave me the possibility to appreciate the role of EMW, especially through the WCC ETE program, not only in Africa but throughout the world.

Since 2009, I witnessed the contribution of EMW in its accompaniment and support of the growing Church in Africa through the partnership with AACC and other Church organizations. EMW is one of the main supporters of our programmes and we are thankful for that. What is more valuable is that EMW is much knowledgeable of dynamics informing everyday work in various parts of our continent. This is very important to benefit from their long experience, competence and love.

I wish a blessed 40 years anniversary to EMW and pledge the openness of AACC for a fruitful collaboration to the glory of God. The role played to promote ecumenical training is known by many and I am sure that a crowd of witnesses can join me to thank EMW. To God be the glory.

MITRI RAHEB

EMW: A Personal Perspective from Palestine

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.

It must have been early 1980's when I heard about the EMW for the first time. I was then a student at the Mission Seminary in Hermannsburg. At the time, excitement mingled with uncertainty as people were not sure what integrating mission into the "state-church" might entail." This question was still in debate when I left the seminary in 1984 to go to the University in Marburg for my dissertation.

However, the first real encounter with EMW was in the late 80ies. I had just finished my dissertation at the Phillips University in Marburg, and also had very recently started as the Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem. In Palestine, there was a Christian movement emerging around al-Liqa' Center. The first Palestinian Uprising 'Intifada' as only few months old, when a group of Palestinian Theologians and Lay leaders came together in Bethlehem to launch a theological document called "Theology and the Local Church." This was the shy first attempt to develop a Christian ecumenical theology in a Palestinian context marked by the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. As a fresh graduate, I both blended in the movement and found a new home at home.

It was in this context that few of the Palestinian theologians including myself were invited to Hamburg to present the document at a theological consultation as well as to discuss with people from EMW and the Academy of Mission in Hamburg the main issues, questions, and challenges arising from a contextual Palestinian theology. The fact that EMW was a major drive behind this consultation demonstrates how this organization was always at the forefront in creating the necessary space for emerging theological voices from the South to be introduced to the North. One cannot overestimate the importance of this step. Contextual theology was not something common in German protestant faculties at that

time. The general feeling was that theologians developed “Theology” at German Universities, while people in less developed “sub-tropical areas” write only contextual theology. In truth, all theology, including that at German Universities, is contextual. Indeed, one might say that theology in German universities was a parochial undertake. Students of theology at German Universities were reading theological writings almost exclusively written in German. It was seldom that one could find a required reading of a theological book written in English or that originated from the South. One had the feeling, that Germany was theologically self-sufficient at that time. For the record, it must be said that EMW was the first organization in Germany to give voice to emerging theologians from the South in general and from Palestine in particular, thus challenging the deception of self-sufficient German theology.

In addition, EMW played an important role in EMOK “The Protestant Middle East- Committee” in Germany. This organization was started in 1976 as an umbrella organization with the aim of coordinating the work of German organizations in the Middle East. EMOK was instrumental in introducing churches of the Middle East to the German church landscape and audience. EMW was also involved in this umbrella organization, and was always eager to lift up the Palestinian local voices and to express concern for justice, things that sometimes the German church at large and other organizations shied away from doing.

MANUEL QUINTERO

EMW: A Genuine Partner in Mission

Manuel Quintero, an elder of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba, served as staff of the World Student Christian Federation (1978-1993), the Latin American Council of Churches (1994-2004), Frontier Internship in Mission (2005-2008) and the World Council of Churches (2009 to 2016).

For we are co-workers in God's service... (1 Corinthians 3, 9)

In February of 1979 I attended a meeting of the World Student Christian Federation's Executive Committee held at Spode House, a mid-18th century manor run by Dominican friars in Staffordshire, a landlocked county in the West Midlands of England. There I met Pfarren Norbert Klein for the first time and came to know about the EMW.

That meeting with Norbert "the Small" (though he was a tall man) in that bitter winter of 1979 was the beginning of a long relationship with EMW, first during my consecutive terms as executive staff of the WSCF, and then as communications director of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). It was marked by numerous meetings in Geneva, Stuttgart and elsewhere where issues like Christian students' mission and the mission of regional ecumenical bodies were thoroughly examined.

One key element in that relationship –which I believe has been a landmark of EMW since its inception– was a steadfast commitment to and practice of partnership. EMW staff was always keen to learn and show sincere appreciation for its partners' cultures and traditions, in so doing building trust and enabling them to faithfully undertake their own call to mission. At the same time, EMW was sensitive to overcome old-fashioned power relations too, rebuffing the paternalistic behavior that brought about so much damage to Christian mission. It did not, as it should not, prevent EMW to unremittingly call for mutual accountability and a responsible stewardship of resources in our fellowship (koinonia).

That sense of partnership was shown in many instances when discussing EMW's ways to support Christian students to raise progressive religious and social views in the academic community, while keeping themselves involved in the Church's life and mission.

The nature and role of the WSCF, a very diverse body with national Student Christian Movement in over 80 countries world-wide, called for a perception of *missio Dei* different from the traditional understanding of mission in the West. It was particularly true for an organization that had assumed "Christian Witness in the Struggle for Liberation" as its main theme in the 70's and 80's and was experiencing the conflict-ridden consequences of that political engagement, including a painful distancing and alienation from churches at the national level.

In that context, EMW understanding that "mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world" (David Bosch), opened up the way for cooperating with a number of Christian students' initiatives at local and regional level, empowering students in critical thinking and constructive transformation of their societies.

EMW was the first and the largest supporter of the WSCF Ecumenical Assistance Program, designed to give concrete and practical support to Student Christian Movements as they built up their local and national work, supporting projects aimed at movement building, promoting gender justice and partnership between women and men, discovering and exploring ways to alleviate poverty within different contexts and regions and stand in solidarity and engage people of marginalized groups in dialogue.

When EMW was established, culminating a long history of attempts to integrate mission and the churches in West Germany, Latin America was experiencing the worst wave of political repression carried out by US-backed dictatorships that persecuted, tortured, killed and disappeared tens of thousands of progressive activists. The Pinochet regime left over 3,000 dead or missing and forced 200,000 Chileans into exile. More than 30,000 Argentine citizens died in the military junta's 'dirty war'. More than 200,000 died and many more disappeared in the civil war in Guatemala. An unknown number of people "disappeared" during the conflict in El Salvador, and the UN reports that more than 75,000 were killed. Archbishop Oscar Romero, a prophetic voice who condemned the Salvadorian military junta as guilty of massacres and torture, was assassinated on 24 March 1980, when EMW was five years old.

All through those gloomy years, EMW gave crucial support to CLAI's initiatives in the defense of human rights in the Southern Cone and peace negotiations in Central America.

Likewise, EMW was an important partner of CLAI when the Council launched its "500 Years Program" to remember the "discovery" of the Americas by the Europeans in 1492 – a program that culminated with a continental gathering in Cochabamba, August 9-15, 1992. Contrary to the celebratory mood of the initiatives undertaken by Latin American governments and the Roman Catholic Church, CLAI focused on and emphasized the martyrdom that the discovery and colonization meant for the aboriginal peoples, while stressing their struggles to resist annihilation and preserve their cultures and *Weltanschauung*.

In recent times, when a series of challenges have undermined CLAI's capability to carry out its mission, EMW has shown the chief meaning of partnership by offering material and institutional support, while fraternally demanding accountability and stressing the need for an in-depth analysis of the Council's *raison-d'être* in conversation with its member churches. Partnership does not mean unqualified, uncritical support, but a relationship in which partner can share their own opinions in mutual respect to strive together for *missio Dei* in a genuine and committed way.

As EMW celebrates its first 40 years, I bear witness to the joy and privilege of being partners with EMW in God's mission and co-workers in God's service.

THOMAS SCHIRRMACHER

Taking the Chance to get Closer

Prof Dr Dr Thomas Schirrmacher is the Chairperson of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), and Director of their International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF). He is also in charge of the Working Committee for Religious Freedom of the German and Austrian Evangelical Alliance.

The growing convergence between the Protestant “factions” of Mission in Germany (to make use of this imprecise expression for once) has been in the offing for a long time. This applies both to the EMW and the Association of Evangelical Missions (AEM) and also to the Missiologists, German Society for Mission Studies (DGMW) and the German-language Evangelical Missiological Society (afem). For the last ten years Prof Dr Bernd Brandl has on behalf of afem had his place in the editorial team of the “Jahrbuch Mission” (Yearbook Mission) published by the EMW, and I myself have also been included in the Directory of German Missiologists and Religious Scholars. As a consequence of this, many Evangelical and Pentecostal contributions can be found in the Yearbook – also from authors in the Global South.

I shall never forget the year 2009, when a ZDF television programme presented the martyrs of Evangelical Mission Societies alongside Islamist suicide assassins - as though it makes no difference, whether one becomes a victim unintentionally or if one voluntarily kills oneself along with innocent victims - in other words commits murder. This programme also showed the graves of missionaries on the Korntal cemetery, who died as martyrs on the mission field. The EMW (and at their suggestion the EKD) issued a protest, not only at this disparagement of Evangelical Missions, but also decidedly pointing out that the Korntal graves belonged to members of Church Mission Societies (long before the EMW and the AEM existed) and therefore the criticism was also against the Mission of the Churches and therefore needed to be taken up directly with the Churches. This protest, while not just a one-off exercise but rather the result of a process, became the first visible sign throughout Germany that it was the conviction of all those concerned that there is only one indispensable Mission of God, to which we are all committed; and that in spite of all differences that we need to discuss concerning some of the “ways” of doing Mission, the criticism of Mission as such is something that affects us all.

If I had more space available, it would certainly be meaningful to look at basic shifts that have taken place and what changes on both sides of the Protestant factions have made these possible. I had an opportunity to do that in front of the *Academica Christiana* in Korea at a joint symposium of the WEA and the WCC, which was represented by Martin Robra. The end of the Cold War had ended much bias on both sides. The WCC had more or less denied persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union, for which in 1991 the General Secretary Konrad Raiser expressly apologised to those concerned. Similarly the WEA, with too much influence from the USA, only saw the persecution in the Soviet Union and ignored the persecution in the Islamic world and also the oppression of Christians by other Christians. Thankfully this could also be overcome quickly after 1991.

The increasing common struggle against human rights abuses must also be named here, just as the growing cooperation in solidarity against the brutal persecution of Churches and Christians in the Middle East, and also in the whole of Africa and Asia. In inter-religious dialogue the events of September 11, 2001 and the following developments led to removing the one-sided fixation on the question, whether a person could be saved through other religions or not, as suddenly it was necessary to differentiate within one religion: between branches, with whom one could cooperate in building a peaceful and just society through social and political dialogue on the one hand, and fundamentalist movements ready for violence, with whom one could not sit down at the same table, on the other hand. In Korea I also voiced the theory that while the WCC and the WEA and the theological movements behind them have moved away from the positions they held before 1990, neither of them has proceeded in a relativistic or a postmodern way; today both are theologically much more in agreement with the spiritual concerns of their founding fathers and mothers.

From two different perspectives I also had the opportunity to observe how the EMW used the opportunity of a changing global landscape - especially with regard to understanding non-Christian religions, dialogue and Mission - in order to get closer to those on the other side.

One perspective was the growing cooperation and understanding between the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). Significantly this began when a representative of the Mission Commission of the WEA became a full member of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC. Through this, the WEA also took part in the preparation of the Mission Declaration 2013. It led in January 2015 to the agreement of an official cooperation

at all levels, including the Theological Commission, as a result of which I have just taken part in a Faith and Order Commission meeting of the WCC in Romania.

And here it was quite decisive that it was representatives of the EMW in the committees of the WCC who pushed for positive changes, as substantial funds from the German member churches flow via the EMW to the CWME. From the beginning the EMW had also supported the discussions between the Vatican, the WCC and the WEA with regard to the following joint document that was agreed on in 2011. In 2006 I was called upon as an expert to attend a planned discussion process between the dialogue departments of the Vatican and the WCC, who had been commissioned to prepare a Code of Ethics concerning Mission among members of other religions.

On behalf of the WEA I developed a proposal for a process that would bring in the WEA on the side of the WCC, because such a Code only makes sense when the majority of the churches throughout the world are in agreement with it, and it is not understood as though the “good” churches only wanted to criticise the “bad” ones. Today we can hardly comprehend that, at that time, this was for all (!) concerned a great risk. The document “Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World”, which was accepted by the Vatican, the WCC and the WEA in 2011, made history in the ecumenical world, so much so, that today we cannot imagine Ecumenism and Mission without it. Its history in detail can be found on the website set up by the EMW at www.missionrespekt.de (this includes the English document and further documentation).

Even with the best will in the world I could not have imagined that this process would be transferable to Germany. In Germany we have two large players with the EKD and the Catholic German Bishops Conference (DBK), the Free Churches have their own Association, the Evangelical Alliance in Germany is not, as in most countries of the world, a Church Federation, but also allows for individual membership. For this reason the Association of Christian Churches (ACK) was seen by many churches to be the natural place for such a process; but it was also clear that in addition to it the EKD and the DBK would also have to offer their own support. Already in 2011, as a former chairperson I was able to present the document and its concerns to the annual conference of the DGWM, also then to the Federation of Evangelical Free Churches (VEF) and to the ACK, and shortly afterwards also at a seminar of the EMW and the Academy of Mission in Hamburg.

I noticed then that the times had changed. And the EMW was quite clearly willing to make use of the document, in order to bring the various mission concepts

together around the table. And so we sat together in Hamburg. Not to make out as though there had never been a problem, not in the postmodern sense, that former points of view didn't really play a role at all, but rather just the opposite – as missiologists and as Mission specialists, who wanted to discuss intensely about the contents and the “Way” of Mission.

The necessary common ground of Mission led essentially to the founding of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846, it led essentially to the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, and to the founding of the WCC in 1948. And it was not just by chance that the subject of Mission – which perhaps one would have least credited it with – not only brought almost all churches throughout the world together for the first time in 2011, but that this also succeeded in Germany. The Congress “Mission Respect” in Berlin brought churches from a wide spectrum together such as never before in German history.

Even if the German Evangelical Alliance, the AEM and the afem supported this hundred per cent from the beginning – their influence on the EKD, DBK and ACK was rather limited. For this reason, the enormous efforts of the EMW, its leadership (Christoph Anders and Michael Biehl) and the members and churches connected with them, deserve the honour of having made use of a unique chance to bring an internationally important development to Germany. The EMW got *missio*, as the mission branch of the DBK on board, later also the DBK itself, the EKD was represented mainly by its Bishop for Ecumenical Relations and Ministries Abroad who also is their representative in the WCC, Martin Schindehütte. The EMW was responsible for organising many discussions among all those concerned throughout Germany.

The EMW must be thanked, that Germany, where the missiological and ecumenical controversies went deeper than anywhere else over the years between 1960 and 1990, unanimously backed “Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World”, as hardly any other country in the world has. This makes clear: God's Mission is irrefutable and there can be no Christian Church without Mission, but we must continue to struggle and discuss self-critically about the “How” of Mission. That includes us as Evangelicals; and not every discussion of the “How” of Mission may be misinterpreted as criticism of Mission itself. We need this discussion about how to do it, about the ethics of Mission, if Mission is to be carried out in accordance with the One, in whose name we carry out the task -- our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus ... (Philippians 2, 5)