

# EEF - NET

News · Information · Discussions on Ecumenical Learning  
*Edited by the Education and Ecumenical Formation Team of the World Council of Churches*

*No 9 / 2001*

*Christian  
education  
belongs ...  
to the  
whole church*

*L'éducation chrétienne  
est l'affaire de l'Eglise entière*

*Die christliche Erziehung  
erstreckt sich auf die ganze Kirche*

*La educación cristiana  
le pertenece a la iglesia en su totalidad*

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## Dear Colleagues in Ecumenical Learning and Formation



This issue of *EEF-NET* carries the report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation of the World Council of Churches and a shortened version of the report of the *EEF* work to the commission. Two of the main priorities the commission identified for the work of the team were Interfaith Education and Peace Education. How much the meeting was influenced for some of the Commission members by the events in the United States of America, is indicated in the appendix attached to the report, where Dan Mosley, from USA, described his feelings during the meeting.

Another document in this issue invites particularly the African constituency to a process of assessment of ecumenical learning and ecumenical formation. This is one area where the whole team will pull its resources together to identify the ecumenical educational needs for a whole region. We hope that many of the readers will respond to this initiative.

Thirdly, there is an article on Internet Education. It comes in the context of a cooperation between Vesper Society and the World Council of Churches' cluster on communication, regarding leadership training for internet communities, about which we hope to report in a future issue.

This edition of *EEF-NET* is also my last one. I do thank first of all Valerie with her never-ending patience in proof reading etc., my colleagues on the editorial board and surely you, the many readers who have given encouragement as we developed *EEF-NET* and have supported it with your constructive criticism. The next issue will be edited by a new colleague.

Greetings from us all in the team,

Gert Ruppell & Valerie Medri

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## REPORT OF THE EDUCATION AND ECUMENICAL FORMATION TEAM SHORTENED VERSION

### 1 ECUMENICAL LEARNING – A CONTINUING PRIORITY

As a team, we have tried to promote, encourage and support learning activities which are ecumenical. Our involvement always carries the price tag of “ecumenical” and of learning which is open and participatory. We are not ashamed of using our resources as leverage towards those ends. This has occasionally been to the disappointment of WCC member churches and related organisations who have hoped for our support in promoting denominational programmes.

### 2 INTEGRATION

The EEF team is more than a collection of “desks” or programmes grouped together for administrative convenience. We have worked on making creative links between the different aspects of our work and on drawing on each others’ strengths.

Where possible, we have worked on activities in combinations of two or three programme staff.

Some of our activities are designed to bring people together from across our networks. An example would be the Peace Educators Workshop where participants came from theological education, laity centres, schools and congregational life.

We also work closely with the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, other WCC staff teams and with corresponding colleagues in Regional Ecumenical Organisations, National Councils of Churches and so on in order to further integrate our work. An example of collaboration with Bossey would be the Ecumenical Leadership Workshop and the seminar for women in leadership in theological education. An example of in-house collaboration would be the multi-faith consultation on religious education organised jointly with the team on Inter-Religious Relations and Dialogue. For collaboration with the REO’s, the team organised a meeting with those responsible for a raft of educational issues to reflect on how we work together.

### 3 BETWEEN THE ACTIVITIES

Almost as much work goes on between the specific activities as in them. Although we are pleased to be able

to report on the workshops, consultations and meetings, these do not represent all we do.

### 4 THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE (DOV)

The DOV is not a programme of the WCC but a commitment of the churches. The role of the WCC is in consciousness raising, enabling, networking and assisting mutual accountability. There are three ways in which the EEF team is involved.

First, all members of staff are expected to promote the DOV through their work, especially when on travel.

Second, our vision of ecumenical learning is one which promotes positive relationships and a sympathetic understanding of the other. Just because this is a “natural” aspect of our work it should not be underestimated as playing a role in meeting the aims of the DOV.

Third, we have specific initiatives. Theological schools and seminaries through ETE and laity centres through OIKOSNET are being encouraged to incorporate this issue. The Scholarships programme funds students each year on courses such as the Peace Building and Conflict Transformation course at the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in Zambia. Family Life Education materials produced with financial assistance from the EEF team help address the issue of domestic violence. We have been working, together with representatives of the other world faiths, on creating forms of religious education in faith communities and school systems which give a positive and sympathetic understanding of the faith of other people. We have held a consultation for those involved in peace education from across the different sectors of the churches’ educational activity.

### 5 ACTIVITIES

For the sake of convenience, we will record activities under four broad headings. However, in the light of 2 above, we would not want these to be seen as watertight compartments. A team report is not the place for a full description and reflection on all activities. What follows is representative and indicative.

#### ECUMENICAL LEARNING

The final workshop in the present round of discussion on Feminist Pedagogy was held in Cuba. Unfortunately, Edna Orteza’s leaving has delayed the production of the outcomes in the form of resource material.

The Holistic Education Study Process continued with a meeting of the Working Group in New York. The work being done in the regions was re-appraised and a strategy drawn up for concluding the Study Process in late 2001. Under the guidance of the Comenius Institute in Germany and accompanied by EEF resource material will be produced.

An important means of ecumenical learning is that of interactions between local congregations across cultures and traditions. A questionnaire to churches and congregations has been sent out and a significant number of partners have answered. An Africa regional workshop was held to reflect on South-North and South-South partnerships. A workshop in the Philippines with participants from seven different countries took forward our reflections on this.

An Ecumenical Leadership Workshop organized in collaboration with the Bossey Ecumenical Institute and the WCC team on Church and Ecumenical Relations focussed on those new to ecumenical leadership. It involved several recently appointed General Secretaries of National Councils of Churches. It placed an emphasis on drawing on the experience in context of the participants and developing supportive relationships. The Workshop surfaced the need for a theological understanding of leadership. Another Ecumenical Leadership Course for the South Asian Conference of Churches was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka for participants from that region.

A meeting in Bangkok brought together religious educators from across world faiths. This was organised in collaboration with the WCC team on Interfaith Relations and Dialogue. Broad agreement was found on the necessity for religious education in state schools and in faith communities to give sympathetic views of the faith of the "other". This was felt to be of spiritual benefit to all as well as for the benefit of community relations. A second meeting for religious educators from Western Europe focussed on teaching Christianity in dialogue with other faith traditions.

Some educational networks do not depend on the EEF team for their organisation but do benefit from the involvement of staff in their conferences. The International Federation of Associations of Christian Higher Education that brings together denominational and ecumenical groupings of Christian universities and colleges, held its conference in Bethlehem. The European Conference of Christian Education similarly brings together national groupings of those responsible for the work of churches in Christian nurture, principally with children. Its conference was held in Italy.

In spite of limited resources, the EEF team was able to make grants towards the production of Family Life Education resource material by the All Africa Conference of Churches, to provide seed funding for an ecumenical formation course organised by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, to part fund research into Christian schools in India and to pay for an exchange of experience for an ecumenical curriculum workshop organised by the Christian Conference of Asia.

A Consultation for Peace Educators is one of the contributions the team is making to the Decade to Overcome Violence. It was held in a context of conflict in Belfast,

Northern Ireland. Participants all prepared case studies based on their own work to root reflection on the realities of those who work to promote peace through educational activities. This is the beginning of wider networking among peace educators

The team's journal EEF-NET has been published three times per year. It is now being translated into Spanish and French. As well as providing a forum for the exchange of experience and reflection on ecumenical learning, it also offers networks an opportunity to share information.

## LAITY

OIKOSNET is the primary global network for laity centres and movements of social concern. A strategic planning meeting was held in the Ecumenical Centre, bringing together representatives of the regions. This enabled them to relate their concerns to the activities of the EEF team and the wider work of the WCC, especially the Decade to Overcome Violence.

Support of various kinds was given directly and through OIKOSNET to the constituent regional networks - Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa (ACLCA), Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concern in Asia (ACISCA), Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe (EAALCE), Collaboration for Ecumenical Planning and Action in the Caribbean and South America (CEPACASA), Southern Cone Network of Centres (CONOSUR), An Ecumenical Christian Association of Retreat and Renewal Centres and Leaders in North America (NARDA), Middle East Association of Training and Retreat Centres (MEATRC).

The Executive of the Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe was held in Switzerland.

Funding assistance was given to the Centre Oecuménique de recherche et Vulgarisation Théologique (CORVT), Rwanda for theological education of lay people from a wide range of churches. This was closely linked with reconciliation after the Rwanda genocide, human rights issues and also Christian/Muslim dialogue.

A guided study programme on Ecumenical Rethinking and Leadership organised by the Inter-Church Service Association in collaboration with the National Council of Churches of India was sponsored.

We cooperated with the Pacific Conference of Churches and the Tonga Council of Churches in offering lay leadership workshop, the first in the Pacific. A Pacific Ecumenical Laity Network was created which will work with the PCC to help in promoting and strengthening lay participation through networking, empowering laity through sharing of information and promoting ecumenical activities through various means of networking.

An exchange programme was sponsored - PCEA Lay Training Centre, Kenya with Kapatiran Kaunlaran Foundation, Philippines. These two centres have programmes on Drug Abuse.

One of the most significant instruments of ecumenical learning in the ecumenical movement has been the Courses on Lay Leadership Training (CLLT). These are courses which demand a significant time commitment as they include exposure visits and a reflection/learning programme. A CLLT organised by the Asia regional association, ACISCA, in Indonesia was visited which also gave an opportunity to visit related institutions in the Philippines. The next Global CLLT will be held in Cyprus in September/October. The planning meeting for this took place in Egypt.

In order to make the experience of CLLTs more widely available, A Manual on Ecumenical Learning for Courses in Lay Leadership Training (CLLT) by Evelyn Appiah and Gert Ruppel was published.

## *ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (ETE)*

The strategy of appointing regional consultants for ETE began to take effect with appointments for the Latin America/Caribbean region in collaboration with the Latin American Biblical University (UBL), Costa Rica and for the Asia/Pacific region in collaboration with the Christian Conference of Asia. These processes of setting up consultancies and appointment are time consuming, necessitating staff travel to ensure regional ownership. However, the initial experience is that careful preparatory work pays dividends. We are still working on an appointment of an ETE Consultant for Central and Eastern Europe who would be Orthodox..

A consultation on Orthodox Theological Education and Ecumenical Themes in Athens brought theological educators from Orthodox theological institutions together with some representatives of the wider ecumenical theological education community. This has created new opportunities of relationships within and with Orthodox theological education.

The ETE Working Group has met twice – in Geneva and in San Jose, Costa Rica. Meeting on the campus of the Latin American Biblical University – a centre of excellence for contextual theological education whose work extends across Central America, the Caribbean and the north of South America – helped root the work. The Working Group is important in helping us keep the emphasis on *ecumenical* theological education in many contexts where there is a reassertion of denominationalism.

As well as reflecting on ecumenical theological education, the ETE Working Group approves grants. Examples include support for: A theological conference organised by The Community of Latin America and Caribbean Ecumenical Theological Education (CETELA); a group of students from an indigenous community on a bachelor's programme in theology and the Bible in Bolivia;

Theology for the laity through the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kerala, India;

A consultation on writing Pacific women's theology; Theological Education by Extension by the Organization of African Instituted Churches; a Summer Theological Institute in Byelorussia.

One of the tasks of ETE is the advocacy for Women in Theological Education. One of the means of doing this is the Sarah Chakko Theological Endowment Fund. The target for the fund is \$3 million in five years. We have appointed the first in a series of annual interns to work on this. Another instrument is the Feminist D Ministry course based in San Francisco.

The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's ordination in India has been celebrated. An address to the Annual Convocation of the Senate of Serampore gave an opportunity to raise the question as to whether there can be ministerial formation which is not also ecumenical formation.

Opportunities also arise to raise ecumenical theological education beyond WCC member churches such as that of addressing those responsible for ministerial formation in the Salvation Army worldwide.

Christians in some countries have to do their theological education in the context of severe restrictions. The EEF team was represented on a visit to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam coordinated by the Association of Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), meeting with leaders of churches and other Christian groups and those engaged in theological education through Bible Schools and distance learning courses.

A seminar for women in leadership in theological education – Presidents, Deans, Professors and Lecturers – was organised in collaboration with the Bossey Ecumenical Institute and others. All regions were represented and a wide range of traditions including non-members of the WCC such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army. Important issues of power and responsibility were raised.

The ETE journal, Ministerial Formation, has been published four times each year to enable the sharing of the theory, experience and practice of ecumenical theological education.

## *SCHOLARSHIPS*

Although in the period of report, members of the EEF team had to cover for the absence of a programme staff member with responsibility for Scholarships, progress was made in refining the policies, explanatory literature and application forms. New procedures for the preliminary screening of applications by staff were introduced to ensure that only applications which are within the Scholarships criteria and for which all necessary information is to hand before they reach the Working Group. The processing of applications was maintained.

The Scholarships Working Group meets twice a year in Geneva to approve awards and to discuss policy. Additional time was given to discuss the final report of a professional

evaluation of the Scholarships programme over the past five years. Many of the findings affirmed some of the policy developments already in process whereas others raised questions for further consideration. The final meeting in this period was an opportunity for reflecting on future strategy with the new staff member.

Scholarships were approved for study/training in the areas of:

Agriculture, anthropology, audiology, child development, Christian education, church history, communications, community development, counselling, development management, ecology, ecumenical leadership, ecumenical studies, educational guidance, emergency management, English language, family therapy, human resource development, information technology, integrated education, inter-religious dialogue, journalism, leadership development, liturgy and music, mission and evangelism, management, New Testament, ophthalmology, organisational development, pastoral counselling, peace building and conflict resolution, personnel development, planning, pre-school education, psychology, public health, public policy, rural development, rural leadership, social ethics, social development, social work, sustainable agriculture, theology, women and development, women's leadership, youth leadership development.

## ADMINISTRATION

The good functioning of the team and the effective delivery of our activities depends on our administrative efficiency. Although colleagues involved in administration are not as publicly high profile as programme staff they provide the structural strength of the team.

It would not be honest to write this report without observing that many administrative frustrations are created by the organisation itself. Resolving them is time consuming and sometimes soul destroying. We hope we may be able to find more effective ways of meeting the administrative requirements of the organisation.

We must also comment on one other area of frustration – obtaining visas to attend meetings. It seems that attitudes are hardening, particularly in Europe. Certain nationalities and groups are treated with suspicion and disdain even when the individuals concerned can prove their bona fides.

## STAFFING

The most important resource of the team is its staff. We are grateful for each other and believe that we still have untapped potential. We are committed to keep working to find the most fulfilling and productive ways of using the knowledge, skills, abilities and wisdom which lies amongst us.

For most of the period covered by this report, the EEF team functioned with only four programme staff. This inevita-

bly led to some disruption of our activities. However, we were able to maintain the work, particularly of Scholarships, through colleagues being prepared to take on extra responsibilities.

We have welcomed to the EEF team:

Marijke Haworth from the USA, who spent 12 months with us as an intern working on the Sarah Chakko Endowment Fund;

José Duque who works at the Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana, Costa Rica and will spend half his time as Consultant for ETE for Latin America and the Caribbean;

Tara Tautari who is a Maori from Aotearoa New Zealand and who is responsible for WCC Scholarships and will be involved in other areas of the work of the team;

Magali Roussel has joined us from within the WCC as an additional Administrative Assistant working on ETE;

Wati Longchar who works at Eastern Theological College in Assam, India, originally coming from Nagaland, who will work jointly as Consultant for ETE for Asia and the Pacific and for the Christian Conference of Asia.

We said goodbye to Edna Orteza. All those who have worked with Edna have been appreciative of the creativity she has brought to consultations, workshops and meetings. In her work, she reminded us of the significance of all the senses (particularly the visual and tactile) and of relationships in learning. Edna has returned to the Philippines and quickly re-established herself in ecumenical and educational work there.

## CONCLUSION

The work mentioned above has not been that of the team alone. In fact, it would be meaningless if it were not basically the work of a whole host of people who have been colleagues, partners and friends in every region of the world. We have learned from and with one another.

*Simon Oxley*

(EEF Team Coordinator)

for the Education and Ecumenical Formation team

1 July 2001

***Report of the  
2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Commission on  
Education and Ecumenical Formation  
of the World Council of Churches***

Cartigny, Switzerland 18<sup>th</sup> –22<sup>nd</sup> September 2001



***A story from Africa***

***Shared during the meeting***

*A group of Christian women from Cameroon, united in their concern for the suffering of their continent Africa decided to do something practical in response. Every Monday at a fixed time they stop their every day activities and light candles which bear the name of each country in conflict for which they have decided to pray. They put on a red scarf with blue trimming. Red symbolises blood and blue peace and hope as they turn their minds and hearts to God and ask for his mercy and intercession for the conflict and violence of war to be transformed into peace and for the human pain and suffering to be alleviated.*

*When a local Bishop heard about the ecumenical social actions and prayer among women from several different Christian churches, in order to discourage the contact between them, he asks them whether they are aware of the differences between their churches. To which one of the women replied, "Bishop we are aware, but we are also aware of the importance of life"*

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. We met for our second time as the EEF Commission in the aftermath of the 11 September's destructive attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, USA. The meeting was affected not only by the fact that several of our colleagues could not attend because of disruption of international travel, but also by our awareness of the grief being experienced by so many of our brothers and sisters in different parts of the world. We hope and pray that this suffering may be transformed to offer an opportunity for growth in our life together in the world. These recent events demonstrate the need for intercultural and interfaith learning and for a more profound reflection on how to handle conflict. The churches have a key role in responding to this need. One member of the Commission from the USA gave his reflections on the event which we include as appendix to this report.

2. Our experience together reminded us of the importance of common prayer and worship as an integral part of our meeting and work. We shared dreams and common visions, we "moved with creation", we sang each other's songs and prayed in each other's languages.

3. In a world where more and more people are afraid not being able to cope with a very complex reality, we once again realised that the Ecumenical Movement exists to offer opportunities and methodologies to deal with differences and diversity. More than ever there is a need to remind ourselves of the fact that welcoming and accompanying the stranger is an ecumenical imperative taught to us by the examples of the Biblical mothers and fathers as well as by Jesus himself. Ecumenical Formation and Education needs to concentrate on providing the tools that enable people to be transformed through their experience of differences.

4. At a time when many of our compatriots live in fear and, therefore, resist change and transformation, Ecumenical Formation can be a tool to offer safe spaces where the encounter of the Other can happen without fear. We need to remind ourselves that this process is one of empowerment, like Christ empowered people to trust their own capacities and at the same time open up to the Divine, without which no real transformation can take place.

5. In connection with this we appreciate the attempts in the team to develop the area of inter-religious education to learn **with** the Other and no longer **about** the Other. Such encounters are of great help in offering platforms where people of different faith traditions can share about their own understandings of life rather than being subjected to the opinions of others about them.

6. The Commission received the EEF staff report of their work and activities during the past 18 months, drawing attention to the priorities in their work since Stony Point and the trends which have since developed. It affirmed with gratitude the work done by the EEF-team and noted that it is heavily overburdened. A number of additional difficulties result as well from administrative demands for which the team and in particular administrative staff are not equipped for or are often not getting adequate information. In addition, the Commission heard an extensive report on the work on Holistic Education and the future plans for this study. Furthermore the Commission was informed about the plans the team is undertaking to engage churches, NCCs, AACC, ACLCA and theological institutions on a critical evaluation of theological education and ecumenical formation in Africa, within the context of Special Focus on Africa called upon by the WCC Eighth Assembly (1998). Having shared among each other the experiences in ecumenical education back home, the Commission identified from this the following priorities for the ongoing work of Education and Ecumenical Formation in the World Council of Churches.

## PRIORITIES

### 1. PRIORITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

1.1 **Holistic education** as education for transformation. We

see this as the first priority, because it undergirds the approach to be taken on all the others. Holistic education means education for transformation. Present educational systems are far too entrenched in transmission of particular, profession-gearred forms of knowledge. Holistic education aims at the transformation of whole persons and communities. As Paul writes: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Rom.12:2) Thus education for transformation takes special care of the inter-relatedness of all existence and deals with moral, spiritual, social and cultural values. In particular, we want the present working group to continue with the process they have already begun:

- clarifying the nature of holistic education;
- developing the resource book;
- gathering stories.



### 2. PRIORITIES IN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

2.1 **Extending and making the most of scholarships.** We continue to believe that the Scholarship programme and other projects supported through Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) programme offer one of the most enduring and significant ways of promoting ecumenical learning and formation. We are concerned at the uneven take-up across the globe. We would want to see particular attention given to:

- involving people from Latin America;
- increasing funds available – and "free places" offered – for theological education;
- encouraging ecumenical hospitality, where those who cannot contribute scholarship finance contribute instead places and accommodation;
- broadening general awareness of the Scholarship and ETE programmes and their role.

2.2 **Strengthening opportunities for learning other languages.** Aware of all the problematic issues about the dominance of English, we nevertheless recognise it in practice as an important tool for enabling people to participate in the global ecumenical forum. We would want to see particular attention given to:

- providing small bursaries to enable people to pay for English or other necessary language training in their home country;

- offering short intensive courses in countries of the respective language, at low cost, where people can be immersed in the language.

**2.3 Strengthening an understanding of how to make the programmes of theological schools and TEE programmes engage with life issues.** The challenges of people living with HIV/AIDS and the call of people with disabilities (PWD) ought to be taken seriously. With the events of 11 September 2001 in our minds, we would emphasize particularly:

- peace education – though of a kind which sees peace in the context of justice;
- education with and for women, which can offer alternative perspectives on the issues underlying conflict and development.
- Development of theological curriculum on HIV/AIDS
- Integrating the concerns of PWD in the curriculum of theological schools

### 3. PRIORITIES IN ECUMENICAL FORMATION

**3.1 Fostering regional and national courses** – plus opportunities of other kinds – where new and existing leaders from different Christian communities can learn together and engage with the ecumenical movement. We recognise that such courses alone are insufficient; and need to be part of a process with long-term follow-up and reflection. Nevertheless, we regard them as a key element in a strategy of developing ecumenical leadership.

**3.2. Exploring how to develop an ecumenism which bridges the different wings within traditions.** We see this as a major ecumenical task for the future, for in so many areas of the world the real divides run within Churches rather than between them. The task is not only an educational one, but education has an important part to play.

**3.3. Fostering the development of resources bringing an ecumenical dimension to the curricula of colleges, theological schools and those providing religious education for children.** In particular, we would emphasize:

- the significance of international co-operation in such curriculum development;
- the importance of free exchange of experience and models around the world.

**3.4 Continuing the programme of Courses on Lay Leadership Training, as a crucial element in the ecumenical for-**

**mation of the laity.** In particular we affirm the strengthening of methodologies in the area of

- Experiential ecumenical learning
- Education in the context of vulnerability of HIV/AIDS
- Lay Leadership formation
- And justice and peace education

### 4. PRIORITIES CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL THEMES

**4.1. Education for peace.** We affirm the work the team has started with peace educators. We believe that in the light of recent conflicts and violence around the world, education for peace is a priority for the team. Attention should be given to peace education in relation to family life education. All education for peace begins in the family. We recognise that Peace education deals also with wounds and is in need of “wounded healers”. We therefore suggest that there is deliberate reflection in what those, who have been victims of violation of peace can contribute to the process of healing, reconciliation and peace building which can be supported through the methodology of “living letters”. This implies the development of a variety of forms of encounter and experiential learning. We affirm that there is no peace without justice and peace education needs to take this into account.

**4.2. Inter-Faith/Inter-Religious education.** The Commission affirms the work done

by the team in inter-religious and inter-faith education, as an important priority for the future. This includes also theological reflection which enables dialogue with other faith traditions and strengthens mutual understanding. Co-operation with the respective team in WCC is strongly recommended

These are big issues. In setting them as priorities, we recognise that what we can do towards each is limited. We cannot say we feel staff are already overloaded, then simply add more to their burden. Nor can we be unrealistic about what we shall do ourselves.

We believe, however, that the following lists of actions are possible:

1. Placing the following items on the agenda of the 2002 **global meeting of general secretaries of national councils of churches:**

- the work of the scholarship programme and ETE the role of national correspondents and the possibilities for co-operation with Commission members in promoting it [priority 2.1];





- the need to call meetings of national/regional church leaders, or to use those meetings which already exist, to explore how to develop ecumenical formation in the nation or region [priority 3.1];
- the need to explore how language courses can be offered [priority 2.2]
- the possibility of arranging inter-faith visits and meetings as part of ecumenical education and formation at all levels [priority 4.2].

**ACTION:** staff and David Goodbourn (as a member of NCCs meeting)

2. Placing on **our own Commission agenda** for our next meeting the issue of bridging the divide within Christian communities [priority 3.2], and agreeing to undertake "homework" (i.e. research and reflection) in preparation.

**ACTION:** Commission members; planning group for next Commission meeting.

3. Strengthening **existing means of communication** (EEF-Net; Ministerial Formation; e-mail group; web-site), to make a particular focus on exchange of stories, models and experiences of:

- conflict resolution, and work in peace education especially related to inter-religious education [priority 4.1];
- courses and activities designed to encourage formation of ecumenical leadership [priority 3.1];

- theological schools, TEE courses, OIKOSNET etc which offer good examples of education for justice and peace and/or education with and for women and youth [priority 2.3];
- curriculum development for an ecumenical dimension to religious education in schools, colleges, Sunday Schools, etc. [priority 3.3];

**ACTION:** staff (in co-ordinating exchange, soliciting material and editing publications); Commission members (in seeking out and submitting stories, models, etc.)

4. Strengthening **links with Associations of Theological Schools**, in addition to those already being established with individual institutions, to seek to place on their agendas:

- education for justice and peace [priority 2.3]
- education for and with women [priority 2.3]
- the place of ecumenical formation within their programmes [priority 2.3]
- the possibility of creating free places or offering ecumenical hospitality for scholarship holders from other countries [priority 2.1]
- the possibility of staff collaborating with others in curriculum development for an ecumenical dimension [priority 2.3]
- questions related to inter-religious / inter-faith learning

**ACTION:** primarily staff, but with support from Commission members in the appropriate regions, ETE and Scholarships working groups.

5. Calling a **meeting in 2002 to evaluate the implications for inter-religious education** [priority 4.2] of three recent consultations (Bangkok 2000 /Geneva 2000/Cyprus 2001) and

- develop a policy statement for inter-religious education for EEF
- Guidelines for the future work of EEF in this area and
- develop resource material for use in the constituency of the WCC as well as in the wider ecumenical family
- Incorporate the work done in the OIKOSNET network on this issue.

**ACTION:** staff

6. Asking the **Programme Committee** to consider:

- ways that member Churches of WCC can encourage ecumenical formation as part of their own Human Resource Development [priority 2.1];
- ways of supporting and extending the funding of the scholarship programme [priority 1.1];
- the need to maintain support for the programme of Courses on Lay Leadership Training as a crucial element in ecumenical formation [priority 2.4];

- how to make Churches more aware of their role in promoting peace education in the context of education for justice and family life education among their constituency, especially among youth and women;
- how to encourage Churches to reflect on the distinctive contribution of their own traditions to peace education, and the ways they can work among their own members, as well as within the ecumenical family at large [priority 4.1];
- the need to encourage inter-faith visits and meetings and take these into consideration at all levels of the work in ecumenical education and formation [priority 4.2];
- the need to encourage churches to use methodologies like face to face encounters, living letters and supply EEF with the needed resources;
- the need to encourage the WCC to make use of holistic educational approaches within the work of the ecumenical centre, the governing bodies of the WCC and its teams;
- the heavy workload carried by the EEF staff team, and the need to avoid further reduction in staff numbers. In addition we ask the Programme Committee to forward to the appropriate governing body of the WCC the request to check whether administrative demands and changes are hindering the programme work of the team;
- ways that member Churches will support the development of Sarah Chakko Theological Endowment Fund.

**ACTION:** *staff, supported by Commission Moderator*

7. **Ourselves affirming the work of the EEF staff team** in the following specific areas:

- strengthening the network of educators involved in peace education [priority 4.1];
- maximising the capacities of OIKOSNET and its work for peace education (such as the global CLLT 2001) [priority 4.1]

**ACTION:** *Commission members*

8. **Inviting the team to reflect and act on:**

- ways in which worship resources, music, writings, paintings and the like from other religious and cultural traditions can be of help for inter-faith learning, thus bringing the life experience of people of different faith traditions into encounter with each other [priority 4.2];
- the role inter-faith visits and meetings can play on all levels of the work on ecumenical education and formation [priority 4.2];
- its own tools in ecumenical education considering the role media is using in promoting forms of intercultural, interfaith and ethnic interpretations contradictory to ecumenical learning objectives [priority 4.2];
- creating space for reflection supportive of their own ecumenical learning;

- maximising the possibility of encounter learning, visiting communities (CLLTs) and provide space for reflections thereof. At the same time staff should make more use of possible regional ecumenical hospitality for programme activities regarding face to face encounters, CLLTs, Living letters, consultations, etc.;
- maintaining close communication with the commissioners through periodic updates of programmatic work, i.e. through EEF-NET section "**News from the Team**";
- facilitating collection and distribution of the stories and materials from commission members for the resource book on Holistic Education;
- building awareness, distribute and encourage discussion of the outcomes of the study process of Holistic Education within the WCC and among the constituency.

**ACTION:** *staff*

9 In addition we **commit ourselves** as Commission members to:

- take a more active role within the work and thus have greater ownership of the work of the team. Forms of this could be: Providing contact within the churches for ecumenical hospitality for programmes, participating in programme work in the region where they are, maintaining close communication with the staff regarding programme work.
- be a greater support in sharing our own ecumenical learning experiences and ecumenical education work in EEF-NET.
- engage in lobbying and advocacy for ecumenical education and the respective initiatives by the EEF team as well as providing the team with the necessary support.
- by the end of 2001 to share stories, pictures, drawings, poems, music, collage, etc. for the resource book on Holistic Education.

**ACTION:** *Commission members*



## **FINAL WORD**

*We wish to close this document with the words of the late Archbishop Romero expressing what we felt about our work as commissioners while discussing with each other and writing this report:*

*It helps now and then to step back and take the long view.*

*The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,*

*No confession brings perfection*

*No pastoral visit brings wholeness*

*No programme accomplishes the church's mission*

*No set of goals and objectives includes everything.*

*This is what we are about.*

*We plant the seeds that one day will grow.*

*We water seeds already planted,*

*Knowing that they hold future promise.*

*We lay foundations that will need further development.*

*We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities*

### **Appendix to the Report of the Commission**

As I have listened to the group through this week, I have felt some frustration. As I have listened to myself, I have discovered frustration. Our response to the listener's report reflects frustration. In reflecting on this frustration, I wonder if this may not be related to September 11. On September 11 something died. In the tragedies in New York and Washington DC something died. We don't know what. Each of us will experience it differently. What died will vary according to our own particular context. But, we don't really know what died. We can't yet name it. When someone dies, we know she is dead. But it takes a long time of telling stories to completely discover what died. It takes time to know what of our world died with her. But, the fact is, when there is a death, there is a change in us and around us and we must adapt to it. When something dies, there is disillusionment, disenchantment, disengagement and disorientation. During these days I have felt all of these things. My experience of grieving has taught me that these are normal responses to a death. Therefore, I believe that some of my frustration with this meeting has been the result of the context of the world in confusion. My disorientation makes it difficult for me to project what should be done in the future. Before September 11 I had some clear ideas how to do Peace education. Now, I don't know. I have some underlying doubt about what I believed before. It is hard to establish priorities when one doesn't know how the world will be shaped in the future. So, I am trying to not be so hard on myself in this meeting. I am trying to receive grace. I am trying to accept the fact that I am not satisfied with my work or the work of our commission. But, I don't know that we can find satisfaction at the present time. Our ideas seem inadequate in relationship to the confusion and disorientation we may feel in our hearts. So, I would invite you to receive grace as well. We will make a report. It will be the best we can do in this situation. We will then move ahead and hope that our future work will be closer to what we would hope for ourselves. Thank you. Dan Moseley



## INTERNET EDUCATION

A recent debate on the influence of the internet at the prestigious Royal Institution in London in front of a high level academic audience raised some interesting issues about our understanding of education. On the positive side, it was said that the internet's potential to make information instantly available to millions of people at marginal cost was as radical a development as the invention of the printing press in the 15th century or even the initial emergence of language.

On the negative side, it was argued that the vast array of unregulated information on the internet would undermine education. When so much information is available at the touch of a button, we will no longer need to gain knowledge in the traditional sense by storing information in our own memories. The primary issue for education, it was said, has been putting knowledge into students' heads. The vision was raised of human teachers being sidelined. Where human beings are no longer needed to control the technological structure, the question is raised about the place for emotions like love, compassion and for other uniquely human things in the learning process.

What surprised me in reading the account of this debate was the argument that education was seen as the storing information in people's memory. Now it would be foolish to pretend that we do not need to carry a certain amount of information around in our heads for the purposes of daily living. I need the information stored in my head about how to work the computer I am using to write this. I cannot read the instruction manual (even if I could

understand it!) each time I want to access a file or save a document. We need to learn, formally or informally, all kind of things for living our lives and doing our work. That said, the days are long gone when an "educated" person could carry around in their memories the sum of human knowledge. The exponential growth of human knowledge means that even libraries full of books cannot contain it all in an accessible form.

Even when it was possible to know most of what there was to know, I hope education was also about the development of critical thinking - knowing how to assess and make use of knowledge. This is what we most need to learn. The internet with its seemingly infinite store of knowledge of infinitely variable quality makes this kind of education absolutely imperative. It is often said that the quality of our decision making depends both on the quality of the decision making process and the quality of the information on which the decision is based. We need to develop skills in both assessing the appropriateness and reliability of what we find on webpages and in being able to utilise the information and understanding we acquire for the common good.

If the advent of the internet challenges the simplistic transmission model of education, we should rejoice. Feats of memory may be impressive and win prizes on television quiz shows but in formal education and in real life there should be no marks for just reproducing information. The effective person is the one who knows what value to put on information and how to use it, whose mind is equipped with evaluative, categorisation and concept making skills. Christians should know this – not those who say "Lord, Lord" (the right words) but those who do the will of the Father (attitudes, relationships and actions). Ecumenical learning is about developing critical thinking.

In the counter argument to the value of the internet, teachers were seen as having the task of knowledge manipulation and regulation. Therefore, they would be put out of business by the more efficient mechanism of the internet. Rather than make the case myself, I turn to Paulo Freire who sees the interaction between the 'teacher as learner' and the 'learner as teacher' as a human process involving the affective as well as the cognitive. Teaching is not about the manipulation of knowledge so that the correct message is received. The essentially and uniquely human things, like our emotions are precisely the reason we need teachers. To reduce education to people picking

up whatever knowledge they can from the internet, or even from books, would be to dehumanise us.

The quality of our education is not validated by the technology at our disposal – overhead projectors, videos, interactive teaching tools on computers or even the internet. Such things are useful but they are neither the foundational or the most powerful agents of learning. That always was and still is human interaction in community – the point of a class room (or a church, for that matter) is that it is a place of community where we can learn together. All the technology, including the internet, only makes sense as adjuncts to the personal and community processes and not as a substitute.

Having said that, there is an interesting project being undertaken jointly by the Vesper Society (part of the OIKOSNET network) and the WCC called “Young Leaders Online”. It is not simply investigating the possibilities of offering a leadership development course online but actual developing community on the internet – virtual community. This raises all kinds of questions and opportunities and I hope that we will be able to report on some of the outcomes of this work in a future edition of EEF-NET.

Human authority of all kinds, including in the churches, has a bad track record of denying people access to knowledge. Centuries ago there were those who argued against teaching everyone to read. If people could read things for themselves, there would be no need of authority figures to tell them what they needed to know and think. Certainly there was then, as there are now, plenty of dubious or downright evil things in books. Many centuries before that, the Greek philosopher Socrates thought that it was dangerous for people to learn by reading but for a very different reason. It was the interaction between people in asking and answering questions that developed critical thinking. The challenge of learning how to understand and apply knowledge is the same for the printed page as for the electronic page. The freedom to access and read books does not do teachers out of a job, nor should the internet. The ability to freely access and be able to make use of information should be a democratic right. Our concern should be that everyone has that opportunity.

This question of access to the internet is important. I have visited theological colleges and seminaries in some parts of the world where their whole library serving many students contains significantly fewer books than on my own bookshelves. Where internet access is possible, it pro-

vides access to a vast amount of written material and images from the ecumenical movement and the churches. Both courses and resources are available online. Places where churches do education - congregations, schools, community centres and seminaries – could be places of internet access. That requires not only an economic/technical capacity but a willingness to learn how to use it critically and creatively.

Although it is now no longer possible for anyone to know everything, we all need to know how to find out anything. We already know this in connection with day to day living. We know how to use the Yellow Pages telephone directory to find someone to do something for us or we know the right person to ask for that information. We are, in fact, all used to finding out. We all use basic research strategies and it is only when I give them that kind of imposing description that they seem anything out of the ordinary.

In ecumenical formation, we often lack a basic understanding of what exists in the way of knowledge that has been produced in and through the ecumenical movement. Some may be aware of significant ecumenical studies such as “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” and use the various books which have come from that as resources for their own local learning processes. Fewer will be aware of the vast array of ecumenical reports and other documentation on racism, the environment, disability, human rights, peace building and so on which could be useful for their contextual reflection on these issues. We do not only need to learn how to look but also where to look for appropriate learning resources. The internet can be a useful tool for doing this.

Ecumenical learning resources in books and on the internet do very little on their own. We all need to learn how to read these resources critically. Unfortunately, some education offered in the churches encourages people to read some things uncritically and to dismiss others out of hand. The critical reading of the text on a printed page, on a screen or of our lives is a basic task of ecumenical education.

Far from undermining education, as suggested in the Royal Institution debate, the internet makes the right kinds of teaching and human interaction even more important.

*Simon Oxley*

## OIKOSNET

A Global Ecumenical Network of Christian Laity Centres, Academies and Movements for social concern working for an inclusive, just, participatory and sustainable community and society. Website: <http://www.oikosnet.org/>

## Calendar of Events

### 2001

11-13 December WCC Special Focus on Africa: Consultation on the Contribution of African Ecumenical Capacity Building Institutions, sponsored by World Council of Churches, Laity Desk and Africa Desk, in collaboration with ACLCA (Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa), Nairobi, Kenya

### 2002

19-22 Feb World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee

4-27 Feb ACLCA Eastern/Northern sub-regional CLLT, Limuru TCC, Limuru, Kenya

1-3 March NARDA (An Ecumenical Christian Association of Retreat & Renewal Centres & Leaders in North America) and the Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry (SACEM) Annual Conference, theme: "Learning from the heart: Spirituality, Community and Education", Daytona Beach, Florida, USA

17 March-7 April ACLCA Sub-regional Health and Healing HIV/AIDS Course for Lay Leadership Training (CLLT), West Africa Sub-region

30 July-26 August ACLCA Sub-regional Health and Healing HIV/AIDS CLLT. Northern/Eastern Sub-region.

26 Aug-2 Sept WCC Central Committee

16-23 Sept Conference: "Journey of Hope in Africa", sponsored by WCC Education & Ecumenical Formation Team and Regional Relations Team Africa Desk, in collaboration with South African Council of Churches, Faith & Mission Dept., venue: Lutheran Centre at Kempton Park, Johannesburg, South Africa

1-28 Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> ACLCA/COADY TOT CLLT Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre, South Africa

2-8 Sept EAALCE (Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe) Annual Meeting, Corrymeela, N. Ireland

2-7 Oct ACISCA (Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concern in Asia) General Assembly, Bangkok, Thailand

7-10 Oct OIKOSNET meeting, Bangkok, Thailand

22-27 Oct CONOSUR (Southern Cone Network of Centres) Annual Meeting, Santiago, Chile theme: Experiences on Construction of Peace

### 2003

21-26 Oct CONOSUR Annual Meeting, Mendoza, Argentina theme: Construction of Peace, daily life and globalization

? CONOSUR CLLT, theme: Overcoming violence

**Several centres around the world are suffering from violent situations. Among them are the International Centre, Bethlehem, Institute of Church and Society, Nigeria and the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Movement in Jos, Nigeria.**

*Please uphold these centres and staff in your prayers.*

## POSTPONEMENT OF THE GLOBAL CLLT 2001

The Global CLLT that was being prepared by the Middle East Association of Training and Retreat Centres (MEATRC), OIKOSNET and the World Council of Churches, was scheduled to take place from 29 September to 20 October, with one-week visiting communities in Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and a two-week residential course in Ayia Napa, Cyprus.

There had been a number of cancellations by participants due to the uncertainties in the world but especially in the Middle East, after the tragic events on 11<sup>th</sup> September in the USA. After consulting with partners in the various regions of the Middle East, our colleagues from the MEATRC offices strongly advised us to postpone the course.

It is still planned to hold the course in 2002 and MEATRC officers will meet to discuss possible dates.

### SOME REACTIONS RECEIVED FROM PARTICIPANTS:

*Selline Korir, Kenya:*

"It is a hard time especially for our friends in America and all other countries which continue to experience violence. Our prayers are with you all.

I am writing to send you a message of courage and hope. According to John 6: 16-21, the disciples were heading for Capernaum in a boat, it was stormy, it was dark and their boat was being blown by a strong wind, the water grew rough and the disciples started to fear. They saw Jesus walking on the water and instead they were terrified but note the word of Jesus to them: 'DO NOT BE AFRAID, IT IS I'. The Lord will never leave us alone. Our God is a warrior, let us trust in Him and stand firm and He will fight our battles.

We can understand the sentiments and fear of many of us, but this is the time that the Lord wants us to be together in Cyprus to share our pains and pray together. This is the appointed time of

God and the beginning of sharing each other's burden and standing with the suffering.

I wish you all a blessed journey. Let us take courage and be instruments of peace".

*Jaap van der Sar, the Netherlands:*

"Although we have not yet met, I feel part of a growing community, longing for the CLLT and the strengthening of each other. Yet I had to decide to withdraw from the CLLT. It is honest to tell you all, since I have been enriched by the process until now. This could only take place since you were all partners on the way towards peace."

*Willy Gardiol, Italy:*

"I have received your e-mail just now and I can't believe what I am reading. I understand difficulties in this moment of sorrow but I thought it was important, more important, to meet. I know you took this hard decision after a difficult reflection and due to difficulties in flying and risk on moving in today's world, but I still cannot believe it and hope it is a mis-translation by me. Please confirm as soon as you can this sad news".

*Ya-tang Chuang, Taiwan:*

"I can feel how painful you were when you had to decide to postpone this Global CLLT. A little disappointed about this, yet I have to thank you and all other members who have done a lot of preparations for this CLLT. I hope it is postponed for a while but not cancelled forever."

*Premraj George, India:*

"Evelyn's e-mail informing of the postponement of the Global CLLT was received. Perhaps this must be our Lord's plan. It is understood that many of the CLLT participants are unable to attend the conference due to the uncertain situation arising on the eve of terrorist brutal action of striking mercilessly the twin towers and pentagon, killing thousands of innocent people."

*Semuel Lusi, Indonesia:*

"I was busy for the last 4 days and did not check my e-mails. I have just found Evelyn's message informing of the postponement of the CLLT. It was disappointing to me. I should be on my flight today to Syria. I left my office on my birthday, 22 September, to Jakarta to secure my tickets. I am now about 500 miles

from my centre. On the way to Jakarta, my younger sister who lives in Australia called me to congratulate me on my birthday. When I told her I was on my way to Cyprus she suggested that I reconsider my purpose due to the uncertainties in the Middle East. I was worrying then but I told her that God should protect me and the Global CLLT.

Let us pray and work for peace in our centre and in our country. Let us pray for brothers and sisters in America who suffered from the "black" September. Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in the Middle East who are now facing a very risky situation, let us pray for the world not to be dragged into war, let us pray for the possibility for us to be an instrument of peace! Amen."

Kim Macaulay, Canada:

I want to echo Evelyn's encouragement to not lose the momentum. I need you. We need each other. Please let us deepen in our networking, sharing with each other what we are doing in terms of peace and justice, education, inter-faith dialogue and how we are doing right now. I would really appreciate if we could keep this large mailing list and regularly 'reply all' to our global community. We must fan the flames of the fire. We must not lose heart. Let us use the gift of the CLLT community to grow in our understanding and ability to be instruments of peace.

Thomas Ndayiragije, a resource person for the Global CLLT, from Network 21, has initiated an e-mail based list/discussion to allow all those who were to attend the Global CLLT in Cyprus to stay in contact and continue to share experiences. To read more about the list, go to:

<http://www.topica.com/lists/peaceCLLT>

## OIKOSNET NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

### AFRICA

**Selline Otieno Korir**, from Kenya was awarded a prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life, on 15 October 2001, by the Women's World Summit Foundation, in Geneva, Switzerland. She was one of the six invited laureates selected among 31 winners this year. The prize honors creative and courageous women and women's groups around the world for their contributions to improving the quality of life in rural communities. Her personal presentation was entitled: "A crusader for peace". A description of all the laureates' work can be found in the Annual Newsletter of the Women's World Summit Foundation, PO Box 2001, 1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland, Email: [prize@vtxnet.ch](mailto:prize@vtxnet.ch), Website: [www.woman.ch](http://www.woman.ch).

**Catherine Akale**, former staff at Mindolo Foundation and an executive committee member of ACLCA, is now working for the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church as a regional missionary for Gender and Human Rights, Sub-Saharan Africa. Her address is: Dr Catherine Mudime Akale, GBGM-UMC at FEMEC, B.P. 491, Yaounde, Cameroon, Email: [cakale2001@yahoo.com](mailto:cakale2001@yahoo.com)

## ASIA

### MEN AND WOMEN AS PARTNERS IN OVERCOMING VIOLENCE, ACISCA ASIAN SYNOD

Maryhill Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, 16-21 September 2001

*Violence covers them as a garment. Their hearts pour out evil and their minds are busy with wicked schemes. They laugh at other people and speak of evil things; they are proud and make plans to oppress others. Psalm 73:6b-8*

The Asian Synod, organized by the Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concern in Asia (ACISCA) was attended by 79 participants, 57 women and 22 men from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand: church workers, deaconesses and pastors, social workers, teachers and community development workers. 20 student deaconesses from Harris Memorial College attended sessions as observers. Mrs Nellie L. Mercado attended the closing programme and the regional launching of the Decade to Overcome Violence in Asia.

Commitments were made in the workshops on strategies to overcome violence and build communities of justice, peace and healing:

On the personal level:

- Listen to people who are hurt and learn to refer to proper agencies;
- Work at my own family to eradicate violence;
- Respect people and their rights;
- Start with myself to break the patriarchal systems;
- Observe the rights of women and children;
- Minister and care for persons who are hurting;
- Live in peace with others;
- Facilitate learning experiences in my workplace to increase people's awareness on the issue of violence;
- As a parent, I will respect the rights of my children.

On the structural level:

- Encourage dialogues in the church on the issue of violence;
- Continue providing education among centres and churches on promoting peace, unity and justice;
- Organize dialogues in centres and churches on promoting peace, unity and justice;

- Examine policies and rules among organizations whether they are violating rights of women/persons;
- Conduct seminar-workshops to build awareness among the young people on the issue on violence (for schools, centres and churches);
- Support programmes that promote justice, peace and healing;
- Support programmes on community organizing for people's transformation and empowerment.

A declaration was drawn up by participants to foster and strengthen partnership among women and men in overcoming violence; advocate the promotion of active non-violence. They encouraged the Church, institutions, and people to initiate, continue and sustain activities geared towards resolving conflicts that occur among nations, within nations, institutions, churches, communities, and the family.

A copy of the full statement is available and a report is being prepared. Please contact: Mrs Priscilla Atuel, Kapatiran-Kaunlaran Foundation, Inc. 937 P. Parades Street, Sampaloc, PO Box 1600, Manila, Philippines Tel: 0063-2 735 4661, Fax: 0063- 2 735 1465, E-mail: [kkfi@skynet.net](mailto:kkfi@skynet.net)

### SOCIO-PASTORAL INSTITUTE, Manila, Philippines

The following valuable resource material is available:

- *Sharing our Stories, Sharing our Spirit*: an encounter of the pastor and the flock towards a new way of being church, held 24-26 February, 1999, Cebu City, Philippines
- *Globalization: Historical Perspective*, a Roundtable Discussion
- *Globalization, Fundamentalism & Global Ecumenism as Humanity's Response*, an Inter-Faith Workshop, Tagaytay City, Philippines, 29 May to 1 June 2000
- *Into Workers' Clothes*, by Siervas de San José, ISBN 971-8721-03-7. Sisters of Siervas de San José share insights drawn from their experiential solidarity with factory workers.
- *Incarnational Spirituality*, by Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, OCD, 2001

These are all published by the Socio-Pastoral Institute, PO Box 439, 1099 Manila, Philippines, Tel/Fax: 435-2560, E-mail: [spi@pworld.net.ph](mailto:spi@pworld.net.ph)

### PROGRAMME ON ECUMENICAL RETHINKING AND LEADERSHIP (PEARL), INDIA

Following the first PEARL Programme "Rethinking Indian Church", prepared by Inter-Church Service Association (ICSA), that was held 1-7 July 2001, in Chennai, India (see EEF-NET no. 8) ICSA is now planning to hold the next Study Programme in Hyderabad, mainly for the churches in Andhra Pradesh. The dates are 29 November to 1 December 2001. Topics for discussion are:

- a) Biblical Understanding of Church – Rediscovering the role of people.

- b) Christian Understanding of Stewardship – Personal morality and Christian Ethics.
- c) Church's Witness in the Secular World – Case studies on law suits.
- d) Repentance and Rejuvenation – Towards a commitment to build the church.

A full report is now available of the first workshop. It is a useful working example for people involved in work with the laity. For copies, please contact: Dr Moses P. Manohar, Executive Director, ICSA, 107 Pantheon Road, Egmore, Chennai, India. Tel: +91-44-8269143, E-mail: [icsa@vsnl.com](mailto:icsa@vsnl.com), Web: [www.icsa.org.in](http://www.icsa.org.in)

### 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY AND THE VISION OF KOREA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

The theological basis for the activities of the Korea Christian Academy (KCA) is the belief in incarnation. The essence of the belief in incarnation lies in that God's love towards this world breaks down the walls between the Creator and its creatures, the holy and the secular, and religion and culture, and transforms our life in reality creatively through the event of reconciliation. This incarnational spirituality is oriented towards Mahayanist Christianity.

The Academy has two programmes specifically for church leaders: Life Ministry Colloquium for young ministers overcoming denominational boundaries and Theological Forum New Echo for the creative pursuit of Korean theology. There are also programmes for lay people: The Bible and Classics for upbringing lay church leaders and Spirituality Training Programmes, an activity anticipating the future of the Korean church when the laity will become the focus.

KCA will also promote to increase reconciliation and cooperation among religions and will do its best to deepen interreligious dialogue and cooperation. KCA will continue to develop programmes for youth.

*Kyoung-jae Kim, Director, Korea Christian Academy*

### KOREA DIALOGUE NETWORK

the making of an arena for communication by the people

Korea Dialogue Network oversees various programmes that reconcile the antagonism and conflicts in society by strengthening the potentiality of the people, and provides alternative plans for society. These include: 1. Programmes following the tradition of Dialogue Movement: "Colloquium on the Politics of Life"; 2. Residents Culture Network Programme based on life and region; 3. Women Culture Network Programme anticipating alternative plans for the future.

The above two articles are excerpts taken from the Korea Dialogue Academy Newsletter, June 2001, vol. 33. Address: San 76, Suzu-dong, Kangbuk-gu, Seoul 142-070, Korea. Fax: (02)907-9089 website: <http://www.daemuna.or.kr>

## THE MIDDLE EAST

### MIDDLE EAST ASSOCIATION OF TRAINING AND RETREAT CENTRES (MEATRC)

Mr Rafik Louis has left the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) and is no longer the Executive Secretary of MEATRC. We thank him for his service to MEATRC and wish him well as he moves on to another position.

## EUROPE

### RESPONDING TO CONFLICT (RTC), UK

RTC is advertising their courses for 2002. The ten-week "Working with Conflict" course is a residential course for practitioners working in areas affected or threatened by conflict and will be held in Birmingham, England, 22 April to 28 June 2002. "Strengthening Policy and Practice" workshop is a residential course concerned primarily with policy formation and implementation in conflict-affected areas. It is intended for staff of local and international agencies with responsibility for strategic development and programme planning, and will be held in Birmingham, England, 15 to 19 July 2002. A Conflict Handbook is available and also 5 video case studies illustrating aspects of peacebuilding in Africa. RTC has carried out training and capacity building in many different parts of the world. They aim to work closely with local organizations and to share skills and experience freely.

For more information please contact: Responding to Conflict (RTC), 1046 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6LJ, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 121 415 5641, Fax: +44 (0) 121 415 4119, E-mail: [enquiries@respond.org](mailto:enquiries@respond.org) Website: [www.respond.org](http://www.respond.org)

### COMPANY OF PASTORS AND DEACONS, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Congratulations to Rev. Isabelle Graesslé who has been elected moderator of the Company of Pastors and Deacons in Geneva. This is the first time since 1541 when the Company began that a woman has been chosen for this position! Some of you may remember Isabelle when she participated in the Montreat World Convention in 1993. Since 1997 she has been director of the new programme for Adult Formation in the Protestant Church of Geneva.

## LATIN AMERICA

Congratulations also to Néilda Ritchie who was elected Bishop during the 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Evangelical Methodist Church in Argentina, in Buenos Aires, 16-18 June 2001. She is the first woman to be elected as a Bishop in Latin America.

Rev. Néilda Richie attended the 1985 CLLT in Dodoma, Tanzania. She was formerly one of the Officers of the World Council of Churches Central Committee. Her address is: Methodist Church Office, Rivadavia 4044-1205, Buenos Aires, Argentina, E-mail: [obispo@iema.com.ar](mailto:obispo@iema.com.ar)

**Amalia Ballerio** has retired from the Cordoba Ecumenical Centre in Argentina. The Director of the centre is now Pastor Alberto Colombo. He is the only person in the work team. Amalia was a founder member of CONOSUR (Southern Cone Network of Centres). We thank Amalia for all her work and support for CONOSUR. Her new address is: Nicanor Carraanza 3938, Cerro de las Rosas, 5009 Cordoba, Argentina, Email: [amaliaballerio@hotmail.com](mailto:amaliaballerio@hotmail.com)



### CONOSUR 8<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING IN PARAGUAY

28 August-2 September 2001

Theme: "Violence, Culture and Peace-building"

This meeting was held in Asunción, Paraguay, 28 August-2 September 2001. Member Centres of CONOSUR (Southern Cone



Network of Centres) and some other centres which were invited

attended this gathering, coming from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Ecuador.

The group reflected on the theme, starting from a juncture analysis: "CONOSUR Situation and Perspectives" with José Luis Simon, a socio-political analyst and journalist. Bible Studies, led by Amadeo Benz, ex-priest who worked many years with native people in Chaco, Paraguay and with poor people in Bolivia, were centred on the subject "Violence and Peace Building", from Bible readings. During the seminar, the theme was presented by advisers Tomás Palau (sociologist, social psychologist, researcher and teacher) and Father Bartomeu Melia (Jesuit working with native communities in Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil and Peace Award received from UNESCO).

Evelyn Appiah reported on OIKOSNET, its programmes and aims, new perspectives and challenges. During the assembly we received information about the centres which could not be present at the meeting.



The annual report was presented by the Regional Secretary, German Zijlstra, and included the audited financial report. Network Rules of Procedure and Bylaws and Regulations were considered and approved.

New members were elected for the coordinating team, which now consists of Renata Menezes (Brazil), Cristina Vila (Paraguay) and Raul Rosales (Chile). The elected substituting member, Antonio Coelho (Uruguay) will replace Renata during the time she is in France.

### Programmes planned for 2001-2003:

- Network Global Focus: It should be deepened on the experiences of peace building. It is necessary to reflect about the educational, methodological and theological dimension. Two mentor centres were appointed: CEDM in Chile and CIPFE in Uruguay.
- Annual Meeting/Assembly: to be held in Santiago, Chile, 22–27 October 2002. Theme: "Experiences on Construction of Peace", and in Argentina in 21-26 October 2003, Theme:

"Construction of Peace, daily life and globalization".

- It was proposed that CONOSUR Network participate in the World Social Forum, in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 31 January–5 February 2002.
- Regional CLLT: After the evaluation of CLLT held in Sao Leopoldo, May 2001, it was decided that the theme of the next CLLT to be held in 2003 should be related to the global focus "Overcoming Violence".
- Exchange Programmes: E-Newsletter will be the tool for information, but for this it is necessary that member centres make their programmes known to the Regional Secretariat.
- Communications Workshops: Ramiro Argandona informed about the E-Communication programme. It is proposed to hold the 1<sup>st</sup> Sub-regional workshop in Montevideo, Uruguay, September 2001. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sub-regional workshop in Santiago, Chile, April 2002. Regional Workshop on the web site would take place in September 2002.

### Note from Evelyn Appiah:

*I was invited by CONOSUR to participate in their annual meeting and general assembly. The meeting was therefore in two parts: 2 days focussed on learning of various programmes of centres and organizations represented with women, youth, Bible Studies and case studies on the theme "Violence, Culture and construction for Peace". There were more than 20 people attending the 2-days seminar. This dropped to 10 when the assembly started because this was for voting members and observers only.*

*For a number of the participants from the Southern Cone it was their first visit to Paraguay. This country is the least visited or not at all. Countries over visited were the 'big' ones, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Chile. For the churches, Christian groups and non-governmental organizations therefore this was a wonderful opportunity to share what they are doing with indigenous people, current problems facing them economically, sharing the history of the country and the significant role that the Roman Catholic Church, Disciples of Christ and Lutheran Churches small churches played during the dictatorship and now with the harsh economic realities facing the country. Problems facing the country: number of street children increasing, violence, land distribution, illiteracy, rights of indigenous people Guarani, Moonist buying large pieces of land.*

*My specific role was to share new challenges coming from OIKOSNET and EEF, WCC. The last time that I attended a CONOSUR regional meeting was in 1997 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Through the help of a Swedish Missionary, Veronica Melander, working with ISER Assessoria, Brazil, who interpreted for me, I managed to capture the key issues that this region faced, to learn about the work of centres in the midst of economic difficulties and to see them work on their by-laws and constitution. The participatory methodology used in all spheres of the semi-*

nars and assembly have to be underlined. This is one of the strengths and dynamism of the regional network of centres.

## NORTH AMERICA

### NARDA/SACEM ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2002

«Learning from the Heart: Spirituality, Community and Education» is the theme for the 2002 annual conference of NARDA (An Ecumenical Christian Association of Retreat & Renewal Centres & Leaders in North America) and the Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry (SACEM) to be held in Daytona Beach, Florida, USA, Friday to Sunday, 1-3 March 2002.

Planning Committee Co-Chair Sally Simmel, Director for Ministry in Daily Life, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and Vice-President of NARDA, is the Planning Committee Co-Chair. They plan to explore how to create learning environments sensitive to the interconnectedness of spirituality and community. Besides plenary and workshop sessions, 'immersion' visits are planned to the inter-dynamics of spirituality and community in actual local settings.

The conference keynoter is Wendy Wright, professor of theology at Creighton University in Omaha. Workshop leaders are: Patricia Killen, professor of American Religious History in the Department of Religion, Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA, USA; Twila Schock, director of the ELCA Wittenberg Centre in Wittenberg, Germany; Ron Cervero, professor in the Department of Adult Education, University of Georgia in Athens, Greece. A panel of international lay leaders will discuss a global model for lay leadership training. Panel facilitator is Scott Haasarud, director of spiritual life and programming, Spirit in the Desert Lutheran Retreat Centre and President of NARDA.

### NARDA NEWS

NARDA now has a website : [www.nardacenters.org](http://www.nardacenters.org) so take a look at their list of member centres, job opportunities and announcements of meetings.

**Rev. Dr John Miller** recording secretary for NARDA for the past 10 years has left Olmsted Manor and returned to parish ministry in Pennsylvania. We thank John for his valuable work with NARDA and wish him and Diana Miller all the best in their new environment and challenging new ministry. *His new address is: Rev. Dr. John D. Miller, senior pastor, Mt Lebanon United Methodist Church, 3319 West Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15216, USA Tel: 412-531 7131, E-mail: [jdmiller@mlumc.org](mailto:jdmiller@mlumc.org)*

We welcome the new secretary for NARDA, **Leslie Montag**, Director of St Benedict Centre, W10888 Hwy V, Poynette WI 53955, USA Tel: (608) 635-4319, Email: [clmontag@charter.net](mailto:clmontag@charter.net)

### VESPER SOCIETY NEWS

The vision of Vesper Society is of a compassionate world that protects human dignity and enhances human potential. Yearning and acting to bring about a compassionate world takes on added urgency in these new times. Vesper again affirms its commitment to creating opportunities for people and organizations to reach this vision.

In the last six weeks, Vesper projects have created opportunities for dialogue and learning around the globe. Early in September, just before the September 11 tragedy, they hosted a conference of 22 Young Leaders from the European Union and the United States. This conference was a follow-up to the earlier conference on the Transatlantic Partnership: The Responsibility of the US and the EU for Stability, Security and Peace in the World, held at Loccum Academy in Germany. The young leaders, experts in policy analysis, foreign affairs, military planning, and justice and peace, gathered to prepare a declaration for designing a common future. Little did anyone know how significant the purposes of this gathering would be, or how important their continuing work is to the hope for a compassionate world.

From 22 October to 2 November Vesper and the World Council of Churches Communications Department convened, in Geneva, eight young people from around the world to begin working on creating online communities of young people. The eight people worked together to create a toolkit designed specifically for young people communicating via the Internet. On return to their own countries the young people will try out the toolkit by forming an online community appropriate for their particular region and needs.

Contact address: Vesper Society, 22351 City Center Drive, Suite 100, Hayward, CA 94541, USA Tel.: (510) 885-1774 Fax: (510) 885-1887 Email: [admin@vesper.org](mailto:admin@vesper.org) Website: [www.vesper.org](http://www.vesper.org)



## NEWS FROM OTHER NETWORKS

### NEWS FROM INTER-EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON CHURCH AND SCHOOL - ICCS

#### Religious Education (RE) around Europe

##### THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

The European Conference on Christian Education, a network of Sunday school teachers and facilitators has held its triennial conference in Santa Severa /Italy in May 2001. Lectures, workshops and discussion groups emphasise a change in the awareness of the child and therefore a changed relationship between teaching and learning. Contributions of Dr David Hay about a research project at Nottingham university worked out carefully the category of Relational Consciousness as a term identifying the core of children's spirituality. Hay introduced themes or categories of spiritual sensitivity or awareness which must play a part in anyone's spiritual life.

- *Awareness of the Here-and now* which has a prominent place in the children's world.
- *Awareness of Mystery* about aspects of life experience that are in principle incomprehensible
- *Awareness of Values* which he sees as the gift of relational consciousness

As overall tendencies and perspectives three areas could be identified at the end of the conference where debates shall be continued:

##### (1) FROM OBJECTS TO ACTIVE MEANING-MAKERS

The discussion about living and learning together in faith – Through the eyes of the Child – can change the status and the image of children. Children are active meaning-makers as everyone of us. They should no longer be seen as *objects* of education where adults tell them what they should know and provide no room for creative thinking or decision making. Paulo Freire called this kind of education the "Banking" concept of education. The teacher is the one who knows the religious tradition and s/he leads the learner into this tradition. But for us who are more knowledgeable and more mature – parents and teachers – the responsibility is clear: to interact with those in our care in such a way as to foster and enrich their own meaning making. Learning is a process of both self- and social trans-

formation and can take place when it is linked to the personal context of the learner.

##### (2) FROM ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AND HESITATIONS

When we actively encourage children to bring in their questions and meanings we should not ignore our own questions and hesitations as teachers. Questions and hesitations can be a central motive of religious education – for an ongoing search for answers in the dialogue between adults and children. There is no need to always give answers but to enable common searching experiences with children and adults together. It seems that there is a bigger problem if adults have no more questions and therefore can no longer listen to the questions of the children or don't want to do so.

##### (3) FROM TEACHING TO SHARING STORIES.

The first two tendencies make clear that teachers are not necessarily the owners of knowledge but more facilitators and guides to the children. Learning from each other by sharing our stories seems to be the key in a common process where we deal with common questions and ways to handle them. This takes experience more seriously than a pure content-orientation.

##### HANDLING TRUTH CLAIMS IN RE CLASSROOMS IN EUROPE

This was the general theme of the triennial European conference of The European Forum of Teachers for Religions Education – EFTRE held in August 2001 in Edinburgh / Scotland. The theme was divided into three sub-themes:

- Truth in Conflict (lecture given by Prof. John Drane, Scotland)
- "Faiths In Dialogue" (lecture given by Prof K.E. Nipkow, Germany) and
- "Integrity in Living" (lecture by Prof Kirsi Tirri, Finland about the identity of teachers and their potential to solve conflicts in school)

Lectures, workshops (e.g. about Information and Communication Technology in RE classrooms, concrete learning models, RE in a European context) and the presentation of examples of good RE practice from various European countries were part of the programme.

Access to all the contributions is possible through the EFTRE homepage: <http://re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/eftr>.

The group of more than 150 participants appreciated that also 20 RE teachers and scholars from central and eastern Europe could participate. Invited by the Religious education Movement in Scotland this group gathered also for a pre-conference where they could learn about RE in Scottish schools and where they could prepare their contributions for the conference. The conference was an important contribution to develop the different RE approaches in Europe in the frame of a common basic understanding about the main dimension of RE in schools.

During the conference some areas were identified which need further discussion :

- The relationship between religious, ethical and moral issues is debated in different RE approaches and need further clarification.
- What does the increasing plurality mean for concepts of religious education? There is a need for confessional approaches to be more open towards other religions and world views. There is a need for non-denominational RE approaches to take into account authentic voices and perspectives of religious communities.
- Holistic worldviews are coming up and influence the understanding of science as well as the traditional religions. In the educational discourse mechanistic world views are criticised, that are oriented mainly on the transmission of knowledge and skills from those who know to those who don't. More emphasis shall be given to education for transformation which enables human beings to self-organised learning processes and help to transform individuals and communities towards sustainable forms of living-together.
- Mutual understanding in dialogue starts with the recognition of the perspective of the other as the centre of any religion. One's own faith.

The relation between "spirituality" and "religion" is dominated in some contexts by the view, that "spirituality" is seen mainly positive and related to future, "religion" is labelled negative and oriented on the past.

### CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

#### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON „CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN EUROPE: RESPONSIBILITY AND RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT IN A PLURALISED SOCIETY“

Sarajevo, 12-16 September 2001

#### FINAL MESSAGE

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) invited Christians and Muslims involved in interreligious encounters to meet in Sarajevo, a city which is highly symbolic of religious and cultural exchanges. In the present new multiethnic and multi-religious stage in the history of Europe, Muslims and Christians from 26 countries spent three days sharing their concerns in three specific areas:

- the challenges of living together in a largely secular and plural society;

- healing the wounds of Christian and Muslim memories so that we can commit ourselves to justice and peace for all;
- shared values through which our communities can contribute actively to constructing a better society.

Considering our gathering as a gift of God, we have shared our convictions and hopes, for we are aware of the responsibilities of religious communities in shaping the future of Europe.

- Together, we wish to contribute to a dynamic identity of our continent, and we advocate a religious attitude which will
- lead us to take courageous actions in favour of human life, freedom, religion, property, dignity and justice;
- give to us and to our faith communities a clear awareness of our common humanity, making us brothers and sisters beyond our different religious and social commitments;
- refuse the justification of violence in the name of religion.

Our commitment to dialogue leads us to make the following recommendations:

- to bring up young people to know and to respect each other's faith and community through educational programmes, and to promote religious education in public schools with interreligious courses;
- to support interreligious groups at grassroots level among lay people, with a view to becoming aware of all trends which go against cooperation;
- to encourage priests, pastors, theologians, imams and Islamic leaders, and lay people to undertake dialogue and interreligious encounter through exchanges between Christian and Muslim faculties of theology and seminaries;
- to maintain or establish in each European country institutions with the aim of interreligious dialogue to serve ethical, social and political values in our societies;
- to continue our efforts in developing an awareness of our common values.

In the light of the developing dimensions of the terrorist attack in the USA, we feel the need to reiterate our earlier statement:

We are deeply shocked by the tragic massacres in New York & Washington D. C., and we express our deep pain and sorrow for the thousands of victims killed and injured, and we share the suffering of their families and friends. We unanimously condemn this act of violence, as well as any other destruction of human life, as a violation of God's will and a sin against humanity. Recognising the potential for violence that resides in all of us, we pray that this senseless deed may not provoke indiscriminate retaliation. We commit ourselves, in the spirit of this conference, to be instruments of dialogue, to contribute to building justice and peace, and to work for reconciliation in our societies.

## The Journey of Hope in Africa

Continued

**Theme:**

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND ECUMENICAL FORMATION IN AFRICA

**Sponsor:**

World Council of Churches, Education and Ecumenical Formation Team and Regional Relations Team, Africa Desk in collaboration with South African Council of Churches (SACC), Faith & Mission Dept.

**Contact Person:**

Nyambura Njoroge – WCC, Education and Ecumenical Formation Team, 150 Route de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland, Tel. 41 22 791 6193, Fax: 41 22 791 6406, Email: [nn@wcc-coe.org](mailto:nn@wcc-coe.org)

**Planning Committee:**

Evelyn Appiah, Simon O'Leary, Nyambura Njoroge, William Temu. (There will be another planning committee in Johannesburg)

**Venue:**

Kempton Park Conference Centre (Lutheran) Johannesburg, South Africa

**Host:**

South African Council of Churches (SACC).

**Dates:**

16 (Arrival)-23 (Departure) September 2002

**Objective:**

To engage in an interactive process of critical self-assessment and evaluation on how we prepare youth, women and men for church leader-

ship in laity training centres, capacity building programmes, theological education, ministerial, spiritual and ecumenical formation in residential colleges and by way of theological education by extension and distance education.

**Methodology:**

Engage in an interactive process of critical study on key issues regarding theological education and ecumenical formation by asking ourselves: What have we done best in the last fifty years in preparing and equipping youth, women and men for ministry? How can we build on this foundation to move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What resources have we used and what do we have today? Where have we erred and how can we correct our past mistakes? How can we make a difference in the life and mission of the church and other church-related institutions in Africa?

**Conference:**

The interactive process will culminate in a conference of about 100 people, where a representative group of those engaged in the process will gather to dialogue, study and draw a plan of action that will guide our activities in this first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**WHY INTERACTIVE PROCESS AND CONFERENCE?**

In September 1999, WCC Central Committee held in Geneva, Switzerland affirmed that in the WCC programmes there will be a "Special Focus on Africa" in order to be in solidarity with Africans as they undertake the **Journey of Hope** as it was depicted in the drama staged during the Eighth (Jubilee) Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, December 1998.



News & Reports from Networks and Regions  
LIVING IN THE NET

Within their mandates the Education and Ecumenical Formation Team and Regional Relations, Africa Desk are deeply concerned about matters related to how we prepare and equip church leaders for their ministerial and ecumenical ministries. Equally so we are deeply concerned about the critical issues affecting the continent such as extreme poverty, violence, corruption and diseases, to name a few, as we wrestle with faith and life issues. Another crucial area of concern is what kind of theologies and ethical value systems inform and help shape the church, Christianity and ecumenism in Africa.

In order to respond to the WCC 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly decision (Special Focus on Africa) and the Teams' mandates we have decided to undertake a critical evaluation on how we prepare and equip youth, women and men for church leadership in Africa through theological education, ministerial, spiritual and ecumenical formation. This means critically examining our laity training centres, capacity building and theological programmes and institutions.

We have agreed a conference is not enough. We need to engage in an **interactive process**. Such a process will allow us to critically explore how theological education, capacity building and laity training are undertaken in their diverse ways in the midst of growing denominationalism, church divisions and the weakening of interdenominational theological institutions and laity centres, which have been supported by WCC through its programmes of theological education, laity training and capacity building. The process would culminate in a **Conference** whose major outcome will be to draw a **Plan of Action** for five years after a journey of self-critical interpretation, scrutiny and evaluation on the nature and status of theological education, spiritual, ecumenical, ministerial formation and laity training in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The interactive process and the conference will take into account the recommendations that have emerged from a number of consultations and conferences in the 1990s in the drawing of the **Plan of Action**. The success and effectiveness of the **interactive process and the conference** will depend on participants' creativity and imagination on how best to make use of the time up to the time of the conference. Denominational church leaders and ecumenical workers will be crucial conversation partners in the whole undertaking.

In addition, it was pointed out that Africans are not alone in delivering laity training, capacity building, theological education, ecumenical, spiritual and

ministerial formation rather there are churches, colleges, mission agencies, [mostly in the North and to a lesser extent from the East (Korea, Japan and Taiwan)] and confessional ecumenical institutions that have traveled with Africans and continue to travel with us in diverse ways, including granting of scholarships for students to study in other foreign countries and continents.

The following are some of the major issues we may consider to be studied and discussed in the **Interactive Process and the Conference**:

- 1) Different kinds of theological institutions/faculties and TEE programmes (Bible schools, seminaries, colleges, universities, etc.).
- 2) Patterns of theological education and TEE tutorial and training.
- 3) What is involved in Ecumenical Theological Education and Ecumenical Formation?
- 4) How theological educators and administrators are trained and equipped?
- 5) Different kinds of Laity Training Centres.
- 6) Transforming curricula for 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.
- 7) Accreditation of theological programmes and degrees.
- 8) Research, writing and publishing theological books.
- 9) Developing African theological libraries.
- 10) The place of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in theological and laity training institutions.
- 11) The place of Religious Departments in State Universities with regard to the formation of church leaders.
- 12) Funding Theological Institutions/Faculties, Laity Training Centres and Associations.
- 13) Scholarships.
- 14) Inter-religious studies and dialogue in seminaries.
- 15) Relationship of theological institutions, laity training centres, the churches and ecumenical institutions.
- 16) Relationship with founder churches and mission boards and missionaries; and Theological Institutions/Faculties and Associations.

17) Brain drain of theologians and theological educators.

18) Sabbatical studies for theological educators.

Breakdown of institutions in Africa and elsewhere to be involved in the Process

1) Interdenominational theological colleges, seminaries and universities (church sponsored).

2) Denominational theological colleges, Bible schools, Pastoral Institutes and universities.

3) Theological and religious departments in state universities.

4) Regional and sub-regional Theological Associations.

5) Networks and association of Laity training Centres (ACLCA).

6) Capacity building institutions (e.g. CORAT)

7) National and sub-regional ecumenical institutions (Council of churches and the Fellowships of Councils of Churches).

8) Regional ecumenical institutions (AACC, OAICs, United Bible Societies).

9) Regional confessional institutions (Roman Catholic, Association of Evangelical Churches, Pentecostals and Charismatic)

10) Inter-religious Councils

11) Publishers of Theological and Religious books.

12) Partner Churches, Theological Faculties, Institutions and Associations, Laity Training Centres and Academies and Mission Boards outside Africa.

*Only self-motivated  
and committed people  
can make a difference!*



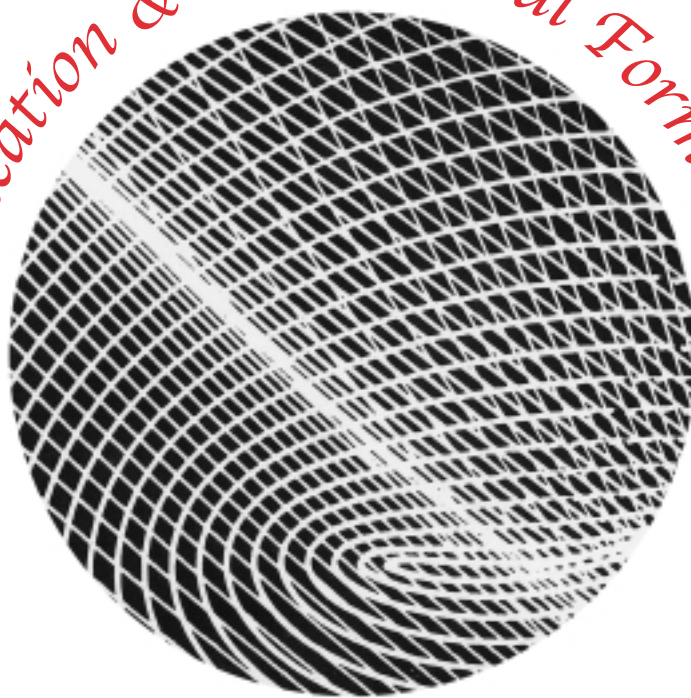
## FAREWELL GERT RÜPPELL

In this issue of EFF-NET we say goodbye to Gert Ruppell. Gert joined the staff of the WCC seven years ago to work on Studies and Education in Mission in the former Unit II (Churches in Mission: Health, Education, Witness). He brought with him a wealth of experience in ecumenical learning and knowledge of the development of the ecumenical movement as well as a passion for ecumenical education in mission. In Unit II, through face-to-face processes and through printed learning resources, he helped people engage with the challenges of common witness and the opportunities of learning within and between congregations. In particular, his work in preparing learning materials on HIV/AIDS has continued to be significant. He was also involved in the planning and follow up to the 1996 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.

Gert was one of those colleagues who was most supportive of the vision of bringing all staff working on education into one team under the reorganisation of the WCC. He became one of the founding members of the Education and Ecumenical Formation team, working particularly on ecumenical learning methodologies. In the context of ecumenical learning, Gert has contributed to our understanding of creating safe spaces, holistic education and the role of encounter, particularly through congregational partnerships. Most recently he has been working with the team on forms of education which help us relate positively to the "other" – inter-religious education and peace education. This journal, EFF-NET, is itself tribute to his work as he has devoted care and imagination to its development as a tool for networking.

We will miss you, Gert, for all your ecumenical knowledge, skills, commitment and energy as you leave WCC at the end of January 2002. Thank you and go well into the future.

*Education & Ecumenical Formation*



**Education and Ecumenical Formation**  
**World Council of Churches**  
P.O. Box 2100  
1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland