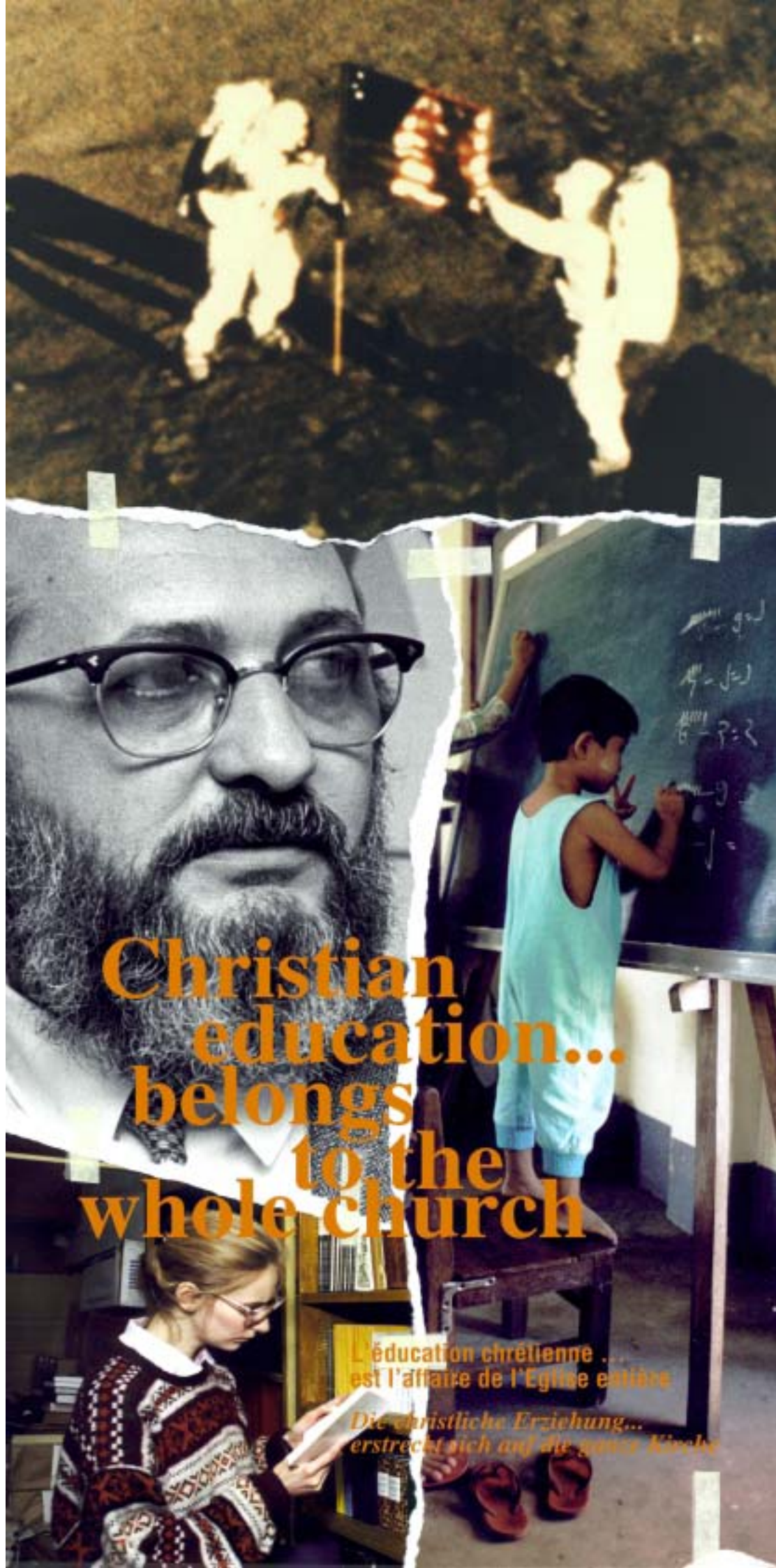


# EEF - NET

News • Information • Discussions on Ecumenical Learning

*Edited by the Education and Ecumenical Formation Team of the World Council of Churches*

No. 3/1999



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*

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## Dear Colleagues in Ecumenical Learning and Formation

*This issue of EEF-NET will hopefully reach you before the end of the year to convey best wishes to you and your loved ones from the team here in Geneva for Christmas and the New Year. It is now one year since EEF-NET began and we are very thankful for all the comments we have received. For this reason, we have opened our "Mailbox" and are publishing some of them in this issue.*

*On the centre pages you will find two pictures which our colleague Alexander Belopopsky, Executive Secretary for the Regional Desk on Europe of the World Council of Churches, brought back from one of his many trips to the region of Kosovo, Serbia, Yugoslavia, during what became for us here in Europe one of the most haunting experiences of the year, the war over Kosovo. Those pictures show some of the bridges the NATO bombardment destroyed on the river Danube. The poetry accompanying them, coming to us from the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation – Novi Sad, explains that destroying bridges is much more than inflicting material damage.*

*Ecumenical education aims at building bridges, sustaining bridges for people to communicate across borders, to meet and to discover the other side. The bridges of Novi Sad thus become a symbol for the efforts needed to make this happen. The poetry tells us of the hope for understanding and cooperation which, in spite of all failures, remains in people.*

*As the new century begins, the challenges remain the same. Setri Nyomi, designated General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and presently with the Education Desk at the All Africa Conference of Churches, draws a picture of what that means for Africa. Two other articles complement this picture. One by Edna Orteza, describing the Study Process on Holistic Education, and one by John Drane, describing the needs in sharing faith.*

*We received two varying descriptions of educational processes, which we are publishing in the FORUM section. We invite you to keep sharing what happens in your*

*network, your work and in that of others whom you know. We also invite you to use the information to link up with those who work in similar areas and thus form the true EEF-Net.*

*The editorial team has made the decision to continue to publish EEF-NET three times a year. We feel that this helps us budget-wise and perhaps gives you a better chance to contribute news and articles. The respective issues will come out in April, July and December. There is also a Spanish version available and we hope that No. 3 will be available also in French.*

*Some of you have asked the cost of a subscription to EEF-NET. We answered and wish to do so again here, that basically EEF-NET is distributed free of charge because we do not wish to make its distribution depend on whether readers have the available resources. But we are very grateful to receive contributions from those of you who are capable to help us uphold this system, preferably by cheque, addressed to the World Council of Churches - EEF-TEAM (please indicate in the accompanying letter that it is meant for Newsletter EEF-NET). For a bank transfer, please see the WCC bank accounts listed at the end of this issue and state for account no: T2-XX0166 EEF-NET. Any amount between US\$50 and US\$100 would help us to substantially support the dissemination of EEF-NET among those ecumenical educators working in areas and organizations with very tight budgets. A big, big thank you to those who have already contributed.*

*However, let us repeat, EEF-NET needs funding but its vitality depends on your contribution of articles, comments, books and material reviews. Keep it up as well through the year 2000!*

*So let us wish you all for the year ahead, one full of positive experiences, of friends and energy.*

For the EEF-TEAM

Gert Ruppell

# STRENGTHENING ECUMENICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

by Dr. Setri Nyomi, All African Conference of Churches

In most African countries, education was pioneered by churches. The churches concentrated on equipping young people with knowledge with which they can participate in productive work. Thus facilitating learning and equipping the people of God for productive work has a long history in Africa. Ecumenical learning is a special area of education which has become very important for the ecumenical movement in Africa.

In Africa, ecumenical education includes providing learning opportunities in which the people of God equip themselves with knowledge and skills with which they can be better witnesses for God in their own contexts. It equips the people of God to respond to the issues facing them in their communities. For AACC member churches, this applies to all levels of the church: local, provincial, national and continental levels. It seeks to empower the people of God for ministry to the whole oikoumene.

The AACC Theology, Education and Family Life Desk is committed to strengthening the ecumenical education offered by its member churches and national councils. It does this in collaboration with all other programme desks. The following description of the seven broad areas covered in the TEFL's education thrust provides a bird's eye view of this ministry in Africa.

## 1. Living as Christ's witnesses within our socio-cultural contexts

The church is called to be witnesses of Jesus Christ. However, the call is not always understood. In many places, the church is found neglecting this call, or defining it in such a narrow way - as a call to attend to "the spiritual" aspect of humanity. In such circumstances, the church merely becomes a self-serving community rejoicing that it is bringing in new people everyday. One of the tasks of holistic ecumenical edu-

cation in Africa is to enable members to catch the vision that the church is a community called to be the salt and the light of the communities in which we find ourselves. When communities are experiencing spiritual emptiness, harsh economic realities, conflicts, breakdowns in marriage and family life, etc., witnesses of Jesus Christ should be found offering hope.

This is the vision that AACC seeks to strengthen its member churches and national councils to offer. The desired result is to prepare the people of God to demonstrate by their transformed lives, their commitment to advocacy for the marginalised, and their action to bring life to replace the forces of death that they are the salt and light of their communities. Through these, they can be true witnesses of the Lord of the church. Without intentional education in this direction, members of our congregations will have lopsided views of how to live the Christian life.

**In Africa, ecumenical education includes providing learning opportunities in which the people of God equip themselves with knowledge and skills with which they can be better witnesses for God in their own contexts.**

## 2. Learning to do critical analysis of issues that confront us

It is one thing observing various issues that confront us. It is another really understanding them in such a way that one can engage in meaningful action to address them. The latter entails skills of analysis. For example, many people in African nations experi-

ence poverty, observe that our currencies are constantly being devalued, and experience the loss of their jobs. They often feel helpless in the face of these issues. A good ecumenical education programme can equip people to link this with globalisation, the debt crisis, Structural adjustment programmes, mismanagement and poor governance. Such linkages help members of our churches to be proactive in trying to discover how we came to inherit such high debts and what the monies were used for. They will then be motivated to join in actions aimed at mobilising towards debt relief and exposing corrupt and unjust government policies and practices.

### 3. Getting equipped for effective and efficient ministry in Africa

Situations in Africa are constantly changing. Some countries have gone through very serious conflicts. After such conflicts, leaders and members of churches feel inadequate in terms of skills to handle their new situations or even in their understanding of the mission to which God is calling them. Providing opportunities for church leaders as well as members at all



levels can enhance their ability to minister effectively in their communities. This is one of the tasks of ecumenical education in Africa. Some of the programmes offered include moving into a community after conflicts (e.g. Sierra Leone) and meeting large sections of church leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, etc., for workshops that equip them to develop appropriate ministries in their contexts. It also includes bringing church leaders from a few war-torn countries together to reflect on new directions God may be call-

Ecumenical Education in Africa has therefore been intentional about equipping people with knowledge with which they can face these specific challenges that impact families. Such education seeks to strengthen marriages and different configurations of families.

ing them to in their contexts and to learn from one another.

### 4. Enhancing fulfilling family life

Family life is very important for Africans. With economic and other social challenges, families are facing more threats of disintegration than ever before. Ecumenical Education in Africa has therefore been intentional about equipping people with knowledge with which they can face these specific challenges that impact families. Such education seeks to strengthen marriages and different configurations of families. It does so within the context of current socio-economic realities. This is even more urgent in view of problems brought on by the sexual explosion (e.g. teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS). The importance attached to this is the main reason for which the term "Family Life" is found in the title of the desk which seeks to strengthen education offered by the churches. In the last six years, the desk has encouraged many churches to establish family life education programmes, and has trained trainers to facilitate this.

### 5. Learning about one another within the Christian family

Africa is full of denominations: some like the Orthodox churches have been in existence for many centuries. Others were brought to Africa by missionaries. Yet others were instituted by Africans. Daily,

new denominations come into existence. A good number of denominations in Africa mirror our ethnic divisions. The denominations even within the same community or nation tend to know little of one another. Even in cases where some denominations in a given country belong to the same national Council of Churches or to AACC or WCC, they often do not interact at the local level. Ecumenical Education in Africa seeks to foster the learning about one another and to strengthen cooperation (rather than competition) at all levels of church life.

## 6. Learning about non-Christian neighbours

Many churches live among non-Christian neighbours. Every African community has a large group of adherents of the traditional religions which pre-

Ecumenical education can help people realise that their ability to talk with people of other faiths may rather be an indication of how sure they are about their own faith.

date the coming of mission originated Christianity. Many also have large percentages of Muslims. We live in the same communities and face the same challenges together. Very often strong disagreements between these different faith communities have dire consequences. Dialogue with persons of other faiths can enhance our living together. Some Christian communities fear that this might damage or compromise our faith. Ecumenical education can help people realise that their ability to talk with people of other faiths may rather be an indication of how sure they are about their own faith. AACC's strengthening of the church's education in this regard helps people appropriate some life enhancing objectives of dialogue with persons of other faiths. It need not lead to compromise. Usually the dialogue is not aimed at coming to doctrinal agreements or compromises but aimed at understanding one another in order to live at peace with one another and to address some community issues together.

## 7. Learning which leads to action

Ecumenical education as offered by AACC is not

merely aimed at acquiring knowledge as an end in itself. The skills and knowledge acquired are meant for action vis-à-vis the issues confronting the community. For example, learning about environmental degradation should lead to lifestyles which refrain from adding to the problem and/or actually do something to address the harm that has already been done to the environment (e.g. planting trees). Civic education also leads to a better informed electorate which can make more informed choices on who governs them and how they are governed.

## Issues in Africa today

The AACC Theology, Education and Family Life Desk seeks in collaboration with other desks to address the following issues in the education offered.

### 1. Peace and Reconciliation

Over the last few decades, Africa has been plagued with many conflicts. Some of these are full scale wars. A culture of violence has there-

fore resulted in which governments have constantly resorted to military operations to solve problems. They have often used ethnic divisions as a tool in these conflicts. The conflicts have also resulted in many people being uprooted from their communities. Concerted efforts at educating people on these conflicts can go a long way in building a culture of peace and reconciliation. AACC's education programmes on many desks (Youth, Women, International Affairs, Theology and Christian Education) have made these a priority.

### 2. Economic Justice

African countries have been going through tremendous economic challenges. Many of these result from economic injustice inherent in global economic structures as well as in national economic systems and practices. All these have led to heavy debt burdens. Some of these debts contracted from the IMF and the World Bank were not even democratically contracted, nor were they used for the benefit of the people of African nations. A good percentage went into military

hardware to protect governments, highly paid consultants from the lending nations, and the private foreign accounts of highly placed government officials. Corruption and mismanagement of our resources by national leaders also compound this. In the last couple of decades the lending institutions have been imposing Structural Adjustment programmes which continue to further impoverish African peoples. AACC's education programmes at the TEFL, Women, and the Research and



Development desks go a long way to strengthen churches in their efforts to mobilise African church members against this formidable problem.

### 3. Child Survival

With all the socio-economic challenges in Africa, our children have been placed at great risk. Many big African cities know large numbers of street children. Other children are exploited as labour in homes, farms and factories. Yet others are sexually exploited. Even in normal homes less money is available for education and health care. The girl child is especially hardest hit in all these cases. AACC's Selfhood of the church unit (Women, Youth, TEFL) is committed to educational programmes to mobilise churches to address this.

### 4. HIV/AIDS

The latest statistics on HIV/AIDS show that Africa hosts about two-thirds of all infected people. This is a serious problem. Many National offices of churches and national councils of churches have education and awareness raising programmes to combat this phenomenon, and also to equip people to care for affected people. This is a concern for education. The desks of the Selfhood of the Church unit (Women, Youth, TEFL) are very concerned about this.

### 5. Culture of Violence

Conflicts and wars have already been noted here. In addition to these, there are some other manifestations of a culture of violence. A number of urban areas have really become very violent, with armed robberies and other atrocities. In addition, many homes are becoming battle zones with increases in domestic violence. Women and children are the highest victims. The education programmes of AACC raise awareness around these so that it cannot be taken for granted.

### 6. Gospel and Culture

As African Christians, we sometimes struggle between what we understand the gospel to be, and our cultural mores. Many experienced the gospel as presented in the Western garments of the missionaries who brought it. Some of these missionaries discounted African cultural practices. In recent times many churches have become committed to rediscovering elements in African culture which are not in opposition to the Gospel, or which deepen our faith as Christians, and which stamps our identity as African Christians. The Education efforts of AACC through the Theology, Education and Family Life Desk enhance this.

### 7. Marriage and Family life

In recent decades, marriage and family life in Africa have suffered tremendously from the social challenges. Many experience a lack of fulfillment while others breakdown. Our value for extended families have been stretched. In some cases, the pain in the relationships have led to abuse and domestic violence. We also have a high incidence of teenage pregnancies, and lack of knowledge is leading to high levels of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. The commitment of AACC to reverse this trend for our churches has led to advocating for family life education at all levels of church life.



**Ecumenical education as offered by AACC is not merely aimed at acquiring knowledge as an end in itself. The skills and knowledge acquired are meant for action vis-à-vis the issues confronting the community.**

## **RE-LEARNING THE SHARING OF FAITH TODAY**

### **Vehicles of Education**

AACC's education thrust seeks to make a difference in all these areas of focus and in the addressing of all the issues through education. Its Theology, Education and Family Life Desk works with other desks to provide the kind of education which strengthens the churches to equip their members with the skills and knowledge with which they can be effective in their communities. One major methodology is workshops through which trainers, leaders and opinion leaders are given the training that will have a multiplying effect on entire constituencies.

The many partners in the provision of such education include national levels of churches, national councils of churches, sub-regional ecumenical bodies, and NGO's with whom we share similar concerns.

Our tools also include relevant books that we publish from time to time. The process of publishing such books includes bringing expert Africans in the particular field together to write resource material which will equip the churches for action.

It is hoped that these constitute a contribution to empowering the churches for effective witness and action in African communities.

Dr. Setri Nyomi  
is Programme Officer for Theology Education and Family Life with the  
All Africa Conference of Churches,  
Nairobi, Kenya

The following article by John Drane from the University of Aberdeen is reprinted from the Newsbulletin of the Churches' Commission on Mission, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. It is a continuation of an article on "The language and culture of evangelism" in which Drane explores the relevancy of evangelism based on a survey of Scottish church leaders last year. It is reprinted here, as we know that many of the readers of *EEF-NET* deal with similar questions in their educational work.

Most denominations have their own training programmes intended to equip people to share their Christian faith, and to varying degrees these are all staffed by full-time appointments of training officers and the like. While these programmes and courses all have their distinctive elements, mostly designed to ensure the survival of their respective traditions, the degree of overlap is often very extensive indeed. This duplication raises fundamental questions about the effective use of resources. Indeed, given that most denominational programmes are not only duplicating one another, but also duplicating resources available from para-church agencies of various kinds, and considering the further fact that many local congregations find these other resources more serviceable even than the materials of their own denominations, one might question the wisdom of investing so much in them.

In theological education, missiology features on most syllabuses, often sub-divided into categories such as urban mission, evangelism, and so on. The same themes regularly recur in in-service provision for clergy. The Methodist Church is one of the few with a specific degree course in evangelism (offered through Cliff College and the University of Sheffield). Nonetheless, significant numbers of clergy of all denominations feel that their training has not



equipped them for the task of effective mission into their communities.

One subject that seems absent (unless it is disguised under some other rubric) is cultural analysis, particularly of popular culture, though arguably this is the key area on which effective evangelism needs to be focused. Theologians and church leaders tend to be far more interested in high culture and the philosophical ideologies underlying modernity and postmodernity, than they do in the kind of culture reflected in TV soaps, Hollywood movies, and so on. Perhaps this is why the churches find it so difficult to communicate with large sections of the population.

A common thread running through most of the responses centres around the feeling that a lot of churches contain discouraged and frustrated people. One reason Christians do not invite others to share their faith is because they are unsure about it themselves. Church culture itself, whether deliberately or otherwise, seems to create the impression that Christians need to have their own lives together before they can have anything effective to say to others. No doubt this is a legacy from the sort of Calvinistic culture which has discouraged generations of Christians from believing they can ever be good enough to receive Communion.

At a time when the culture generally is more tol-

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erant of 'failure', accepting mess as part and parcel of life, do we need a different approach to empowering church people, that concerns itself less with techniques for evangelism, and focuses more on personal spirituality? Should we be enabling people to be themselves, to accept that being Christian is not about being perfect, and that bearing witness is more about inviting others to join us on the journey, because we share the same questions and problems as others have, than it is about 'selling' people the 'right' answers to life's problems? I am reminded of Bonhoeffer's timely observation that 'We should give up the foolish effort of trying to be saints and get on with the more important business of trying to be human'.

Do we need to be more realistic in identifying who it is that we are trying to reach with the gospel? As far as I can see, all the current evangelism training programmes seem to assume that there is an undifferentiated mass of Scottish people out there, who are all the same as each other, and of whom those who are already in the church are broadly representative. This seems to me to fly in the face of the facts, and our tacit acceptance of it means that from the start even if our evangelising endeavours were totally successful, we would only be able to reach a tiny percentage of the population. One church leader noted that "...the continuing decline in numbers shows that the current methods are not effective enough, and the problem is the image of 'church' as a whole. Relevance to younger people has to be attempted. So does a whole culture that seems to shy away from any form of commitment".

Could it be that, far from being unsuccessful, the churches are actually doing quite well within certain sections of the population, and the real problem is that the number of people who find meaning (whether spiritual or otherwise) in the church's culture is declining all the time? Could we say, not that the church is evangelistically ineffective, but that declining numbers of people still find meaning within the culture of modernity, while that is the only culture in which the church feels comfortable (as reflected in our inherited ways of being). Is it fair to say that our problem is not intrinsically spiritual or religious at all, but stems from our insistence on clinging to an outmoded way of being, simply because we don't know how to do things any other way?

Related to, and following on from that, is a fur-

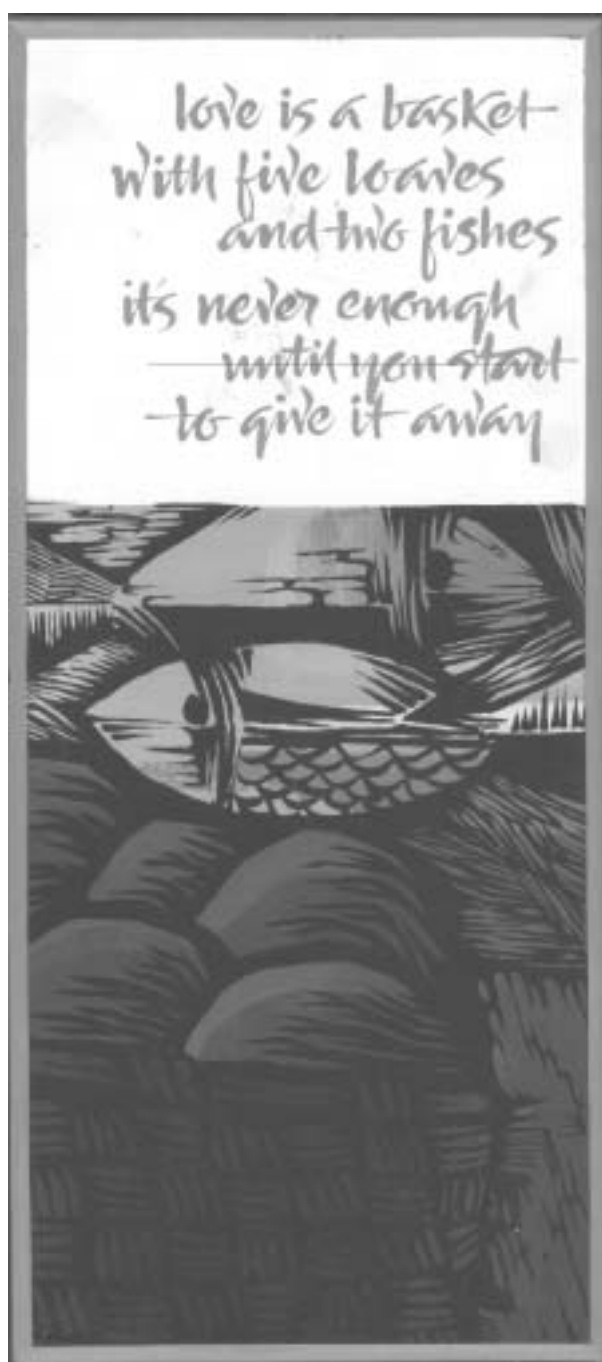
Should we be enabling people to be themselves, to accept that being Christian is not about being perfect, and that bearing witness is more about inviting others to join us on the journey, because we share the same questions and problems as others have, than it is about 'selling' people the 'right' answers to life's problems?

ther question about the purpose of evangelism. Though we are inclined to deny it vigorously on theological grounds, almost every response seems to indicate that, pragmatically, all our churches see evangelism as more or less synonymous with marketing the church, getting more members, and thereby reversing the decline in attendance at Sunday services? In light of the emerging shape of post-modern Scottish culture, it is arguable that Sunday services as we have known them will, sooner than we realise, be a thing of the past. Though there is widespread disquiet with the up-front, hierarchical nature of the so-called crusade style of evangelism, with its heavy dependence on the professional evangelist, very few seem to appreciate that, in sociological terms, the crusade is just a variation of what happens in church services of all traditions every Sunday.

Do we now need an open and vigorous discussion about how to develop new ways of being church, that will not only be continuous with our heritage from the past, but will ensure our survival into the future – and in the process, reflect the values of the gospel in ways relevant to the new circumstances in which we find ourselves? And, given that all our denominations are, for the foreseeable future, likely to be concerned mostly with managing their own survival (or, what might turn out to be the same thing, supervising their own tidy demise), is it being too visionary to imagine that the ecumenical context, far from being the antithesis to effective evangelism,

might actually be the one forum within which an effective engagement with the new Scotland can be initiated?

*As mentioned, this article is a reprint and appeared in Connections, Issue No 6, September 1999, Churches' Commission on Mission, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL, England Tel:+44(0)171-6204444.E-mail: [simonbarrow@cix.co.uk](mailto:simonbarrow@cix.co.uk) / [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)*



## ON THE ROAD TO LEARNING ABOUT HOLISTIC EDUCATION

*We began with a story. It was about four men carrying a friend in an improvised stretcher, breaking through an opening on the roof over the place where Jesus was. There were just too many people crowding around Jesus and it was impossible to pass through the front door, so these men found a way to see Jesus — through the roof. And Jesus, when he saw this, said to the paralyzed man: Son, your faith has made you whole. (Mark 2:1-5)*

*The story called our attention to the multiple dimension of wholeness. The faith of the friends, their determination and perseverance, their creativity and resourcefulness, their sense of solidarity, their taking the risk ... made healing possible. And then, we thought of the paralyzed man. He must have had such faith, too, and such courage as to make himself completely vulnerable. What if his friends just gave up seeing all those people at the door? What if, in their rush or confusion, they dropped him? And, what about the people? People just wanting to hear Jesus often do not realize that they tend to get in the way of healing.*

*Continuing with our reflection, we offered symbols. Participants were asked to bring symbols of their work and it was amazing to see the broadness of the context within which they find themselves. The symbols offered were not necessarily from the participants' specific locations, but were rather items brought back from encounters in different countries and cultures. There was the hat from the Philippines which brought memories of a march for peace and reconciliation, a pilgrimage of faith from which experience a tremendous community emerged; a statue from Mozambique with the memories of a young people's meeting, of their pain and laughter; an egg-shaped soapstone from Kenya symbolizing the fragility but also the continuity of life; a glass paperweight from Taiwan, the glass itself a reminder of our fragility and vulnerability, the shells inside, of the depth and breadth of the ocean, and the water, of the Spirit that surrounds us; a piece of cloth from India, woven together from different directions, showing the enormous potential for wholeness; keys for closing and opening doors; an icon of St. George killing the dragon, a representation of institution-alized evil; a lampstand symbolizing darkness to light, untruth to truth, death to life ... As we were reflecting, we knew that all these have to do with wholeness .*

## Study Process on Holistic Education\*

### From Viitakivi to Stony Point

During midsummer 1998, a Consultation, the first attempt for many years for the WCC to reflect on education across the different kinds of educational activity undertaken by or in relation to the churches, was held in Viitakivi, Finland. The Consultation brought together thirty participants as well as representation from the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, members of the new staff team and observers from the Finnish churches. It was a significant moment in the development of an integrated approach to education.

Out of the discussion from the major issues that emerged, it was decided that a study process on holistic education was to be taken forward by eight members of the Consultation representing different regions and educational interests in liaison with one staff member. Consequently, the group and two members of the staff met at Stony Point (20-24 March) to begin their task. As one reads through the following, it can be noted that we ourselves in our discussions sought to embrace an understanding of holistic education.

### Vision

It is obvious that we needed to ponder the use of the term 'holistic'. Many would claim that the term

has lost 'energy'. Some would perhaps even claim that such a term is no longer relevant to the task of education. If so, why then are we engaged in this process? Why explore holistic education? Why centre our work upon a term many declared to be 'passe'? This became our quest, our challenge, our vision.

As we commenced this journey, it became clear that it was intrinsic to our task, to our vision of what a 'holistic education' process could be, to examine and look for the marks that characterise this term 'holistic' and its place within today's education processes.

It is a given that the process we are seeking to name and describe has to do with the ongoing search to restore the given unity of the people of God and of the whole creation. That our search has to do with meeting the needs of whole persons in whole communities. There is no doubt that this ongoing search



to restore unity and individual and corporal wholeness presents a great challenge to educators.

The challenge, the vision, we are taking upon ourselves is to find a process which can serve as an alternative approach to education processes that at times reinforce the brokenness, the fragmentation, the divisiveness, the compartmentalization that marks not only society but the Church today and marks, too, the Christian Education processes within the churches, both global and local.

As we explored together the term 'holistic' within our various regions, we became excited by the possibilities uncovered and discovered. We also saw the possibilities for the components of this process to enrich processes already occurring in our churches as educators have sought to heal the divisiveness present in our world.

The vision of unity and integration that encompasses the richness and dynamism to be found in holistic education does not end at Stony Point. Our time together envisioning was only the second stage of our journey. We go on from here to explore, uncover and discover, name and define further what we have outlined below, and to share our findings with the ecumenical network.

## Toward a common understanding of holistic education

As we continued our journey together toward a common understanding of a holistic education that would be relevant to each of our regions and the Ecumenical Movement, it was noticeable that there were common key issues and concerns around which our thoughts revolved, and which formed the entire background to Christian education and its task and responsibilities.

Such *key issues* include: globalization, fundamentalism, racism, ethnic and religious conflicts, sexism, women, children, young adults, Indigenous Peoples, sustainability, economic efficiency, ecology and social justice, media, communication technology ... Our *concerns* revolved around: individual vis-à-vis community, changes in perspectives and life styles, relevance, inclusiveness, learning to live together in a pluralistic society, developing appropriate alternative approaches, helping people analyze critically, developing tools of analysis ...

Describing these key issues and concerns gave substance to our search for a common understanding and assisted us in our journey as we grappled with what we were meaning by 'holistic education', both as a term and as being lived out within our regional contexts and realities that holistic education embraces a process of *learning to know, to do, to live together, to be* ... It is a continuing process, and essentially, a process of becoming ...that holistic education embraces an interplay of power and empowerment. Some of the characteristics involved within this are: solidarity, determination, creativity, perseverance, diversity, community, risks ...

- that holistic education looks at persons as whole beings; is process-oriented, dynamic, experiential, innovative, relational, inclusive, life-giving; accepts differences, is based on

a context and its particularity, takes place in community, leads to action, involves risks ...

- ❑ that holistic education is about helping to facilitate, to equip; it is about enabling people to take control of their lives ...
- ❑ that holistic education is inter-religious, inter-confessional, inter-generational, inter-disciplinary ...
- ❑ that the methodology involved in holistic education displays a dialogue-oriented, qualitative approach, an attention to process, an orientation to both the individual and the community

As the group explored, discussed and assessed our understanding of holistic education, we noted that processes being described were being paralleled in our own working group; that similar parallel processes are occurring within local congregations, in Christian education programmes with the ecumenical movement and networks.

## Case studies

As part of our study on holistic education, each of the participants have outlined case studies they will explore, over the next 12-18 months, in order to define more clearly the marks, approaches, dimensions, and elements of holistic education. The case studies arose out of the key issues and concerns from our individual contexts.

### Peace Building among the Youth (Africa)

How to build a culture of peace is a continuing challenge to the churches in Africa, where conflicts on issues of ethnicity, economy, governance, ecology ... are prevalent. The study aims to help: build a culture of peace, relevant to the African faith and culture, among young people; enable them to be agents of peace, and life, by enhancing their capacity to contribute to wholeness in their communities.

This will be undertaken mainly through the All Africa Council of Churches (AACC) in Kenya.

### Living Together in a Pluralistic Society (Asia)

*What does wholeness mean in a multi-religious, multi-cultural context? How do educators help build inclusive communities?* To be implemented in cooperation with the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the study involves the gathering of information on the education processes, particularly among children, being undertaken by National Councils of



Churches (NCCs) and Curriculum Writers' Associations in Asia.

### Caste and Identity (India)

Casteism in India has its complex historical and cultural roots. It continues to be a problem, reflecting fragmentation and division in Indian society. *How do the churches deal with the inter-related issues of caste and identity? What changes are taking place? How do churches enable communities to be inclusive? To be whole?* This is the subject of this study which is undertaken in cooperation with local churches and National Council of Churches in India (NCCI)..

### Sustainable Communities (Mexico)

In thinking about alternatives to dominant economic models, especially in terms of promoting sustainable communities, it is important to learn from the experiences and perspectives of those who work closely with the land. This study in Mexico will

focus on indigenous communities in Mexico. *How do peasants and Indigenous People sustain their communities? What is their concept of wholeness? What significant dimensions emerge out of their understanding and practice of education? What insights can be gained? How can we learn from them?*

## Global Learning (Germany and Northern Ireland)

In Europe, Protestant schools are trying to work out a new profile in light of growing pluralism in European society. Using research, field visits, interviews and questionnaires, the study aims to discover new approaches in global education in schools in Germany and Northern Ireland. *What is the global dimension of how people live? In an increasingly pluralistic Europe, what is the place of religious education in schools? Are the approaches used holistic? How do they bring about changes in perspectives and in lifestyles? How are they models of ecumenical learning?* The study will involve mainly the Comenius Institute and the Inter-European Commission on Church and School (ICCS).

## Innovative Theological Education (Greece)

In Eastern Europe, innovations are taking place in the area of theological education in the form of research, consultations, theological discussions, dialogue, and exchange programmes among students. Known as the ERASMUS project, these initiatives are bringing about new currents in theological thinking particularly among Orthodox churches. It is the objective of this study to look into such initiatives, identify significant elements, and draw insights into their ecumenical and holistic dimensions. *How can these contribute to ecumenical learning processes in other contexts?*

## Courses for Leadership in Lay Training (CLLTs)



The project aims: to identify principles and components of holistic learning in the *Courses for Leadership in Lay Training* (CLLTs); determine their impact on local situations; and, to discern ways in which the CLLT model could be strengthened,

improved or changed. To do this, focus is given on two recent expressions: a global CLLT (France, June



1998) and a regional one (Arizona, January 1999). The project will be undertaken in cooperation with NARDA and the OIKOSNET.

## Women and Theology (Tonga)

In the Pacific, energies are focused on exploring the area of women and theology. This is a relatively new development in the region. *What are these initiatives? How do they address women's issues? How do they bring about wholeness?* The study will be conducted in cooperation with the National Council of Churches in Tonga (NCCT) and the Sia'atoutai Theological College. It is hoped that the process itself will help contribute to the articulation of a theology from the perspective of women in the Pacific.

Still to be organized is a study in Argentina.

In the process we will undertake, we will attempt to live out the characteristics we ourselves have defined as describing holistic education. In this way, we can test our thinking in readiness for our final evaluation in the year 2000. The participants have been put into teams to ensure ongoing support as we engage with our case studies. The teams will meet at midpoint for shared assessment and to sharpen perspectives with relation to the case studies and vision.

Taking the lead in this study process are the members of the working group: *Lynette Fuka* (Tonga), *Glynthea Finger* (Australia), *Setri Nyomi* (Kenya), *James Palm* (USA), *Dimitris Passakos* (Greece), *Peter Schreiner* (Germany), *Humberto Shikiya* (Argentina), *Godwin Shiri* (India), and *Carlos Tamez* (Mexico).

## Stony Point on

The journey we have undertaken is for sharing with the whole community of God. It is hoped that the outcome of our work will become a part of the ongoing ecumenical learning stream. What we are envisioning for our final report is not necessarily a new thing but an attempt to gather into a detailed account, a presentation of characteristics and dimensions of holistic education already taking place, a report that educators may identify with and be able to confirm as occurring within their own programmes. It is envisaged that the characteristics we outline may at the same time be able to give insight to those struggling within their context. It is hoped that above all, we will be able to give to the church, to Christian educators, alternatives to processes that have lost direction, have been swamped by life-denying rather than life-affirming programmes. It is hoped that our final report will help to build confidence and understanding in the churches and networks of whole persons in whole communities; to enrich processes already seeking this goal; to strengthen those engaged in educating for life.

We foresee that during this time of exploration we as individuals and as a research group will be greatly enriched by those we share our task with. We are very aware that many educators are involved with the task we have set ourselves and we look forward with great interest to hearing their stories, their experiences as they have sought to heal the brokenness, fragmentation present in our world today. Our report will seek to express their voice and their experiences so that all may live together, learn together, know together and be together.

Edna Orteza, the author of this report on the Study Process on Holistic Education in the EEF-Team, has accompanied the process as staff member since its beginning at the Global Educators Conference 1998 in Finland

\* A longer report, prepared by Glynthea Finger and James Palm, could be made available for those interested.



## FORUM

We would like to share with you excerpts from two letters we received from India. The author of the first is very involved in inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and education by means of art. The author of the second is a lawyer who decided to work with his wife among rural women for legal literacy work. Particularly in the midst of the stressful news one may hear from and about India these days, it helps to remind us of those colleagues who remain innovative and pro-active in seemingly difficult times

*...In November I am going to Hyderabad to give a talk at the Henry Martin Institute. Recently we have been very much concerned about the whole situation here in India with the rise of the Hindu fundamentalist party. We are wondering what the future holds in store. Since the meeting which we had at Bossey on Religious Diversity, I have been thinking quite a bit on the whole question of Idolatry, and the Biblical rejection of images. This question came up quite a bit in the discussions which we had, especially in relation to forms of worship, and the criticism which Christian and Muslim missionaries have had of what they deemed to be the pagan beliefs of Hindus and even Buddhists, who use images for meditation during worship. In fact one of the Buddhist nuns who was attending the meeting, and who was quite mystified by the whole discussion, asked very innocently "But what is wrong with worshipping images?" When they speak of Hindu fundamentalism, it is often a problem to define what exactly it means : really it is more what one might call Hindu nationalism, as there is no "fundamental scripture" to which Hindus adhere in the same way that Christian fundamentalists or Muslim fundamentalists stick to a literal interpretation of a revealed and sacred text. But there has been a great sense of hurt amongst Hindus about the way in which missionaries have not only rejected their sacred images, but have even on occasion encouraged the destruction of these images. In fact one could say that one of the great divisions between Faith systems has been over this problem of the use of images, and what is right, and what is wrong about them. I hope to discuss this phenomenon of rejecting other people's holy images in my talk at Hyderabad.*

*We are still not at all clear here about ideas concerning a "Folk school". There are now about 8 young people staying at the Art Ashram, and they are all busy trying to design things, and take on commissions. In general I think it would be true to say that they would not feel the way I do about relating to an organized church, or any organized form of religious belief for that matter, though even I have my criti-*

cisms of the structured Church. Just now there is quite a discussion going on about the question of the relation of art to spirituality. As I would understand a "Folk School" the relation of art, creativity or aesthetics, to ethical issues, or a value system in society, would be a central part of the learning process. Though I have doubts about what Rudolph Ficker calls education for development, or change, I would believe that a creative process in education involves a reflection on our sense of responsibility for the world in which we live, as part of our inner growth and spiritual awakening. The problem really is, what do we mean by "development".

As the word seems to be connected with the word "envelopment", what I would imagine is that education for development would liberate people from the kind of coverings which envelop them. But often the word development simply means progress in a kind of linear sense which really has little meaning in the context of an ancient culture like India (which Rudolph is also addressing in his article).

Recently I conducted a workshop on "Symbols of Wholeness", and at this meeting an Indian psychoanalyst who was trained at the Jungian Institute at Zurich, and who is now practicing as a clinical psychologist in Bangalore, spoke about her understanding of Indian myths and symbols from a Jungian perspective. I personally have always found this approach to Indian images very helpful. I am rather hoping that in the future this might be a direction which we will increasingly look into during our "art retreats"---to understand better this inner process of transformation through images and symbols, and how Indian cultural forms have helped in this deeper awareness of forms which lie in our own unconscious. I do not know what you would think of such an approach. I have heard from Michael Amaladoss that he is interested to be involved in developing this idea of an art retreat, using his own skills at musical composition.

I was thinking of writing something for your magazine on the way that we have been trying to use traditional stories, especially of those who have been marginalized in Indian society, as a basis for education. Can we relate the learning process to a healing one---that is a process of affirming the unity of life, and the search for inner wholeness.

Jyoti Sahi  
Art Ashram  
Bangalore

## LOCATING OURSELVES IN A CHANGING SCENARIO

In our work to empower women through legal literacy, a great extent of our interactions have been with rural women. We walked into their homes, sat in their yards, and tried to grapple with their needs and problems in training sessions. No wonder that violence against women, caste oppression, economic exploitation and gender subordination are not

merely conceptual issues for us; they are part of the existential reality of numerous women who share their experiences with us.

We have often balked at the enormity of the problems faced by these women. There are times when we felt helpless when they narrated harrowing experiences within their homes and in the community. But there have also been great moments of hope and solidarity when individual women and their collectives have intelligently and effectively used new knowledge and awareness to resist and sometime squarely defeat forces of oppression.

Our encounter with the challenges that women face and the need to address their problems make it imperative for us to inquire more deeply into processes of social transformation. We are also, by necessity and by choice, driven to understand more clearly the context in which the women are placed; the cultural ethos of the community, social and economic dynamics and state policies. And in this era of globalisation and liberalisation we have had to clarify for ourselves the implications of these developments for women. Our own identity, as constituting a part of civil society, necessitates a sufficient understanding of the changing relationships among civil society, states and markets. We have attempted to follow and strive to find our moorings in a changing environment.

Jaszashree and John Bosco  
Ashraya Society for the Emancipation of Women  
63, Sonar Galli, M. Vadgaon,  
Belgaum - 590 005  
Karnataka - India

### Dear friends at the EEF-Net:

I have just read the article, or the Editorial, called Education in a context of change: What are we aiming for?, and I was VERY impressed. Due to a personal involvement with environmental issues in my professional work in the State University at Campinas, I have been called upon to cooperate with the theme of Environmental Education with Mathematical Education (or the other way round!), and many of your themes and challenges are recurrent in our texts, our worries, our challenges. My work is in the Department of Applied Mathematics,

where my research is developed, but I also cooperate in the School of Education in the Dept. Of Mathematical Education. In both places I am a tutor in doctorate and master programmes, as well as a project coordinator. The issues numbered 1 and 2 were lent me by my father, Gerson A. Meyer, who worked in WCC some years ago. The reason I am writing, besides letting you know that the text was very good, is to contribute, albeit somewhat late, to a reflexion



on the issue. There are two points on which slight differences appear: Now these differences might be seen as the [most proper] manifestation of plurality, but you better judge for yourself: 1. Working with mathematics in environmental problems (this has a name, it is called Mathematical Ecology, and includes studies of populations, epidemics, global changes and economy), and with education, most especially in our southamerican situation, we are confronted with a quasi-despairing URGENCY, which is always coupled with the challenge the editorial refers to; and 2. Quite exceptionally I was involved in helping a student with the teaching of mathematics to indian-teachers in Central Brazil, and there we are confronted with an Education for a different kind of change, in some cases, for a non-change: not changing into second-class whites, for example, or the challenge of criticizing mathematical content of classes in order NOT to create a criticism of cultural values, of traditional values, of part of a social context which will change, for sure, but in a way which these societies should decide for themselves.

Now none of this goes against what was written in the Editorial, but it all crossed my mind while I devoured it. I was glad to be able to read your paper. Thanks for your words. My Dad has told me I cannot keep the magazines, so I will photocopy the editorial and give it to my students. Here in Brasil we have a nice fruit, called the Jaboticaba, the trees of which take more than ten years to give fruits. Planting them is a commitment with the future that only those in love with this future can accept. But in some cases, these twelve years may mean a very, very high price. If I could only change your Hermeneutics of Assessment from two parallel lines to parallel spirals, we would see-and-judge-and-act-and-see-and-judge-and-so-on, the same holding for present-past-future-present-future-present-past in a nonlinear way, ambiguous way, more in agreement with our feelings than only our reason. And, as you wrote, let solidarity and plurality permit our love for the present world, and our commitment to tomorrow's.

Once again, thank you!  
Joao Frederico C. A. Meyer  
cooperatei n the School of Education  
Dept. of Mathematical Education  
University of Campinas,  
Campinas, Brazil

Twenty years ago 36 Christians from India, the Philippines and Germany underwent a learning encounter together by building community through visiting each others places of struggle and encounter with society and trying to gain a better understanding of global reality for the sake of their own social involvement. Autumn 1999 saw a reunion of some of the participants with the aim to identify which paradigms in ecumenical learning have changed and which ones are important to maintain.

The following are reflections by Dr. Paul Löffler who was responsibly involved in the 1979/1980 project and attended this year's evaluation. Löffler is Secretary of a large German Ecumenical Network of Action Groups and Individuals, after having served in his church as Executive Secretary for Ecumenism and Mission

## ECUMENICAL LEARNING – THE ONGOING STORY

### A) What has been endorsed by experience

After twenty years since the Tri-Country Programme two essentials, which I learned then, have been strongly endorsed for me.

#### 1. Exposure and analysis belong together:

The lasting impact for our learning experience in India and the Philippines resulted in the first instance from a base encounter with people in their living situation. Staying and sharing at least for a short time with families who made their living at and of the mountain of garbage at the rim of Metro-Manila and with villagers in Mindanao fighting oppression. There are obvious limits to such short term exposures, and it must be carefully considered what is bearable especially to the receiving community. Yet in retrospect that exposure has indisputably been the foundation of my learning process. A consecutive analysis of the political, social, economic and cultural factors which shape the experienced reality and make up the root causes for the actual situation must, however, follow. Partially it begins already in the preparatory process. Yet the sequence of first exposure and then analysis remains essential. Analysis carries the danger of a dogmatic and finally ideological approach to reality with it. But without analysis the exposure experience remains short term emotional and cannot be translated into consequences back home.

#### 2. Ecumenical learning happens in ecumenical communities!

The quality of our learning depended essentially on the fact that our exposure and analysis happened in a group process between Indians, Filipinos and Germans. That mixture caused a lot of communication problems which had to be overcome with patience and sensitivity. Indeed we could only master them by becoming a community of fellow travellers with our own shared song book, enclosing style of spirituality, biographical story telling and times of laughter together. What seemed at first a huge investment in group dynamics and internal communication at the expense of outward orientation paid off through the richness, depths and correction of insights gained. How much would an intellectual German from a highly industrialised society have been able to understand of life in the rural Philippines without the aid of the Indian members of our group? How could the same person of middle class background deal with a revolutionary situation of struggle against oppression without the Filipinos in

(cont. page 20)

## Bridges made by angel wings

*“My father told me as a child how bridges first came to this world and how the first bridge was built. When Allah the Merciful and Compassionate first created this world, the earth was smooth and even as a finely engraved plate. That displeased the devil who envied man this gift of God. And while the earth was still just as it had come from God’s hands, damp and soft as unbaked clay, the devil stole up and scratched the face of God’s earth with his nails as much and as deeply as he could. Therefore, the story says, deep rivers and ravines were formed which divided one district from another and kept people apart, preventing them from travelling on that earth that God had given them as a garden for their food and their support. And God felt pity when he saw what the Accursed One had done, but was not able to return to the task which the devil had spoiled with his nails, so God sent his angels to help people and make things easier for them. When the angels saw how unfortunate men could not pass those abysses and ravines to finish the work they had to do, but tormented themselves and looked in vain and shouted from one side to the other, the angels spread their wings above those places and men were able to cross. So people learned from the angels of God how to build bridges, and therefore, after fountains, the greatest blessing is to build a bridge and the greatest sin to interfere with one, for every bridge, from a tree trunk crossing a mountain stream to this great bridge of Mehmed Pasha, has its guardian angel who cares for it and maintains it as long as God has ordained that it should stand.”*

from “The Bridge on the Drina” by Ivo Andrić (1892-1975) was a distinguished Yugoslav diplomat. “The Bridge on the Drina” earned him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1961.



## Bridge

*When the word BRIDGE is heard, we immediately picture two sides that are connected. The main idea in the meaning of this word is joining together.*

*It takes a lot of time and strength to build a bridge, because we need to get from one side to another, and yet, it takes only a few seconds to destroy it, because the joint is fragile. Years and years had passed before the bridge across the Danube connecting Petrovaradin and Novi Sad was built; only one well-targeted bomb was enough to destroy it forever. A lot of energy was needed to unite two worlds by this bridge; the Orthodox world living on one side and the Catholic world living on the other -a single bomb managed to divide them.*

*Bridges are constructions that we are proud of, but at the same time, they are constructions of the spirit, which joins people and objects. This is why the bridge in Novi Sad was not just construction; it was a construction of emotions, since every citizen had somebody or something in the other part of town. The pupils of High School in Sremski Karlovci used to cross this bridge every day on their way to school. They were going to the other side to gain knowledge, find their first love and spend hours and days that were to remain a part of their youth memories. One bridge has disappeared -the bridge that connected the citizens of Petrovaradin and three beautiful Catholic churches that their fellow citizens from Novi Sad used to visit once a day or week. Those who had their peaceful oases in the Fruska Gora Mountain cannot find their rest there any more. We, from here, cannot go to them who are over there - it hurts! This is why we protest.*

*The bombardment of the bridge in Novi Sad symbolizes division between nations, parts of the world, the division within ourselves. The bombardment of the bridge in Novi Sad is only one in a series of bombardments in our (former) country -the beautiful bridge in Mostar. Bridges are disappearing, the bridges that join us and remind us of the fact that it is possible to live together.*

*And today as we stand in front of our destroyed bridge, each of us recalls how we lived with it, and we all cry. We cry because we hate those who took it away from us. Destroying the bridge in Novi Sad as a strategic point, they have moved the emotional point of our balance and now we are limping in search of support. We only hope it is not another military point.*

Text: Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization Novi Sad, April 20, 1999

Pictures on this side. Alexander Beloposky



*the group who were not merely hosts and teachers but members of the community? It was equally important that our learning community did not disband at the end of the programme but went on for many years to practice mutual accountability about how we acted upon our insights each in his/her own place back home.*

## **B) What has been gained anew?**

*In an ongoing involvement in development education and ecumenical formation at seminary and congregational levels I have gained two further essentials since then.*

### **1) International ecumenical learning must be contextualized!**

*Without question the international reality in the "oikoumene" has become more complex during the last decades. The experiences of poverty and oppression, for instance, seem quite different for women in*



*secularised and traditional societies and for the marginalised in an industrial country and in one excluded from global economic development. Analyses have to be diversified in order to match plural reality and even our common visions of justice and peace have to be concretised in order not to pale away. This seems due to the contradictory impact of globalization under hegemonic control on different situations and different people in one situation and different aspects of the same impact. But it is also due to a basic learning process within the ecumenical movement, the discovery of the diversity of contexts. I have learned to give more weight to culture and tradition and the way they shape values and well being of local communities. I have learned to beware more of the inherent eurocentric orientation and methodology which determine so easily processes of ecumenical learning. My experience with interreligious dialogue has increased awareness of how partial and one sided language expressions, seemingly common terms like peace and justice and*

*even symbols are. Another example: Who are the poor in our country was a controversial debate twenty years ago. How to overcome poverty has been a continuing challenge in the political dialogue of our plural civil society. What fullness of life means to different groups in our society, for youth culture, to migrants from Asia or Africa, to religious communities of diverse tradition provokes yet another dimension of mutual learning.*

### **2. Learning begins locally!**

*Twenty years ago the common motto was that we should learn to "think globally and to act locally". The perspective may have to be reversed or at least to be supplemented: "Learn locally in order to relate globally". Already in the Tri-Country Programme it was obvious that we could really learn only from those who were involved at their local place. Now it is still more evident that local involvement is a precondition for wider learning. "Ecumenical learning at home" is not only a test for the seriousness of my wanting to learn in a wider context. It also furnishes the learner with the instruments and criteria for wider learning. The ecumenical agenda is developing from the grass roots before it can be enlarged internationally. In that sense ecumenical learning has become a process of exchange between contexts. One consequence could well be that more emphasis needs to be given to ecumenical learning in ongoing bilateral partnerships so to enlarge them by the global experience and analysis. Besides the process of globalization makes it possible to find most essential building stones of ecumenical learning in each local situation different cultural and religious communities, the deepening gulf between rich and poor, the oppression of marginalised people, the problems of ecology.*

*If a former emphasis of ecumenical learning was to "de-provincialised Christian awareness" (Ernst Lange), it may now have to give more attention to interchange and understanding between different contexts in which Christian communities exist. The centralised orientation of a mono-directed process of financial and economic globalization as the opposite, neo-liberal vision for our one world may challenge ecumenical learning to reverse its emphasis and to build up learning from below on the local resources of each context. International ecumenical learning would then be a grand process of learning to share between contexts.*

Dr. Paul Löffler  
Plädoyer für eine ökumenische Zukunft  
Büchener Weg 16a  
D-21451 Lauenburg  
Germany

# THE DREAM OF LEARNING OUR TRUE NAME

In the beginning  
there was the dream...

We saw the four points  
and from each one women were coming  
and each one was bearing a burden

some were almost borne down by their weight  
some stepped more lightly  
one walked with children  
but as they came  
leaves and stones, flowers and berries  
bark and flame and grasses drifted around them  
and woman who is a tree of peace  
gathered them up and shaped them into a sacred circle  
and the women entered the circle  
and we began our learning

woman with poems in her heart  
taught us the art of receiving with grace

woman who remembers the future  
taught us of silence, and fire in the snow

woman who gives power to women  
taught us the necessity of practical responses  
and to dare to wear flowers in our hair

woman who works from the heart  
taught us that a clear mind is energising like cool water

and there was not enough time  
and there was all time...

woman who points beyond  
taught us to look with the eye of prayer

woman with the ocean in her soul  
taught us the virtue of laughter in serving

woman who is a tree of peace  
taught us to bend to receive earth's seasons



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woman with fire in her heart  
taught us to feel the heartbeat of life

...and there was not enough time  
and there was all time....

woman who brings forth healing  
taught us attentiveness to the needs of others

woman whose heart is tender behind the shield  
taught us that song is a wheel of fire

woman who makes everything beautiful  
taught us to bow to the universe  
and to never, ever separate matter and spirit

woman who smiles through tears  
taught us the cost of care  
and the art of grieving

...and there was not enough time  
and there was all time...

woman who is a sanctuary  
taught us how to hear the music beyond words

woman who walks with children  
taught us the playful delight of creation  
and how to let go

man who sees but does not claim  
taught us gentleness of presence

...and there was not enough time (for this is life)  
and there was all time, for the circle goes beyond time  
and in the time beyond time we dreamt a dream together

of the circle and the seasons  
of the power of the waters  
and the generations of humankind  
of giving and receiving and suffering and learning  
and the Great Spirit whispered our name in dreams  
the name of all who love the mystery

and we saw with amazement  
that everything we needed

was contained within the circle  
all healing  
all justice  
all hope  
all courage  
all knowledge  
a gift broken open before us  
broken like bread  
broken like loving hearts  
broken like the life offered up



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broken to be shared  
and to give new life  
if only we will receive it into ours  
with open hands and a contrite spirit

and we saw that the circle too must break  
and there would be wide spaces between us  
but they will not be empty  
for many, many people stand in them  
and we are all part of the circle of life  
and so we are not afraid  
because we belong together in the circle

wherever we go,  
and the Great Spirit who loves us  
and has given us our true names  
whispers them in the darkness  
when we are alone

when we are weary  
when we are despairing  
and we are re-membered  
in the heart of God.

Drafters' Report  
Workshop on Women, Art and Education  
Toronto, 23-29 August 1999



## **OIKOSNET NEWS**

### **Calendar of Events**

#### **1999**

Dec 9-12 Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concern in Asia (ACISCA) Joint Consultation on Place of Minorities in the Pluralist Context of Asia, Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, India

#### **2000**

Jan 17-26 NARDA (An Ecumenical Christian Association of Retreat and Renewal Centres and Leaders in North America) Regional Course for Lay Leadership Training (CLLT): "Healthy Leaders for Healthy Institutions", Spirit in the Desert Centre, Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Feb 15-20 Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa (ACLCA) Pre-Assembly: Youth and Women's Network Consultation, Ramseyer Training Centre, Abetifi, Ghana

Feb 20-27 ACLCA 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, theme: "Being the Light of the World: Challenges and Hopes for the New Millennium", Abokobi, Ghana

May 15-17 OIKOSNET Strategic Planning meeting, Geneva, Switzerland

July Asian Women's/Men's Synod 2000 in Indonesia or Korea Contact: Mrs Priscilla R. Atuel, ACISCA Treasurer, Fax: 0063-2-735-1465 E-mail: [kkfi@skyinet.net](mailto:kkfi@skyinet.net)

Sept 8-14 Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe (EAALCE) Forum 2000, Loccum, Germany. Quota: 4 participants per region. For information contact: Wolfgang Lenz, EAALCE, Tel:0049-212-2494-250, Fax: 0049-212-2494-254, E-mail: [office@eaalce.de](mailto:office@eaalce.de)

October ACISCA Directors Consultation, Karachi, Pakistan. For information contact: Dr Felix N. Sugirtharaj, ACISCA Executive Secretary, Fax: 0091-44-558 21 50, E-mail: [arpmds@md3.vsnl.net.in](mailto:arpmds@md3.vsnl.net.in)

November ACISCA Ecumenical Conference on "Development in the Third Millennium". Hosts: Mr Prawate Khid-arn, Executive Secretary, CCA – D&S and ACISCA

**After OIKOSNET meeting, Stony Point, September 1999, the two following meeting dates were moved to 2001:**

Mar 14- April 12 Global Course for Lay Leadership Training (CLLT) Theme: "To be Instruments for Peace"

Mar 14-19 4 Team visits: Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine

Mar 20- April 1 24 Residential Course, Ayia Napa Conference Centre, Cyprus. 30 participants: 4 from each region plus 4 resource people. For information contact: Evelyn Appiah, Education and Ecumenical Formation, World Council of Churches, PO Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Fax: (41-22)7102312 E-mail: [app@wcc-coe.org](mailto:app@wcc-coe.org)

2001 ACLCA and ACISCA Interregional Interfaith Consultation on Islam/ Buddhism Christianity. Rev. Jonah Katoneene, ACLCA, Fax: (2634) 573279 E-mail: [aclca@zimsurf.co.zw](mailto:aclca@zimsurf.co.zw) or Rev. Felix Sugirtharaj, ACISCA, Fax: 0091 - 44 595 00 52 E-mail: [arpmds@md3.vsnl.net.in](mailto:arpmds@md3.vsnl.net.in)



## NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

### AFRICA

#### CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING NETWORK OF ACLCA

This ecumenical grassroots network of Christian lay centres is dedicated to peace, justice and development in Africa, committed to the ideal of world peace through social change, and is part of global civil society.

Strategic directions are:

- ◆ Solidarity – to bridge the divides amongst the many peoples of Africa through a shared vision and aspiration towards a common goal;
- ◆ Education – to develop skills and raise critical awareness of its members to act wisely and professionally in conflicts, analyse complex situations and promote self-reliance;
- ◆ Coordination – to bond members into a social movement which shares information and exchanges the many lessons drawn from their own experience and traditions.
- ◆ Activity plans for the next three years are: Year One: set up infra-structure, conduct training, deepen awareness, make strategic links;
- ◆ Year Two: share local stories, deepen skills/learning, form strategic partners, lobby for Africa Peace Academy;
- ◆ Year Three: broaden knowledge base amongst members, implement joint projects, assess progress.

Contact person: Philip Visser, ACLCA, 32 Winson Road South, PO Box H122, Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe. Fax: (2634)573279 E-mail: [aclca@zimsurf.co](mailto:aclca@zimsurf.co)

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Rev. Ejike Okoro, Director of the Institute of Church and Society, Nigeria who was elected Chairperson of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) at its Assembly held in Lebanon, August/September 1999, from September 1999 to September 2003.

*NEW ADDRESS: PCEA Lay Training Centre, PO Box 213, Kikuyu, Kenya has a new post office box number and now also has an e-mail: [pcealay@insightkenya.com](mailto:pcealay@insightkenya.com)*

### ASIA

#### A REPORT OF THE ACISCA CONSULTATION ON ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVES BEYOND 2000 IN ASIA

The Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concern in Asia (ACISCA), a regional network of Asia associated with OIKOS-NET, organised an important Consultation in Chiangmai, Thailand from October 3 - 7, 1999 with the theme "Ecumenical Perspective Beyond 2000 in Asia".



#### WHY SUCH A CONSULTATION?

We have entered the final stretch of our journey towards the year 2000. Many of us are overwhelmed by the anticipation, longing and hope that are growing among global communities.

The World Council of Churches had just celebrated its Golden Jubilee and proclaimed the year 2000 as a renewal for peace and justice. Yet, we as Christians, in Asia, are still to find a common ground in matters of faith, rituals and traditions. We should be proud of our religions, cultures of harmony with nature and human beings. We do believe that we can rediscover one another's heritage and use these resources for the common good of others.

As we are at the threshold of a new millennium, the Ecumenical community is challenged as never before to renew our faith in Christ. Will Ecumenism in Asia beyond 2000 become the Church of the stranger and take the side of the uprooted? Will we, as Ecumenical partners, be in the service of the Churches so that Ecumenism may be increasingly used by God as a means of witness and service and inspiration to the Churches in the fulfillment of their common Ecumenical calling?

Above all, as part of the Ecumenical Global community, we must proclaim a new hope and a new vision based on people's hopes and aspirations and relate it to God's vision of making all things new. The Asian Churches should strive hard for the promotion of peace, social justice and ecological balance and must project a new vision for the New Millennium

## WHAT HAPPENED AT THE CONSULTATION?

During the Consultation it emerged that we, as Asians, are confronted with the following serious realities. They are as follows:

1. Ecological degradation associated with over exploitation of natural resources.
2. Commodification of women.
3. Commercialization of sex, abuse of drugs and related problems of AIDS.
4. Loss of basic means of subsistence of land for farmers and indigenous people, and loss of marine resources for those who rely on fishing.
5. Privatization of health care and educational facilities.
6. Uncontrolled flow of capital, profit becoming the ultimate criteria in development and States losing their sovereignty.
7. Rising religious fundamentalism.
8. Terrorism and organised violence.

## PANELS AND DISCUSSION GROUPS:

Apart from regular morning worship and Bible studies based on the relevant themes, there were two panels namely Panel I on Redefining Lay Leadership, Gender Equality and Social Concerns and Panel II on Socio Economic Cultural Realities of Asia Beyond 2000 and ACISCA's New Role.

Both the panels sharpened a clear theological self-understanding reflected on the life and mission of the church with bold options in support of the victims of globalization. Dialogue with other faiths and humble submission to respect other religions and their values was strongly emphasized. During the Bible studies it was felt that we as Christians, should read and understand the Bible in the context of contemporary understanding of a covenant community that is inclusive and all prevailing.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONSULTATION:

The participants and observers were more than fifty in number. We have all self-examined and reflected as to why our people are getting poorer while the wealthiest continue to increase their control over God's gift of creation, which was meant for all people. Our affirmation of faith was that God in Christ had entered our world with all its structures and had already won the victory over the principalities and powers.

Therefore we concluded that we, as Asians, must catalyse the local congregations and specially our young lay leaders and the community around us to reclaim our cultural heritage and deeper spirituality in relation to our life styles in contrast to our poor peoples struggles. Our

mission beyond 2000 is driven by a burning passion for justice, peace and integrity of all God's creation.

Mr Rich Watson from NARDA, Ms Angela Roemer from EAALCE and Ms Rana Khoury from MEATRC participated in the consultation as the OIKOSNET delegation. Ms Evelyn Appiah, the Executive Secretary of Education and Ecumenical Formation, WCC, participated in the panel and also brought greetings from WCC. A few Asian Ecumenical Organizations such as Christian Conference of Asia, Amity Foundation, Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism and Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong also took part in the consultation.

## JUBILEE 2000 TO RESOURCE IN HOPE:

There was a clarion call for the Jubilee Campaign so as to free ourselves from foreign debts, free ourselves from all sorts of human slavery, free ourselves from oppression and exploitation and actualize the Jubilee for our time and beyond !!

## FUTURE PROGRAMMES OF ACISCA 1999

1. Consultation on Indigenous People in Asia Pacific, October 27 - November 1 1999 at Lay Training Centre, Presbyterian Bible College, Hsinchu, Taiwan.
2. Joint Consultation on Place of Minorities in the Pluralist Context of Asia, December 9 - 12 1999, at Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, India.

For reports of these and further information contact: Rev. Dr Felix N. Sugirtharaj, Executive Secretary ACISCA. Fax: 0091-44-5582150 E-mail: [arpmds@md3vsnl.net.in](mailto:arpmds@md3vsnl.net.in)

## THE ECUMENICAL CENTRE FOR PEACE

### First Church of Chiang Mai

The First Church of Chiang Mai was established in April 1868 and has served the people of Chiang Mai City and Province for 131 years. The old church building (which now serves as the assembly hall for the Chiang Mai Christian School) and the new sanctuary located at 10 Chareonras Road have become Chiang Mai landmarks that cannot be missed. Christians coming to Chiang Mai regularly pay a visit to the church to admire the buildings and grounds and to join with the congregation for Sunday worship.



Currently the population of



Chiang Mai Province has grown to over a million persons. This increase in population has been accompanied by eco-

economic and material growth and by the construction of many high-rise modern buildings. Throughout the province one finds a multitude of new hospitals, schools, hotels, banks and shopping centres. Chiang Mai has become a centre for business, education, and medical facilities for the province and for the entire north of Thailand. In recent years these facilities have attracted many new residents to the city.

This rapid urban growth has created many new social problems for Chiang Mai City. During the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in slums and crowded areas, violent crimes, cases of drug addiction, environmental pollution, unhealthy competitiveness and greed, exploitation and oppression, sexual crimes, etc. All of this has contributed both directly and indirectly to increased suffering and hardship and to the experience of injustice for the people of Chiang Mai.

The Christian community like the rest of the population is unable to avoid or ignore these conditions. All of God's children, both those inside and those outside the membership of the church, need a place of refuge to which they can turn in order to escape the menace and perils of today's contemporary society that are threatening their lives and well-being. Economic poverty and exploitation, injustice, unemployment, physical pain, emotional stress, ruthless social competitiveness, and social and religious upheaval are just some of the ills being experienced by the residents of Chiang Mai at the present time. Today the people need a safe spiritual, mental, and physical haven from the negative influences and turmoil that have resulted from rapid growth and from the adverse effects of scientific and technological advancements.

The First Church of Chiang Mai is located in the middle of this vibrant, tumultuous, and troubled community. We are contacted frequently by many persons who are interested in learning about the Christian religion, and who request pictures, printed materials and books about the birth and resurrection of Christ.

#### *Objectives of the Ecumenical Centre for Peace:*

1. To heal and care for those who are bruised and injured both physically and spiritually.

2. To create peace in the lives of those who are troubled and distressed.
3. To accomplish God's will and to establish God's Kingdom.
4. To help the church become an institution and a people that serves others rather than seeking its own power and influence.
5. To protect, preserve, and develop the quality of human life and the environment.
6. To assist and enable the Christian community in Northern Thailand to perform its ministry more effectively and faithfully.

#### *Ministerial Functions:*

- a) Provide spiritual support and various forms of counselling.
- b) Sponsor seminars, lectures, and discussions on various topics related to problems arising in the church and the community.
- c) Sponsor and arrange programmes for training and developing church and community leaders.
- d) Serve as a service and information centre for the church and community.
- e) Serve as a centre for developing various skills among church members and within the wider community.
- f) Serve as a centre for improving the quality of human life, the church, society, the environment, and all creation.
- g) Provide a meeting place for classes, worship, seminars, and workshops.

#### *Purpose:*

The Centre is intended to serve as an instrument by which God's love, justice, peace, and unity is introduced into the Christian community and into northern Thailand.

For more information contact: Rev. Pakdee Wattanachantaragul, Ecumenical Centre for Peace, 10 Chareonras Road, Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand. Tel/Fax: (053)243072 E-mail: [chaitip@mail.com](mailto:chaitip@mail.com)

#### **NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS:**

Rev. Dr Toshitsugu Arai, Executive Director, Nippon Christian Academy now has an E-mail address: [arai-xa@m.academy.or.jp](mailto:arai-xa@m.academy.or.jp)

## **OIKOSNET EXCHANGE PROGRAMME**

From Kapatiran-Kaunlaran Foundation Inc., Philippines to Bossey and Boldern, Switzerland

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

My trip to Switzerland was indeed an experience of a

lifetime. The breathtaking landscape of lakes and hills, towering trees in different shades of green and bright beautiful flowers was a sight to behold. The cool, gentle breeze was very relaxing, inviting me to feast my eyes on the serene and picturesque villages and vineyards. It was definitely an expression of God's handiwork, the way it should be - beautiful, clean, abundant and refreshing. It was almost like paradise where you can enjoy God's presence every single moment of the day.

Such an idyllic setting was the silent witness to a rich encounter between women from different cultures and faith traditions, with different economic and political perspectives. From heated academic and theological discussions to heartwarming sharing of life experiences in the most authentic way, we were able to connect with one another and learn from each other's differences and uniqueness. It was an incredible manifestation of God's creative work in weaving our manifold lives together with the whole of creation in such a beautiful interconnectedness.

#### A. BOSSEY SEMINAR:

The "Women in Christian Spirituality" seminar held at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, from July 29-August 7, 1999 had 27 participants and 10 organizers and speakers representing 17 countries with diverse faith traditions. The presentations and discussions focused on Christian Spirituality as nurtured by feminine images and symbols in the Scriptures and tradition of the Church (specifically from the Orthodox and Protestant traditions) and the place and role of women in the history of the Church and her liturgical life. After every presentation were small group discussions wherein questions were raised and the members of the group dialogued with one another for an in-depth discussion of the lectures. The most relevant issues that needed further study were then taken up during the different workshops. I joined the group assigned to study the spirituality of sufferings since it was the most relevant to our Philippine context.

During this seminar, I observed that discussions tended to be highly academic and theological which reminded me of my seminary days. But thank God, there were times when the discussions were "pulled down" to the ground for a more relevant translation of true Christian spirituality in our own lives and the lives of the people we serve. I realized then how I longed for this kind of dialogues and encounter. Here in the Philippines, we need a kind of spirituality that is rooted in the experiences of the people many of them, especially women, are suffering from all kinds of social evils.

It is probably the reason why I learned so much from the sharing with the participants at the dinner table or even during break time where we were more free to express

ourselves while enjoying the delicious feast served before us. I also enjoyed the discussions within the small groups just like our workshop group of "suffering women" which was a diverse and engaging group. The Bossey family, especially the staff/organizers and the blue angels, were very kind and accommodating. I must say that my Bossey experience was enriching; not only because of the theological discourses that engaged my mental faculties, but also because of so many genuine connections with wonderful people in almost everything we shared and experienced together. Indeed, Bossey is a place of an encounter and learning beyond boundaries.

#### B. BOLDERN SEMINAR:

I had such a great time at Bossey that I wished the Bossey participants were also joining me in Boldern. Somehow, I expected that I'd be the "odd-one-out" considering that the Seminar was for European Women. But then again, Boldern was absolutely beautiful. It is located on a hill overlooking Mannedorf and Lake Zurich. We got to feast our eyes on such a fantastic view every time we ate.

The seminar was dubbed, "Computer, Cow and Women's Business." It dealt with women's contributions towards a caring economy and sustainable living in Europe. There were 120 participants and organizers/speakers coming from 29 countries, mostly from Western and Eastern Europe. The lectures and discussions focused more on economic issues concerning women in Europe. I learned from the discussions that the situation in Eastern European countries is very similar to us here in the Philippines in terms of poverty, crime rate, etc. In the workshop I joined, we discussed about different women's projects presented by the members of the group. I had the chance to present the programmes of KKFI and they were all impressed by what we have been doing here. They didn't expect to find a foundation in the Philippines that has such a variety of programmes with excellent network of other partner agencies.

I believe the most significant thing that happened during this workshop was that one of the members of the group representing OWEN (Ost-West-Europäisches FrauenNetzwerk e.V. or East-West Women's Network) based in Germany was very much interested in learning how we do our programmes here in the Philippines so they can effectively launch women's programmes in Bulgaria. We have discussed and made plans (genuine networking even while the seminar is still going on) for an East-South exchange programme. Basically, it's women from Western Europe learning from the Philippines so they can better serve women in Eastern Europe like Bulgaria, Ukraine, etc. We realized that it would be an expensive project and OWEN does not have such funding at the moment. They said that they will communicate with us this month and I believe that this is one great opportunity for KKFI to extend our services even at in-

ternational level.

After Boldern, I had the privilege of staying overnight at the home of one of the participants, a very kind and wonderful Swiss woman, Alice Wegmann who lives in Zurich. Being a social worker, we were able to share our own experiences in working with the poor and marginalized while we went around the old city of Zurich which was bustling with much activity at night. It was indeed an excellent way of completing my Switzerland experience.

### C. SUBSEQUENT PLANS RESULTING FROM THE TRIP:

Before coming to Switzerland, I had in mind the countless people we serve: from the streetchildren to the senior citizens; from the women's dormitory residents and scholars to the residents of the rehabilitation centres and out of school youths; from the church and civic leaders to the urban poor, farmers and fisherfolks and indigenous people. How can I better minister to them in their respective needs? I have shared about their plight during various group discussions. But still I asked myself, what more can I share with them besides the Swiss chocolates and vivid stories and pictures of my experiences?

First, I believe that the most impressive thing that happened during this trip was to find my place in the incredible tapestry of God's creation. Everything was interconnected with each other, the human family and the rest of creation. We need not feel isolated no matter where we come from, neither do we need to be disconnected or alienated even when we think we're poor and different. We can always allow God to link our lives with others and weave us together in perfect unity even in our diversity.

I believe that with this realization, I will be able to help promote stronger bonds and solidarity among our people groups. As the exhibit of women in the ecumenical movement beautifully put it, "Come into the circle. Join the open space." Indeed, everybody has a space in the circle of God's creation.

Second, I took home a wealth of knowledge and information that can easily be shared in every opportunity I have. Of course, some need to be adapted to our own context in order to be beneficial. I still believe in the importance of participatory discussion and group processes towards more creative interactions and more productive learning experiences. One education opportunity that I am planning to pursue is on the area of women empowerment that is grounded on women's experiences of Christian spirituality. Since majority of the KKFI clientele are women, there's a rich well of resources and varieties of faith expressions that we can draw from and use for their own capability-building.

Third, in terms of networking, I will do whatever I can

towards the realization of the East-South collaboration between OWEN and KKFI. I also intend to further strengthen the other connections we were able to forge with different women's agencies even in terms of communication initially and then ultimately in more concrete sharing of resources and other concerns.

### CONCLUSION:

Everything I experienced in Switzerland has enriched my life and ministry in so many wonderful ways. In a sense, I can say that I will never be the same again. God has called us to serve in a world filled with dissensions and every evil thing imaginable. It was indeed very inspiring to experience a special kind of solidarity between diverse people willing to move beyond their respective boundaries to learn from each other's differences and uniqueness. No matter how brief, it was a glimpse worth pursuing until we can truly say that together, we are working for peace and justice for this world as the finest expression of our Christian spirituality.

Again, for all these and more, THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH!

Rev. Ruby-Nell M. Estrella

Kapatiran-Kaunlaran Foundation Inc., 937 P. Parades Street, Sampaloc, P.O. Box 1600, Manila, Philippines. Tel: 0063-2-735-4661, Fax: 0063-2-735-1465, E-mail: [kkfi@skyinet.net](mailto:kkfi@skyinet.net)

## EUROPE

### FUNDACAO CESDA, Lay Training Centre, Portugal

Fundação CESDA, in harmony with its action, based on principles and guarantees of Human Rights, decided to unite efforts with Fundação AMI (International Medical Help) that develops a recognized activity within Humanitarian Missions.

In this sense, they appeal to the greatest number of persons, entities and civil society in general in order to canalise all efforts to those non-governmental organizations present back in the field of operations, so that TIMOR LORO SAE reaches its full right of independence, with all the respect for Human Rights and People's Dignity.

AMI already has a medical team and all of their contacts for logistical support have been made. Only a freight departing from Lisbon and regarding a plane that would take 30 tons of cargo costs 45,000,000 \$escudos. They now have important, vital representatives to organize the mission in Sydney, Darwin and Jakarta. They have already contacted the Australian Caritas, which is offering the same support as the AMI. This is

the fourth emergency mission in a little over a year that the AMI embraced (Guinea-Bissau: June 1998-April 99, Honduras: Nov 98-June 99, Kosovo: April-May 1999) thanks to the friends of the AMI and all of those that have responded to their appeals, not to mention in Angola, where the AMI has been ensuring an emergency mission in the Providence of N'Dalatanto, since 1995, which has been progressively prolonged to January 2000.

For information contact: Daniel Lemos, Fundação CESDA, Rua Manuel Fernandes da Silva, 46, Paço, Esgueira, 3800-313 Aveiro, Portugal Tel: 351(0)34 300720 Fax: 351(0)34 300729 E-mail: fundacao.cesda@mail.telepac.pt

## ST ANDREW'S BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

St Andrew's Biblical Theological College (Moscow) offers the possibility to study the Orthodox theology, church history, biblical studies, liturgy, philosophy, literature, Christian art history and other relevant subjects. The programme is open to members of any Christian denomination or any religion. Working knowledge of Russian is expected. For information concerning timing, fees, application form and curriculum contact: Dr Alexei E. Bodrov, Rector, St Andrew's Biblical Theological College, Sportivnaya St 6-11, Dzerzhinsky, Moscow Region, 140056 Russia. Tel/Fax: +7095 5513462/7095-1358292. E-mail: [standrews@standrews.ru](mailto:standrews@standrews.ru) Website: <http://www.standrews.ru>

## THE LIFE AND RESOURCES OF LAITY CENTRES

by Chris Lawson

This is the first set of overviews to be produced about the aims, origins and work of member centres of the Association of Laity Centres in Britain and Ireland. Chris Lawson, a former tutor at Woodbrooke College and long associated with the ALC, has visited over 20 centres (from Corrymeela in Northern Ireland and Carberry in Scotland to Hengrave Hall in Suffolk and Trefeca in Wales). He has written succinctly about each making clear their purposes and organisation as well as describing their settings and facilities and given some of his own thoughts on their role in an Introduction.

The ALC is glad to make these descriptions available to all those interested in the ways in which the Centres are meeting the needs of people within and without churches today, including:

- staff and members of governing bodies of the Centres
- those concerned with the provision of adult religious

education

- those involved in promoting ecumenical gatherings and learning
- other study and retreat organisations and networks
- those looking for a Centre to go to personally or with a group

Published by the Association of Laity Centres, September 1999, 53 pages, A4 spirally bound with card covers, £4.00 inc. postage. For information contact: Brian Baker, ALC Honorary Secretary, Scottish Churches House, Kirk Street, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0AJ, UK, Tel: 01786-823588, Fax: 01786-825844, E-mail: [schse.@dial.pipex.com](mailto:schse.@dial.pipex.com)

### Request from Evelyn Appiah:

If other Associations of Lay Centres have any similar brochure we would be pleased to receive a copy here in Geneva.

**NEW ADDRESS** for Rev. Sven-Bernhard Fast, President, Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe: Orrholmsvägen 27 B, SE-791 53 Falun, Sweden

## NORTH AMERICA

### LIVING INTO GLOBAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A consultation was held 13-16 September 1999 at Stony Point Centre, New York, sponsored by NARDA, an Ecumenical Christian Association of Retreat and Renewal Centres in North America. 90 participants attended, two-thirds from NARDA and others representing OIKOS-NET regional associations. Hurricane Mitch was also there bringing closed airports, flooded freeways, and no electricity! This unusual experience for New York presented an opportunity for real togetherness as participants huddled around candles to talk in the dark!

#### Goals were:

- To reflect biblically and theologically on what it means to work for just, participatory, sustainable and inclusive communities;
- To experience the effects of globalization in the North American context;
- to experience and reflect upon the nature of ecumenical education in global reality;
- to explore what it means to be a centre in a global network;

- to develop strategies for the future.

Keynote speaker was Dr Kosuke Koyama "Living into Global Community".

Participants were warmly welcomed by the new Director of Stony Point, William H. Pindar. Accommodation was arranged in three houses: Asia, Africa and Latin America, as a building community. Visits were organized with school bus transportation to those living on the edges of society or working with the marginalized in New York City. Areas covered were the world's: HIV/AIDS – women and children; uprooted homeless/jobless; the marginalized – social work and justice, psychiatric patients over 40 years.

Workshops held were: 1) Communications for Living into Global Community, Rich Watson and Liz Schueler; 2) Education for Living into Global Community, Loretta Whalen; 3) Developing Leaders for Global Community, Margaret Haney.

NARDA Annual Meeting that followed on 16 September, Dr Scott Haasarud (Spirit in the Desert Centre) was elected President of NARDA and Ms Cynthia Crowner (Kirkridge Centre) as Vice-President. Thanks were given to Rev. Bill Peterson for his time as former President.

## OIKOSNET MEETING

Stony Point, 17-19 September 1999

Apart from sharing reports from various regional associations, WCC, and Tonga Lay Centre, time was also spent on discussing Courses for Lay Leadership Training (CLLTs) and future expectations – two-weeks or one-month courses. Invitations were extended to various programmes of associations to be held in 2000. There is a need to discuss long-term strategic planning. It was decided not to print a Directory of Ecumenical Conference Centres. The regional associations were asked to handle this by e-mail and internet, as well as systematically updating their information. Network 21 will be a useful tool. The book "History and Hopes of CLLTs" will be published in India. A design group was appointed to work on vision, future fundraising strategies and joint programmes. It was proposed that Loccum 2000 should be on a smaller scale due to funding limitations, and that the Global CLLT in Cyprus be postponed to 2001.

Reporting on Stony Point meetings  
Evelyn Appiah, OIKOSNET Secretary  
Executive Secretary, Education & Ecumenical Formation

## TATAMAGOUCHE CENTRE

As an adult residential learning centre, an exciting development over this past year has been the creation,

through a task group process, of our Statement of Educational Practice. For years we have talked about the magic and power of learning experiences that occur in this place, and now we have described it. "Transformational Learning" is how we name our practice of adult education. It is grounded in an experiential model of learning that has been used and developed here for over three decades. It is also grounded in a theology of cocreation. We see ourselves as called to be active agents with the Creator in a movement toward greater wholeness for us as individuals and as seekers of justice. Programmes include: Spiritual Growth; Self Discovery; Social Transformation; Congregational Life.

The Christian Leadership Education Programme (CLE): "CLE has taken me from the back row of meetings to leading meetings". "CLE has been the most significantly supportive, challenging and Christ-like experience of my life". CLE is a home based leadership certificate study programme designed to provide support and training for lay people as they learn and grow in faith. Participants discover the links between faith and everyday life while they develop their leadership skill. This programme is for any adult interested in continuing to bridge the gap between what they learned in Sunday School and a more mature faith and understanding. Participants study at home, attend regional gatherings three times a year and a couple of programmes at the Tatamagouche Centre. This programme is jointly sponsored by the Christian Development Committee of the Maritime Conference and Tatamagouche Centre. A promotional video is available in every Presbytery.

For information contact: Wayne Edgar, Executive Director, Tatamagouche Centre, RR3, Tatamagouche, NS, B0K 1V0, Canada. Tel: (902)657-2231 or 1-800-218-2220, Fax: (902)657-3445, E-mail: [tatacent@north.nsis.com](mailto:tatacent@north.nsis.com)

## STONY POINT CENTRE

William H. Pindar is the new Executive Director of Stony Point Centre. One of the programmes they wish to recommend is their Resource Centre which serves as an ad hoc display space/study centre/library space. All recent publications and video tapes of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Publishing Corporation and Westminster John Knox Press are on display. Also, Readers' Service which is a book redistribution service where books are collected and sent to churches and educational institutions around the world. When donating books, they ask if possible to include a contribution to help defray the cost of overseas shipping. They suggest US\$1 per pound of donated books. Cheques payable to Stony Point Center designated for Readers' Service. Two options are available for assisting with the

mission of Readers' Service. Commit yourself (or organization) to:

- 1) ongoing sponsorship by pledging an annual gift to cover mailing costs – suggested contribution US\$50 a year.
- 2) One time contribution to help with mailing costs or purchase of requested books not donated.

For those who have lists of books needed and also for more information contact: Stony Point Centre, 17 Crickettown Rd., Stony Point, NY 10980, USA, Tel: (914)786-5674, Fax: (914)786-5919, E-mail: [Stony.Point@PCUSA.Org](mailto:Stony.Point@PCUSA.Org)

## KIRKRIDGE RETREAT AND STUDY CENTRE

Cynthia Crowner is the Director of Kirkridge. Since 1942 the Centre has welcomed persons seeking personal and social transformation. Kirkridge was founded by John Oliver Nelson, a Presbyterian clergyman, inspired by the vision and creation of a Christian community on the Scottish Isle of Iona. Their programmes include: Theological/Biblical/Church Renewal; Contemplation/ Sabbath Time; Justice, Peace and Ecology; Personal Growth and Healing; Spirituality Through the Arts.

For information contact: Kirkridge, 2495 Fox Gap Road, Bangor, PA 18013-6028, USA, Tel: (610)588-1793, Fax: (610)588-8510, Website: [kirkridge@www.kirkridge.org](mailto:kirkridge@www.kirkridge.org)

## LATIN AMERICA

### CENTRO EMMANUEL CELEBRATES ITS 40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Our congratulations and sincere best wishes for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Centre, in November this year, to the Director, Rev. German Zijlstra, the Board and staff. May the good work continue.

#### NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

Ivaline Nickie, Executive Secretary, CEPACASA, E-mail: [cepacasa@cwjamaica.com](mailto:cepacasa@cwjamaica.com)

Amalia Ballerio, CONOSUR, Centro Ecu mico de Cordoba, Lima 266, 5000 Cordoba, Argentina, E-mail: [cexc@piquillin.fis.uncor.edu](mailto:cexc@piquillin.fis.uncor.edu)

## THE MIDDLE EAST

### THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF BETHLEHEM

The centre is named Dar al-Nadwa, literally meaning the house of worldwide encounter. The name was chosen deliberately because they believe in the necessity of dialogue between cultures and encounter between people from different contexts. Since its opening, the centre has provided services for more than 20,000 people annually, both local and international.

Programmes included are:-Authentic Tourism, "Land, Culture & People";

- Future Guides for the Land of Palestine, training and qualifying professionals, especially women for the tourist industry as well as developing multi-faceted approaches to translate the different realities in the country;
- Intercultural Encounter, to promote cultural exchange between Palestine and the world;
- Reintegration Programme, to stop emigration of Palestine graduates and motivate return of those living abroad;
- Women's Studies, their role in society
- Art, Crafts and Music

Two lecture rooms are available with audio-visual equipment; "The Cave" for informal meetings; Two open-air courtyards; Guest house for groups and individuals; Dining room; Auditorium; Church. *Contact address: Dr Nuha Khoury, MEATRC Secretary, The International Centre of Bethlehem, P.O. Box 162, Paul VI St., Bethlehem, Palestine. Tel: +972 2 277 0047, Fax: +972 2 277 0048, E-mail: [annadwa@planet.edu](mailto:annadwa@planet.edu) Website: [www.annadwa.org](http://www.annadwa.org)*





# News from the School related Networks

## Inter-European Commission on Church and School (ICCS)

ICCS will hold its triennial European Conference from June 29 to July 2, 2000 in the beautiful city of Trondheim in Norway. The theme will be: "The Pluralistic European Society, Opportunities for Cooperation between Church and School?" The programme includes presentation of developments in religious education in different European countries, lectures dealing with the theme from the perspective of European policy on religious education, as well as workshops, discussion groups and excursions. Conference fee including full accommodation is 390 EURO or DM 780.

For the full programme and more information please contact: ICCS Secretariat, PeterSchreiner, Comenius-Institut, D-48149 Münster, Germany, Phone: +49-251-98101-25; Fax: +49-251-9810150 email: [schreiner@comenius.de](mailto:schreiner@comenius.de) or Institutt for Kristen Oppseding - IKO, Kirsti Ness, P.O.Box 2623 St. Hanshaugen, 0131 Oslo/Norway, Phone: +47-22595300; Fax +47-22595301; email: [kirsti.ness@iko.no](mailto:kirsti.ness@iko.no)

**A new publication** of ICCS will be available at end of this year:

P. Schreiner (ed): RE in Europe, 120 pp. price 20 DM or equivalent. The book includes short articles about the situation on religious education in more than 25 European countries. It provides basic information about the legal framework, the place and the image of RE in public schools as well as current discussions.

Please order from: ICCS Secretariat, Peter Schreiner, Comenius-Institut, D-48149 Münster, Germany, Phone +49-251-98101-25, Fax: +49-251-9810150 email: [schreiner@comenius.de](mailto:schreiner@comenius.de)

## New Co-ordinating Group established:

**CoGREE**, the Coordinating Group for Religious Education in Europe was established in late 1998 to foster activities about religious education in Europe. Six organizations are working together in CoGREE:

**EAWRE**: European Association for World Religions in Education, is an independent association of scholars and

educators which fosters an accurate handling of world religions in school and education. Contact: EAWRE, Dr. Herbert Schultze, Tangstedter Landstr.32B, D-22417 Hamburg, Phone: +49-40-531 5968

**ECCE**: European Conference for Christian Education, is a forum for the exchange of ideas, models and discussions about issues of Sunday school work in particular.

Contact: ECCE, Mrs. Pille Valk, Ülikooli 18, EE2400 Tartu, Estonia. Phone: +372-7375 963 email: [pvalk@ut.ee](mailto:pvalk@ut.ee)

**EFTRE**: European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education, supports the European co-operation of national and regional RE teachers' associations as well as institutes and organisations which support RE/RS (about 50 members from 10 countries). Its self-understanding is that of a non-confessional forum which represents the interests of RE teachers in Europe, independent of a specific structure and a confessional or non-confessional approach.

Contact: EFTRE, Mr. Jeremy Taylor, 4 Milton Court, Winnals Park, Haywards heath, West Sussex RH16 IEY, Phone: +44-1444/455260; email: [re@oakmeeds.rmplc.co.uk](mailto:re@oakmeeds.rmplc.co.uk)

**ICCS**: Inter-european Commission on Church and School, is a network of churches, institutes for education and religious education, and state organisations (from 17 European countries) which deal with education and RE. ICCS creates a forum especially to discuss the relations between church and school.

Contact: ICCS president, Drs. Hans Spinder, Landelijk Dienstencentrum SoW Kerken, KTO/Opbouw en Educatie, Postbus 8505, 3503 RM Utrecht, Netherlands Phone: +31-30 880 1503; email: [j.spinder@sowkerken.nl](mailto:j.spinder@sowkerken.nl)

**IV: International Association for Christian Education**, an umbrella organization of Protestant national associations and organisations of teachers and schools (members from 8 countries). The self-understanding of IV is to act as a council, which represents the interests of its members on the European level. It encourages co-operation amongst its member organisations and works on issues of the realization of Christian responsibility in education in Europe.

Contact: IV Secretariat, Frans Vos, Acacialaan 15, NL-8181 GG Heerde

**Religious Education Network**, gives practical support for the establishment of a Christian oriented RE in Middle and Eastern Europe, especially through seminars and providing information material.

Contact: Walter Sennhauser, CH-8415 Berg,

Phone: 0041-523181832,  
email: [renetwork@bluewin.ch](mailto:renetwork@bluewin.ch)

At the moment CoGREE is preparing:

- a) a reader about Religion, Education, and Europe
- b) a conference in 2001 on Learning from/about religion in Europe
- c) a political initiative to take part in the European education policy debate.

More information through the acting secretariat of CoGREE: Peter Schreiner, Comenius-Institut, D-48149 Münster, Germany,  
Phone: +49-251-98101-25, Fax: +49-251-9810150  
email: [schreiner@comenius.de](mailto:schreiner@comenius.de) or soon on the homepage of CoGREE: [www.cogree.com](http://www.cogree.com)

## News from Youth related Networks

ENYA Youthlinks is an exciting discussion forum and a resource centre, managed by the Ecumenical Network for Youth Action (ENYA). The "youthlinks" forum is open to young people/young adults, youth ministers/priests, youth workers, Bishops and those interested to work with young people. Primary focus includes the development of inter-active training courses for young people/adults, and youth workers, and the sharing of experiences and resources in the fields of youth-led relationship programming, social justice and peace issues, youth ministries, burning issues and current ecumenical developments.

This ENYA youthlinks forum is part of:

### **THE MILLENNIUM OF YOUTH IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE CHURCHES.**

Emailaddress: [ENYAyouthlinks@onelist.com](mailto:ENYAyouthlinks@onelist.com)

The variety of activities of this Ecumenical Youth Network can be checked out on: <http://www.anyaorg.cz>



## From the Mailbox

*"I am very happy to receive EEF-NET from your team. Thank you for all that you have done for the world churches. It is exciting to read the articles about Integration in Theological Education."*

Chen, Nan Jou, The Academic Dean,  
Yu-Shan Theological College and Seminary,  
Taiwan

*"Thank you for sending us the new magazine EEF-NET. We will use it in our work as much as possible. We like the first issue."*

Mila Hradecná, Christian Peace Conference,  
PO Box 136, Prokopova 4, 130 11 Praha 3,  
Czech Republic

*"Yesterday I received EEF-NET and read it with much joy."*

Dr Ulrich Dehn, Brahmstr. 39i,  
D-12203 Berlin, Germany

*"I want to express our humble thanks for the first copy of EEF-NET addressed to us"*

Rev. E.N. Bambo,  
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon,  
Church Centre Mankon, PO Box 57, MankonMezam,  
Republic of Cameroon

*"Thank you for the EEF-NET no. 2. I particularly got interested in the article by Dr Rudolf Ficker. He was professor at UTC Bangalore when I studied for my M. Th. I would appreciate receiving his email address"*

Rev. Parimal Roy, Leonard Theological College,  
South Civil Lines, Jabalpur 482001, M.P., India

*"I'm impressed with the new EEF-NET no. 1 just received. I'm enthused by the article by John Sutcliffe, whom I knew very well when he was Christian Education Movement General Secretary, I being CEM N.I. Secretary."*

Gordon Gray, First Lisburn Presbyterian Church,  
26 N. Circular Rd., Lisburn BT28 3AH, N. Ireland

*"Congratulations on the first issue of EEF-NET. It is a very timely production, since education is the key to life."*

Rev. D S Jeevan Babu, Presbyter in charge,  
St John's Church, Fort, Vellore, N.A., India.

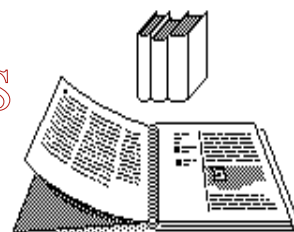
*Prezados/as amigos e amigas,  
Agradecemos o envio da interessante revista EEF-NET News Information -Discussion on Ecumenical Learning. Para podermos aproveitar melhor o seu conteúdo na nossa equipe, perguntamos se é possível enviar-nos esta revista em espanhol.*

*Saudacoes cordiais,*

Benno Asseburg, Rua Parana, 818 Scharlau,  
93121-970Sao Leopoldo -RS Brazil



## REPORTS ON BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



Monika Treber et.al. (ed.)  
*Dialog lernen – Konzepte und Reflexionen aus der Praxis von Nord-Süd-Begegnungen*,  
IKO, Frankfurt/M. 1997, 306 pp.

The Christian Initiative International Learning, is a well known organization in Germany when it comes to support, analysis and praxis of intercultural learning. With the German “Dialog lernen – Konzepte und Reflexionen aus der Praxis von Nord-Süd-Begegnungen (Learning Dialog – Concepts and Reflections from the Praxis of North – South Encounters) Monika Treber, Wolfgang Burgraf and Nicola Neider (ed) publish analytical reflections, as well as concrete examples in the area of partnership as well as ecumenical learning. The material stems from the project “Learning Dialogue” which ran between 1992 and 1995. The published outcome is as Monika Treber rightly puts it in the introductory remarks, a workbook and this in the best sense of the word. Everyone who is involved in this kind of work and many congregations are by means of partnership programmes, will find this workbook extremely helpful.

The presentations come in three sections. After a stimulating systemtheoretical and development pedagogical introduction into “Orientation and Capacity to act in the context of global society” (Scheunpflug) a second section presents the reader with a wide variety of examples. It is in those examples that the factual value of the compilation lies. Not only is the reader confronted with different models and reference groups but also with a broad variety of didactical approaches. Issues familiar for intercultural learning are dealt with. (e.g. hermeneutics, systems of communications as well as learning barriers, encounter and solidarity as well as accountability and mutuality in intercultural learning) The final section leads back to the beginning, as the editors reflect on Scheunpflug’s arguments. This part has a very interesting passage on the relevancy of moral decisions in inter-

cultural learning. The book closes with a couple of reflections aiming at helping those involved in planning processes of partnership / encounter programme to look into the “pro and cons” of such encounter learning. It is a rich compilation presented here and very helpful for the presently ongoing analytical discussion on partnership programmes not only in the mission movements. It is therefore hoped that the publishing house will find means and ways to make this book available at least in English, so that the “Learning by Dialogue” can be continued with a broader audience than only a German reading one.

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*Sinfonia Oecumenica -  
Worship with the Churches in the World*,  
Dietrich Werner et.al, Gütersloh/Basel 1998, 983pp

The book many have waited for! Werner and the team of editors have compiled in the four main ecumenical languages (German, English, French, Spanish) Worship formula for whatever worship occasion one can think of as ecumenical fellowship. There is nothing to say but a big thank you to those who took the effort to compile, what for many of us will become an everyday tool. This almost 1000 page resource will be more than a classic handbook and makes a nice present in ecumenical encounters and partnership programmes.

For those in other than the North American or European continent, the book can be easily obtained from the bookstore of the World Council of Churches.

**For transfer to EEF-NET please use the following banks:**

- Bankers Trust Co. Church Street Station P.O. Box 318 New York, NY 10018, USA Lock Box **Acct. 04 810-510**
- Schröder, Münchmeyer Hengst & Co. Friedenstrasse 6-10, D-60020 Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
**Konto Nr. 008288480 0 (BLZ 505 200 85)** (Postgiro der Bank 6-Frankfurt a/M Nr. 190)
- Lloyds Bank Pic 39 Threadneedle Street London EC2R 8AU, UK **Account No. 1101875** (£ sterling)
- Union de Banques Suisses (UBS) CP 2950 CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland **Compte no. 695.149.00A**  
(francs Suisses) **Compte no. 695.149.60 X** (US dollars)

## News from the team



There are many activities in the area of education and ecumenical formation which the team could encourage and support. With reduced staff and funding, we, like our colleagues in the rest of the WCC, have had to prioritise the work we do. We want churches, related organisations and networks to feel that we are responsive to them. Yet we also have to be realistic about what we can do well.

One of our priorities is work on ecumenical learning methodologies. We want to learn from you about new and effective methodologies which we can then share with others. We would also like to receive copies of ecumenical learning materials you produce. This applies whether you are involved in popular education, theological education, schools or education in the congregation.

The WCC Scholarships programme, which is now an integral part of the EEF team, has been significant for churches, related organisations and individuals for many years. We have just completed a professional evaluation of the past ten years work and are engaged in a thorough review of the purposes and administration of Scholarships. The emphasis of the programme has shifted to meeting the human resource development needs of churches and related bodies. This means that we do not accept applications from individuals who wish to pursue a personal study plan but only from churches and organisations who nominate a person to receive further education or training to meet their needs. We welcome any comment you may wish to make on this aspect of our work as we consider future development.

In November we said goodbye to our team colleague, Barbara Maubach, who has worked as Executive Secretary for Scholarships. She has moved within the WCC to become Seminar Programme Coordinator at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey.

At the WCC Assembly it was agreed to establish a Decade to Overcome Violence which will be launched in 2001. The EEF team is involved in the initial work for this and the educational aspect will be an important feature of the Decade. *EEF-NET* will be bringing you more information in future issues.

*Simon Oxley*