



Conference on World Mission and Evangelism

Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship

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Action and reflection input on the signs of times and the importance of discipleship training

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I would like to begin by thanking the World Council of Churches for the invitation to attend this Conference, which has been very enriching for me. I have also been able to participate in GETI 2018, where we shared exceptional moments with young people from different parts of the world and different faiths. What a powerful experience!

With regard to today's topic, namely, the importance of discipleship training, I would like to start by sharing the thought that came to me as I reflected on the topic. When I had just arrived in Morocco, one of the first sermons I heard in my church, the Evangelical Church of Morocco, whose Chairman is here in the room with us today, was that "you are the Bible that many around you will not have an opportunity to open, so live according to the Word and reflect His light." I believe that this can be a message for all of us today, regardless of the context in which we find ourselves. The world with its greed (for money, power and many other things that fail to glorify our God) seeks to seduce as many as possible. Consequently, the Church and theological institutions have a very important role to play. Clearly, the goal is to train not only members of the clergy but above all women and men who reflect the light of Christ in society. This thought reminded me of a song that we used to sing in church, the words of which go like this: "If I am a farmer, make me a farmer to talk to farmers, if I am a politician, make me a politician to talk to politicians", and so on. Unfortunately, I was unable to find the composer's name. But I believe that this song, like the passage to which we shall refer later, simply means that the goal of our life on Earth is to reveal Christ, and when the song speaks of "talking", I do not think it is referring to evangelization as such but rather to the revelation of Christ in our daily walk, regardless of the field in which we work. For our reflection, I have chosen Romans 8:18-22, which is also one of the fundamental texts for this Conference and which reads as follows: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.** For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own chose, but by the will of the one

who subjected it, in hope *that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay* and brought into the freedom and glory of the other children of God.” Unfortunately, I cannot speak of all the context of Romans chapter 8, but given that the room is filled with great theologians, I think that this text will only be a simple reminder. Yes, creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed, but this can only happen if we, the majority of church leaders, focus on the training of disciples. Jesus trained 12 disciples in some three years. Very often, we worry about the number of persons we wish to draw to Christ, without taking sufficient time to train them to ensure that they are walking properly with the Lord. Accordingly, it is more important than ever for us to focus on training disciples as we ourselves live as disciples. Creation is suffering and waiting for the sons and daughters of God to be revealed. Most of us who are here today are capable of training young people and adults, so let us not wait for others to do our job: let us act so that the light of Christ may shine forth in the world. My challenge to you this morning is the following: over the next three years or even a bit more, each of us should train at least 12 disciples in Christ who can reject the world’s injustices and bring the Word of God into their daily lives.