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This issue offers an insight on the New Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

The statement titled [“Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in changing landscapes”](#), prepared by the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) was unanimously approved during WCC’s Central Committee meeting in Greece in August 2012. The new affirmation will also be presented at the WCC’s 10th Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2013.

Being the first ecumenical affirmation on mission and evangelism since 1982, the new affirmation addresses aspects of mission within the contemporary changed global landscape. It aspires to encourage reflection and inspire renewal in mission engagement amongst churches and mission actors.

The affirmation comprises of four chapters, on the Spirit of Mission as Breath of Life, Mission from the Margins in the Spirit of Liberation, Church on the Move in the Spirit of Community and the Spirit of Pentecost with the Good News for All. The affirmation begins with ten contemporary missiological questions, answered at the end of the document in the form of affirmations for the celebration of the Feast of Life. This issue presents a brief overview of the main new insights this ecumenical affirmation brings on mission and evangelism.

You are all invited to share with us your own thoughts and reflections on the new affirmation. Keep sending as well your stories and reflections on evangelism.



The opening prayer service of the WCC Central Committee meeting invoked reflections on “God of life, lead us to justice and peace,” theme of the WCC 10th Assembly

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Thankful for your ongoing commitment
to the call for common witness
In Christ,

Kyriaki Avtzi
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TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE: MISSION AND EVANGELISM IN CHANGING LANDSCAPES

A New WCC Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism

Shifting from Christological to Pneumatological focus, the understanding of a dynamic, transformative mission is unravelled in the new mission affirmation. In a Trinitarian understanding of mission the



Dr Kirsteen Kim, vice-moderator of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), presented the new affirmation to the WCC Central Committee on Thursday, 30 August 2012

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emphasis is placed on the healing and reconciling mission of the Spirit for the affirmation of life in its fullness and for the renewal of all creation. Transformative spirituality affirming life is at the heart of mission, having its roots in the Trinitarian *koinonia* of love. Spirituality of mission transforms all life-destroying systems, affirming life in its fullness wherever the life-giving Spirit is at work. The discernment of spirits offers a new perspective on the rapport between mission and life-affirming wisdoms in different cultures and contexts. Life-affirming wisdoms and cultures, understood as gifts of the Spirit which blows where it wills, bring their distinct value to contemporary mission work. Discerning God's spirit in them, churches are called to respond with openness and respect.

The framework of mission globally is re-defined adjusting to many fundamental changes. With the shift of the centre of gravity for Christianity from the global North and West to the global South and the East, the reality of a World Christianity is established. Diverse patterns of migration and strong mission movements emerging from the global South and the global East prompt a multi-centered and multi-directional mission frame. The influence and the prominent place of Pentecostal and charismatic churches asserts the importance of interdependence in mission through cooperation and partnership. As churches explore new ways to fulfil their missionary call, new contextual missional expressions, such

as “new monasticism”, “emerging church”, “fresh expressions”, as well as emerging multi-cultural migrant churches radically restructure mission.

In the contemporary global mission landscape, the role of margins is a prophetic one. As power structures are challenged by the Spirit of liberation, the prominent place of the margins in mission denotes that fullness of life is for all. Mission agents are no longer exclusively from among the powerful, the rich and the privileged. A considerable shift from “mission *to* the margins” to mission carried forth *from* the margins is taking place. An inextricable aspect of participating in God’s mission is the hope in and work for a just and inclusive world. Hence, missional activity ought to be directed towards the transformation of all social and political structures which compromise the fullness of life. Mission as healing and wholeness overcomes individualism and injustice and restores the communion with one another, with all humanity, with the whole of creation.



WCC Central Committee, Mission Plenary
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Creation is placed at the heart of mission. Moving beyond the anthropocentric understanding of the purpose of God’s mission, fullness of life is a criterion for discernment in mission. The Spirit, as a source of life, embraces humanity and creation together in God’s plan for salvation. The implications of this

inclusive insight of mission urge for the re-discovery of paths towards the reconciliation of humanity not only with God but with the entire *oikoumene*. Eco-justice and the promotion of alternative sustainable lifestyles need to be part of churches’ reconciling mission in unity for the salvation of all life.

Evangelism, as an invitation to discipleship in a new life in Christ, focuses on the proclamation of the good news in all ages and places. Centered on the salvation of all and the glory of the Triune God, its eschatological reference is the Kingdom of God. Nonetheless, in the challenging contemporary secular landscape authentic evangelism exercises the prophetic vocation of speaking truth to power in a spirit of self-emptying love, humbleness and hope. Evangelism in the Spirit of Pentecost becomes a transformative call to a life-affirming conversion guided by Christian values, as asserted in the statement on “Christian Witness in a Multi-

Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct”; the rejection of all forms of violence discrimination, repression and false witness, the respect of cultural diversity, the respect of freedom of religion and belief, and the building of relationships in a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation. Local congregations are the first cradles of mission for the building of fellowship through worship and service for the witness of life in its fullness.

Unity in mission manifests the visible unity of Christian witness in the world. The existing diversity in the expressions of this witness, reflecting the diversity of world Christianity, calls for the development of a broader understanding of unity in diversity. The call to be one, so that the world may believe, transcends all boundaries and embraces diversity in unity. The church needs to become an inclusive community moving towards the fullness of life. The exploration of ways for

common witness in multi-cultural and multi-religious contexts entails the sense of inclusivity in a spirit of respect, humility and self-emptying love. Diversity of mission expressions within diverse cultural contexts, seen as a gift of the Spirit, calls for common witness in diversity through multi-cultural ministry. Vital is also the function of local congregations as mission agents. Building relations of trust and



Archpriest Mikhail Gundyayev, member of WCC's Central Committee, addressing the Mission plenary
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respect, they can work for the renewal of Christian witness, contextualizing it accordingly. Dialogue and cooperation with other religions and minority groups is an imperative for the credibility of authentic Christian witness.

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

28-31 October 2012

Consultation on: Evangelism in Theological Education and Missiological Formation

A Consultation organized by the Mission and Evangelism Project of the WCC.

Venue: Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Switzerland

30 October – 2 November 2012

IV Consultation of the Orthodox Mission Network

A Consultation organized by the Orthodox Mission Network

Venue: Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Bucharest, Romania

Please send your comments, proposals, stories or reflections to the email:

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