



BEYOND BOUNDARIES

The newsletter of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey

www.bossey.ch



November 2019

Greetings by the Director



Photo: Ivars Kupcis/WCC

Dear friends of Bossey,

It is my pleasure to share with you our new issue of Beyond Boundaries at the start of the new Academic Year 2019-20 and to convey to you our warm and cordial greetings on behalf of the staff and students of the Ecumenical Institute.

In September, we have started a new academic year, with 32 students from 19 countries and, as usual, representing the historical Churches but also Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations.

As every year during the last two decades, most of our students come from the South but this year we have a good number of students from Europe, North and South America and Caribbean. We are also glad to share with you that this year we have succeeded in reaching a good balance between male and female participants.

The new academic year has also brought about changes and renewals in the composition of the faculty. Our esteemed colleague, Prof. Amele Ekue left the institute in June this year and at the end of October Prof. Martin Robra is leaving us, as well. We are grateful for their contributions to the formation of new generations of ecumenical leaders over their years of service in Bossey and wish them God's blessings in their new endeavours.

At the same time, we are glad that two new colleagues have joined the faculty. Rev. Dr Kuzipa



Nalawamba was appointed as Professor for the chair of Ecumenical Social Ethics. She is an ordained pastor of the United Church of Zambia and did her PhD at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

Dr Vasile Octavian Mihoc is a lay theologian of the Romanian Orthodox Church. He has been appointed as Programme Executive for Ecumenical Relations at the WCC and also as associate professor at our institute. Previously, he has taught theology at the University of Münster. His area of expertise is Systematic Theology, Missiology and Interreligious Dialogue.

We have therefore a fully staffed faculty, with colleagues of different expertise, ready to meet and answer the academic and research expectations and needs of our students.

To all of you, our readers, our supporters and our alumni we would like to express our gratitude for all the support you have given to the Ecumenical Institute Bossey and its staff. We feel sustained by your prayers and contributions.

We would be more than happy to welcome you with a visiting group or a seminar at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey.

*Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
Director of the Ecumenical Institute
Deputy General Secretary of the WCC*

Bossey: 'Being in the right place at the right time'

As the study year of 2019-2020 is fully underway, students testify already to what their time in Bossey means to them.

"Being at Bossey is both a great privilege and a responsibility with our churches back home and with the ecumenical fellowship. The combination of academic formation on theology and ecumenism and the everyday intercultural community sharing is indeed a very unique opportunity," says Dianet de la Caridad Martinez Valdés from Cuba.

Jin Liu, who works in the office relations department of the China Christian Council in Shanghai, was drawn to the CAS course at Bossey after working as a steward at the WCC Central Committee in 2018.

"In ecumenism, we are talking about church unity," she notes. "I feel strongly about it as there can be conflict between churches. Much of the time, it is because of misunderstandings between each other. So, ecumenism is important for me so that we could bring one



Students in the chapel of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. Photo: Peter Kenny/WCC

another together; so, we can talk to each other?"

Rev. Joshua Koroma comes from the other side of the world, where he is a member of the Kingdom Life Pentecostal Church in Sierra Leone. "In terms of the religious aspect, we are open because as you know, as Pentecostals, we believe in prayers. And of course, we know that the course at Bossey helps students overcome prejudices that they might have, you know, like, say, between Orthodox and Protestant and Catholic and Pentecostal or, if there is some

hostility to ecumenism in your church," Koroma says.

Amanda Carlshamre, from Church of Sweden, reflects, "I've been overwhelmed by the generosity and the empowerment that the institute offers us as students."

"We've already started to learn and grow together as a whole. When we made a round of comments regarding our feelings having arrived at Bossey, I could clearly state that I've got the feeling I'm in the very right place at the very right time," she concludes.

Contents

Greetings by the Director	2	Bossey master students graduate, continuing 'that pilgrimage we call ecumenism'	7
Bossey: 'Being in the right place at the right time'	3	Muslim from Canada and Indian Christian share sun rising over Lake Geneva praying together	7
Applications open for academic year of 2020/2021	4	Interreligious Summer School explores meaning of 'belonging'	8
Dies Academicus 'a small pause to reflect'	4	Farewell of Dr Amélé Ekué	8
'Bossey daughter' shares her 30-year pilgrimage	5	Welcome to Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba	9
A day of rich activities	5	Welcome to Dr Vasile Octavian Mihoc	9
Graduation ceremony marks special moment	6		

Applications open for academic year of 2020/2021

For the Ecumenical Study program, which starts every year in September, the deadline for application for the academic year 2020/21 is 30 November 2019.

For more information, please visit: www.bossey.ch or contact: Bossey_Admissions@wcc-coe.org



Dies Academicus 'a small pause to reflect'

Walking together the pilgrimage of Justice and Peace...

Dies Academicus eases a small pause of Bossey's regular academic life in order to reflect about the ecumenical pilgrimage. Under this second edition, the theme Walking Together, Serving Justice and Peace was used to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches. For several weeks, the students and academic staff, formed groups who passionately engaged in reflections and dialogues regarding emblematic speeches of the former WCC general secretaries. After reading a special edition of the Journal of Ecumenical Review, the distributed groups of ecumenical pupils were asked to introduce each emblematic message throughout presentations.

Inspired by the morning prayer and the opening lecture from Rev. Dr Ofelia Ortega Suárez, the students conclude their hard, imaginative and creative work, by immersing the participants into the words, the achievements and the contextual challenges of each WCC historical period. The quite diverse presentations included a play about the



Photo: Benjamin Simon/WCC

collaborative efforts that brought the idea of WCC as a fellowship of churches, a television program representing Emilio Ortega and his passion for evangelism, a musical composition from Eugene Carlson Blake engagement with the civils rights efforts and the challenging continuity of the ecumenical movement during the Cold War era, a contemporary theater play regarding the mandate of the ecumenical movement, a photography project about the household of living stones from Phillip Porter, an analytical reflection of oikos as our household, and deep understandings on the ecumenism in the current century. It was a

fascinating representation of the students diverse yet affianced commitment to walk together the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The exercise acquires relevance in Bossey, a unique place where ecumenism is not only studied but lived... the young ecumenical leaders realized that despite the valuable milestones walked by their predecessors, the ecumenical pilgrimage is not over. There are new challenges for the present generations; however, it is by walking (and acting) together that our "common calling" will be fulfilled (WCC:2010) and the world will see "justice and peace kissing each other" (Psalms 85:10b)...

Lani Anaya, Mexico

'Bossey daughter' shares her 30-year pilgrimage

In November last year, one of Bossey's daughters came back home to share her pilgrimage to her 30 younger sisters and brothers who were coming from 17 countries. Her name is Dr Ofelia Ortega Suarez - the first ordained women from Reformed-Presbyterian Church in Cuba.

Coming back home, there is a lot to share. Recalling her long journey, she re-defines in her inspiring keynote lecture what ecumenism does mean for her. First, Ecumenism is church without walls. Second, to defend life, or in other words, to struggle against injustice and power misuse. Third, to empower all the people. She said, "our power is not only for us, but to empower people, if



Photo: Peter Kenny/WCC

you have position and you do not empower people, your faith is very limited." The last, she reflected on Jesus question to a blind man who called out for him near Jericho, "What do you want me to do for you?" She encouraged children of Bossey to ask the very

same question to their fellow neighbours.

For us it has been a wonderful moment to listen to Ofelia and learning from her experiences.

Lidia Lebang, Jakarta

A day of rich activities

The keynote lecture was the highlight of the celebration. This was followed by creative presentations from the students on the chosen theme. It was the latter part of the day, after lunch, that featured various activities and added luster to the day's programs. The post-lunch session began with an activity called Joint Trekking Activity, where students reflected while they walked in pairs around the Institute by way of discussion on the statement: "As young ecumenist, I have a dream...." Students were encouraged to write any reflection or comments on the Talking Wall, a white board kept at the Conference Hall lobby.

After the activity, Creative Work Stations built up in Salles Genève and Lausanne (two large

conference halls) provided spaces to learn and reflect. While the walls in Salle Genève decorated the Ecumenical Pioneers of the ecumenical movement and their short biographies, another part of the room had exquisite earthen vessels, representing the global reality of Ecumenism, placed on the floor – assorted vessels and handicrafts that gleamed with shine in the sunlit hall. Another workstation hosted the opportunity for students to use paintbrushes and colors, pieces of magazine and newspapers, and other craft items, and reflect on the theme of the day and their impression on the ecumenical movement.

On the one hand, while Salon Jaune was the place for watching video clips on various facets of

Ecumenism, Salle Lausanne had a Labyrinth designed for participants to walk through the maze and enter into a contemplative exercise, in order to reflect on our ecumenical vocation. The climax of the day was the Ecumenical Quiz activity Who Wants to be a Millionaire, which was a 'contextualized' version of a British TV show. Questions revolved around quotes of ecumenical pioneers, their life stories and other aspects of the ecumenical movement.

At the end of the day, the activities had led each one into intellectually, creatively and collectively grasping what it meant to walk together as ecumenical pilgrims to serve justice and peace in the world.

John Abhishek, India

Graduation ceremony marks special moment



Photo: Peter Williams/WCC

Monday 28 January was a very special day for 25-year-old student Kezia Wairata from Jakarta, Indonesia. Along with 30 dedicated peers, she received her diploma in advanced studies of ecumenism at the World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland. "An important moment in my life. Studying in Bossey has given me friends from all over the world. I have learned a lot about other places and bring with me an enhanced understanding of other cultures and denominations", she says.

Her special interests are child rights and educating children and she feels excited about WCC's commitment to children in Indonesia through its partnership with UNICEF. She therefore chose Ecumenical Social Ethics as a

module in Bossey.

"The church plays a critical role and must assume a special responsibility in terms of child rights and education", she points out.

When she came to Europe for the first time last summer to study in Bossey she already had a bachelors degree in theology from the Jakarta Theology Seminary to build on. After Bossey she feels ready to return to her home town to pursue a masters degree. Wairata belongs to the Protestant Church in Western Indonesia.

Her fellow student, 23-year-old Nicolas Gurgénidze from Georgia, expresses the same excitement about the opportunity in Bossey to meet students with different backgrounds from around the world and to make friends for life.

"Here in Bossey I have learned



Kezia Wairata. Photo: Peter Williams/WCC

to listen to people from different denominations and to have a dialogue based on respect and love. That is very important in the ecumenical movement", he says.

His dream is to become a teacher - or even a theology professor - and he will now return to Thessaloniki in Greece, where he lives, to continue his studies. A masters degree in ecumenical theology is in the pipeline. Gurgénidze belongs to the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Bossey master students graduate, continuing 'that pilgrimage we call ecumenism'



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

June 2019 saw eight new master students graduate from the Ecumenical Institute.

Finalizing a yearlong period of intense study, the students defended their theses and have now been sent on their way to a life enriched by the experience of studies at Bossey.

Rev. Fr Dr Lawrence Iwuamadi, dean of the Ecumenical Institute, reflected on the hard work of the group of students throughout their

study period.

"At Bossey, no two years are the same. Every group of students is unique. And here, you have had the opportunity to study and learn, but perhaps most importantly, to explore what is the meaning of lived ecumenism," he said.

Iwuamadi then urged the students on. "Our hope is that you take with you the good things you have learned at Bossey. But also that when you face challenges, we know the importance of avoiding

arrogance, thinking that the other is the one who is wrong. Instead, we remember that humility and faith are gifts of God," he reflected.

The students then took the opportunity to share a joint message with the faculty and guests visiting Bossey on the day.

"The academic year has been a journey... And like any journey, it had its highs and lows, curves and bends, and laughter and struggles," said Salome Esebua from Georgia, reading aloud the message.

"We realized that diversity is a gift from God which is an opportunity to grow in love and live in peace," she continued.

The students then jointly expressed gratitude to all those who "trust in the fact that each graduate that walks out from Bossey will continue in this pilgrimage that we call ecumenism."

"Bossey is evidence that to live in peace is not just a dream, but it is a reachable reality," they concluded.

Muslim from Canada and Indian Christian share sun rising over Lake Geneva praying together

The Shia Muslim student from Canada, the Presbyterian Christian student from India and some of their companions reluctantly set off for an early run on a chilly morning to the Geneva lakeside little knowing what sunrise would bring.

Two years ago, Jihad Hyjazie a software developer from Montreal and a Shia Muslim who was with a group of Muslim visitors to Bossey had gone towards the lake, but a rail track blocked the route.

This year after setting off at the crack of dawn he had gone

with Rev. Abhishek Prabhakar John, from India's Manipur Presbyterian Church and two other interreligious seminar students and the route was open.

They were among a group of 26 students taking part in the 20-23 March Joint Seminar between the International Islamic Centre of England and the Ecumenical Institute Bossey which included a visit to the World Council of Churches (WCC).

"The sun was rising slowly behind the mountain. The sun rays were

shining through like they do in religious books. So, we did a joint prayer. There was a Muslim prayer and a Christian prayer.

"By the time the Christian brother had finished the prayer the sun actually appeared from behind the mountain as the prayer was ending. There was a tremendous amount of symbolism in my view," which was a contribution to the greater understanding of God, said Hyjazie recounting their experience at the seminar's end.

Interreligious Summer School explores meaning of 'belonging'

What might be termed "an authentic interreligious encounter" is also, more simply put, a question of what it means to belong. Eleven students at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute deeply explored this question as they completed a Certificate in Advanced Studies in Interreligious Studies course.

Rev. Dr Simone Sinn, vice dean and academic coordinator of the course at Bossey, reflected that the students had "learned about the other from first-hand encounters with lecturers and fellow students from different religious traditions."

The theme of the summer course was "Belongingness in Judaism, Christianity and Islam."

Sinn added that "the students explored the diverse religious as well as psychological and sociological dimensions of



Photo: Rhoda Mphande/WCC

belongingness. They emphasized that this notion goes beyond in-group relations but reaches out to others in society. It is about having an open door and being in solidarity with each other in spite of our differences."

The students presented a communique on "Engaging for just and participatory societies. Belongingness in Judaism, Christianity and Islam" reflecting on their discussions, reflections and experiences during the course.

Farewell of Dr Amélé Ekué

Throughout the years, at the end of the mid-September orientation week in Bossey, I got used to seeing Amélé's module on ecumenical social ethics being signed-up by more students than any other module. This was certainly a sign of interest.

Last July, when Bossey bid farewell to Amélé Ekué, I posted on Facebook a picture of her goodbye party. Immediately the picture got dozens of likes and comments full of recognition by her former students. This was clearly a sign of appreciation and gratitude. Their interest had been rewarded.

A migrant scholar, Amélé soon realised that successful learning in an intercultural students' community such as Bossey required more than the traditional classroom hours in which the



Photo: Benjamin Siimon/WCC

professor who presumably knows transfers knowledge to students who presumably don't.

If you are surrounded by students with rather diverse learning cultures, classroom hours may need to be supplemented by

regular sessions of individual tutorials. By doing this, Amélé helped the students to journey from interest to appreciation and gratitude for a learning which is also emancipation. I tried to follow her example...

Odair Mateus Pedrosa

Welcome to Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba

Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba has started recently at WCC to serve as Professor of Ecumenical Social Ethics at Bossey Institute and programme executive for Ecumenical Theological Education. Her research focus in PhD work is in the area eco-theology. Her academic publications include a monograph, several journal articles and book chapters on eco-theology and the history of Christianity.

She studied for a BA Ed. (English) at the University of Zambia, MDiv and MTh (History of Christianity and Mission) at Trinity Theological College in Singapore, and for the MA (Theology) and PhD in systematic theology at the

University of Pretoria in South Africa.

Kuzipa Nalwamba is not new to the WCC, as she has served as volunteer in some programmes of the WCC including, among others, EHAIA, the Ecumenical Water Network and was part of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2018.

She is an ordained minister of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) and served as lecturer and academic dean at the then UCZ Theological College. She has also worked for the Council for World Mission (CWM) as Mission Secretary, Communication and more recently as Consultant, Strategic Planning.



The faculty of the Ecumenical Institute Bossey and its students are very happy to welcome her in its midst.

Fr Lawrence Iwuamadi

Welcome to Dr Vasile Octavian Mihoc

We are happy to welcome at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey a new colleague, who will be partly working with Faith and Order and partly with the Institute.

Dr Mihoc's educational background has been by its settings strongly ecumenical, and by its topics strongly focused on Systematic Theology and on intercultural and interreligious issues. Thus, he has a BA and MA from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Sibiu (Romania), which he completed with theses in Systematic Theology, a three-year experience as Research Fellow at the Faculty of Protestant Theology, University of Göttingen (Germany), and a PhD from the Department of Ecumenical Theology and Oriental Church and Mission History, Faculty of Protestant Theology, University

of Göttingen. His professional background so far has also been ecumenical and focused on Systematic Theology and on intercultural and interreligious issues. Between 2013-2019 he has been Research and Teaching Assistant at the Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology, University of Münster, first at the Department of Missiology and the Study of Theologies beyond Europe (until 2016) and then at the Department for Systematic Theology and its Didactic, where he has carried out research and teaching on topics of Systematic Theology and Global Christianity, designing and teaching courses on topics like comparative Missiology, Ecumenics and the Study of Christian theology beyond Europe; religious identity and conversion; global



Christianity and the development of ecumenical movement; interreligious theology; methods and projects in comparative theology, and theological aesthetics.

Fr Lawrence Iwuamadi

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

is a periodic newsletter of the Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey.

Editorial Team

Benjamin Simon
Albin Hillert
Susan Kim



Printed at the Ecumenical Institute
November 2019

The Ecumenical Institute shall not be under any liability to any person in respect of any damage, however caused, which may be incurred or which arises directly or indirectly from reliance on information in this publication.



Front cover photo: Ivars Kupcis/WCC Back cover photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Support the work of the Ecumenical Institute!

Online giving

<https://donate.oikoumene.org/en/donateto/ecumenical-institute-of-bossey>

Bank transfer

Banque Cantonale Vaudoise (BCV)
Case postale 300, CH-1001 Lausanne, Switzerland
Account holder: Institut œcuménique
IBAN: CH81 0076 7000 U067 5255 7
Swift code: BCVLCH2LXXX

Thank You for Your Gifts!

**Ecumenical Institute
Château de Bossey**

Chemin Chenevière 2,
1279 Bogis-Bossey,
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 960 7300

Fax: +41 22 960 7367

bossey@wcc-coe.org

www.bossey.ch



**World Council
of Churches**