

Preparatory Paper No 6

We are pleased to add the following documentation to the series of preparatory papers for the Athens world mission conference. They exemplify how a community of churches and mission bodies addressed issues of reconciliation and violence, healing of memory, common witness and peace-building. The EMS study process is a contribution to the DOV - and as a reflection by an intercontinental mission community - also to the preparation for the CWME conference. The documents are reproduced here with permission and an introduction specially drafted for this series by the EMS general secretary. We have kept the documents in their original spelling, but without reproducing the names of participants.

Jacques Matthey

Foreword

The EMS, German acronym for “Association of Churches and Missions in South West Germany” (Evangelisches Missionswerk in Suedwestdeutschland), has embarked on a journey from a German based mission body to an ecumenical, international fellowship comprising 23 churches and four mission societies on the three continents Europe, Africa and Asia. This self-understanding finds its expression in the EMS Mission Council as the most important decision making body, a round table with voting rights for all churches and organisations in the fellowship, likewise in a common mission statement and policy framework elaborated in a participatory process over several years, in international networks, e.g. of women and youth, and above all in joint programmes. Since 1991, when delegates from all churches and organisations met in Jerusalem to work out recommendations for the ecumenical journey together, “common witness” has become the catch phrase to signify what binds the fellowship together. For the past seven years, each year a particular theme has become a vital aspect of this ecumenical fellowship. For two consecutive years, 2001 and 2002, the EMS Mission Council agreed on “Reconciliation” as the common focus. In course of this period, several consultations were held, reflecting the challenges of reconciliation in various contexts.

a German-Korean-Japanese consultation organised by the German East Asia Mission, the Aunae Foundation, Korea, and the Tomizaka Christian Centre, Japan, from 12 to 16 September 2000 in Musashi-Ranzan near Tokyo, Japan a consultation held from 21 to 23 November 2001 in Mahabalipuram, India, with delegates from all CSI dioceses and from theological colleges, organised by the EMS India Liaison Desk and the Church of South India a consultation held from 27 to 31 January 2002 in Tomohon, Minahasa, Indonesia, organised by the EMS Indonesia Liaison Desk and nine Indonesian churches a consultation held from 16 to 27 November 2002 in Hanover Park, Cape, South Africa, with 30 participants from eight countries and 17 churches, organised by the EMS Secretariat and the Moravian Church in South Africa

These consultations are part of an ongoing process in the wider ecumenical movement. They were meant to make contributions to the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence. Within the EMS fellowship, “reconciliation” has remained on the agenda. In July 2003, the EMS Mission Council agreed on a biennial programme on “peace building” as the common focus for the two forthcoming years. Thus, the EMS plays a humble role as an ecumenical forum facilitating the exchange of experiences in peace building and interlinking initiatives in different contexts in the common commitment to peace, justice and reconciliation.

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