

Ecumenical Network for Multicultural Ministry (ENFORMM)

Churches in Ecumenical Transition: Towards Multicultural Ministry and Mission

This paper is ENFORMM's contribution towards the drafting of a new WCC Mission Statement commissioned by CWME for use at the pre-Assembly Mission Event in 2012.

1 Introduction

1.1 The WCC Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) is working towards a new WCC mission statement in view of the 2013 Assembly. WCC's official mission statement issued in 1982 entitled 'Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation' now needs to be renewed to meet the demands of the time and context.

1.2 Given the Edinburgh 2010 Centennial celebrations, the WCC Central Committee (CC) agreed not to organize a world mission conference between the Porto Alegre and Busan Assemblies. Instead, it asked CWME to organise a pre-Assembly mission event – now confirmed for March 2012 with 200 participants. At that event a new WCC mission statement is expected to be finalized for consideration at the 2013 Busan Assembly.

1.3 Recognizing the critical significance of the emerging multicultural and migrant churches to mission and ministry in the 21st century, CWME is keen that the new mission statement adequately reflects that important development. Clearly, the ministry and ecclesiology of migrant/multicultural churches are integral to the future mission and existence of the Christian Church.

1.4 The Faith & Order Commission's important work on 'The Nature and Mission of the Church' (2005) had not engaged that important issue adequately, however. Consequently, CWME initiated collaboration with Faith & Order (F&O), Just & Inclusive Communities (JIC), and the Ecumenical Network For Multicultural Ministry (ENFORMM) to bridge this gap.

1.5 At its 2009 Winnipeg Meeting, ENFORMM accepted CWME's request to produce a document on the topic for deliberations at the 2012 pre-Assembly event and for inclusion in the new mission statement. In the meantime, a joint consultation between CWME, F&O, JIC and ENFORMM on the mission and ecclesiology of migrant/multicultural churches was planned and held in Utrecht on 16-21 November 2010. This paper is ENFORMM's specific response to CWME's 2009 request, which was formalized at Utrecht into a three year process of consultations between the four parties.¹

2 Cultural diversity as a fact of human existence

2.1 Migration is not an invention of modernity

2.1.1 This paper assumes that cultural diversity is a fact of human societies and migration is a fact of human existence. Throughout human history societies have always enjoyed varied degrees of cultural pluralism largely because migration is a natural human predisposition. The tendency to treat migration as if it is an invention of modernity is misleading.

¹ The *JRM* April 2011 issue, 100.1 (392), co-edited by ENFORMM-members Raafat Girgis and Michael Blair, is devoted to multicultural ministries. Pages 104-107 contain the report of the Utrecht consultation.

Recommendation a:

We recommend that the new WCC mission statement avoid any assumptions of migration as a modern invention. The Early Church, as will be shown below (3.2), lived the experience of being a church in migration and diaspora.

2.2 *Whose issue?*

2.2.1 Whose issue is migration and its impact on churches? Some will argue that the impact of migration primarily is an issue for the global North and its churches, as the North needs to cope with and respond to the influx of immigrants. Whereas there is some truth in this claim, we will argue that the impact of migration is a *global* issue that affects churches in *both* the North *and* the South. Migration is by no means limited to movements from South to North. People movements from South to South and North to South have equal importance and impact.²

2.2.2 Migration, according to the 2010 WCC Utrecht-report, is a global phenomenon that involves 250 million people worldwide. This is described as a movement of peoples either forced or by choice in search of livelihood. Histories of (colonial and post-colonial) conquest, displacement due to natural or manmade disasters, religious and political conflicts, poverty and repression have forced countless people into migration - often without a clear picture of the future and resulting in vulnerability and stigma of being the cause of many problems. Migrants risk danger at sea and deserts in efforts to reach prosperous places. The globalizing economy is under threat of protectionism and social injustice. Where there are no prospects to find employment, migration becomes a viable and attractive option in spite of the risks involved.

2.2.3 As mentioned already, whilst migration is not a new phenomenon the scope has dramatically changed since the 19th century with the impact of colonial expansion, regained political independence in the 20th century, and the improved ability to travel (mobility). Within the last decade migration worldwide was around 2.9% of the world population with 8.3% moving to the more prosperous countries and Europe taking in 10.3%.³ These statistics make clear that migration is by no means a phenomenon that confronts only the prosperous countries and Europe. It is a global issue since internal displacements due to violence, failed crops, and unemployment impacts every continent.

2.2.4 Improved means for people movement across the globe implies increased migration. With increased migration come increased cross-cultural encounters and their attendant complexities. Put another way, cultural diversity and the necessity to find ways to share the same space in harmony is a central socio-political concern of the 21st century. This is reflected in the fact that in the North (im)migration is one of the most controversial political hot topics of the first decade of the new millennium.

2.3 *Reframing the rhetoric on migration and the debate on mission*

2.3.1 The Utrecht-report calls for the rephrasing and reframing of the rhetoric on migration. This may expose the wide-spread misconception that migrants as such constitute the root

² This paper is primarily written from a Northern perspective in the sense that the overwhelming majority of people in the North for whom multicultural issues are of critical daily concern are people from the South now residing permanently in the North. Whilst ENFORMM is committed to ensuring that perspectives from the South are included in its ongoing work, for the purposes of this process we expect that the WCC Pre-Assembly Event 2012 will be better placed to fill this gap, as there will be delegates from the South present whose perspectives should be sought and included.

³ P. Scheffer, *Land van Aankomst*, Epe 2007, 104-105.

cause of social tension and problems. This positioning of 'migrant' as the 'problem' conveniently identifies a scapegoat for local socio-political and economic anxieties and uncertainties. It also ignores the fact that it is economic injustice and globalisation that are the root causes for people movement around the globe. As highlighted above, the drive and motivation for people to move from one place to another vary, from political unrest to economic upheaval, from intellectual aspirations to religious persecution to environmental issues. The list is virtually endless.

2.3.2 People movement around the globe (migration) not only calls for reframing the rhetoric on migration, it also calls for reframing the debate on mission. Here we emphasize that mission is not so much 'to boldly go where no Christian has gone before', but much rather to unite in shaping missional life of the church(es) locally. The transition to global Christianity and migration require new missional approaches that incorporate mission and ministry of new multicultural and/or migrant churches.

Recommendation b:

We therefore recommend that the new WCC mission statement avoid any assumptions that migration is just an issue for churches in the North but rather addresses migration as a global issue that impacts the shape and mission of the church in both North and South.

3 Cultural diversity as a fact of Christian communal life

3.1 Migration-shaped churches

3.1.1 The church, living in a multi-ethnic world, has always been a culturally diverse body, shaped by migration. The complexities of migration and cultural diversity faced by the wider world and societies were mirrored in the faith communities. As governments began to introduce domestic multicultural and/or multi-ethnic policies, many faith communities were already engaging in multicultural ministry⁴ and mission. Churches were running programmes designed to address the challenges and gifts of the cultural encounters that were becoming characteristic of community life. In fact, faith communities and churches have been the social sites and spaces for successful experiments in dealing with issues of cultural diversity. The Ecumenical Network for Multicultural Ministry (ENFORMM) grew out of such church initiatives. It is important that such efforts remain consistent, persistent and ongoing. It requires long term commitment and informed balanced thinking, by governments and their agencies and by churches and faith communities.

3.1.2 The WCC's Churches Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) has recently highlighted migration as one of its focal areas. The tasks of the CCIA include offering advice on public policy and advocacy, and it oversees the WCC programs on public witness: addressing power, affirming peace; justice, diakonia and responsibility for creation; and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. The CCIA sets up working groups on specific topics to provide timely advice on urgent issues faced by the WCC and the ecumenical movement. For the time period October 2010 through to the WCC Assembly in October 2013, four

⁴ Intentionally living with and ministering to people of different cultures and ethnicities in one Christian church (i.e. as denomination and/or local congregation) is now increasingly referred to as *multicultural ministry*. Multicultural ministry is also named in different contexts as *intercultural ministry*; for this paper, we understand multicultural to be inclusive of the term intercultural. The term *multicultural mission* is often used when the ministry has an explicit focus on the multicultural context (external orientation). See also K. Tahaafe-Williams, 'Multicultural Ministry: A Call to Act Justly!', *IRM*, April 2011, 100.1 (392), 17-25.

working groups were set up by the CCIA. One of these working groups is focused on the Dignity and Rights of Migrants and Migrant Workers.

3.1.3 The WCC Utrecht Consultation highlighted the fact that migrants continue to develop migrant and multicultural churches in the global North. These churches and congregations invite the established local churches to enrich their understanding of Christian self-identity, ecclesiology and mission while challenging post-colonial assumptions about migration. The consultation agreed that the gifts and challenges of these new churches demand a 're-imagining of mission, evangelism and being church'.⁵

3.1.4 In the contexts of migration and emerging migration-shaped churches, mission needs to be rethought in terms of the internal, intra and external dimensions of ministry.⁶ The boundaries of Christian community need to be redefined and transcended with respect to nationhood, language, ethnicity and status. The Utrecht consultation called for a new paradigm of ecumenism that truly incorporates 'the need to be inclusive and collaborative' and that takes the three dimensions of the mission seriously. A new space is needed where all Christian churches, both well established and newly emerged migrant congregations, can be equal partners; where they can develop a common understanding of the context and content of the multicultural mission.

3.1.5 Undoubtedly, WCC has the potential to provide effective global theological and missional responses and leadership on the issue of cultural diversity and multicultural ministry. Successive WCC Assemblies and mission conferences in the latter parts of the 20th century have addressed the issue briefly. Now it is time to give it the necessary focus, given the unprecedented levels of global migration and its very public and visible implications for the world church and societies.

Recommendation c:

We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will signal two things: i) recognition of the critical importance of multicultural ministry for mission in the 21st century, and ii) a serious commitment to meaningful engagement with the issue.

3.1.6 The sole purpose for ENFORMM's existence is to serve multicultural ministry and mission in both global and local contexts. Our involvement in the said WCC three-year process of consultations is a welcome privilege. It is also an opportunity to remind the world church once again of the critical importance of multicultural ministry and mission for the future of Christianity and of Christ's Church. Our reflection in this paper, therefore, takes us back to the beginning.

3.2 Migration-shaped Early Church

3.2.1 The Early Church was not homogeneous. Inclusive multicultural practices have been a distinctive characteristic of Christ's church from its very inception. At Pentecost and throughout the book of Acts, the multicultural and multilingual nature of Christ's community is clearly evident. More importantly, cultural difference and diversity were embraced as an enriching fact of life. When confronted with challenges the apostles responded with thoughtfulness, respect and justice.

⁵ We understand 'mission' in terms of *Missio Dei* (God's mission), not in terms of the work undertaken by (mostly) Western missionary societies in (post-) colonial times.

⁶ On internal, intra and external dimensions of mission, see G. Noort, 'Emerging migrants' churches in the Netherlands: missiological challenges and mission frontiers', in: *IRM*, April 2011, 100.1 (392), 11-12.

3.2.2. This is evident in the incident regarding the Hellenist widows and the complaint about the distribution of bread (Acts 6). Moreover, Acts 10 demonstrates clearly 'that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right' (Acts 10:35-36). Cornelius, the migrant from Italy, is no longer judged according to the law as an 'impure and unclean' foreigner, but he is included in the community of Christ's faithful disciples.

3.2.3 The Council of Jerusalem recognized the changing shape of the community of believers with the inclusion of gentiles in Antioch. It accepted that the Spirit was given to all, that the hearts of these new believers were purified, and that the old believers should not discriminate (Acts 15). In accordance with the words of the prophets as referred to by James, multicultural space had to be created to enable the restoration of David's fallen tent so that all could seek the Lord (v. 16-17). Creating space for the nations therefore is intrinsically missional in nature, as rebuilding the tent is linked to the peoples bearing God's name and seeking the Lord.

3.2.4 The Roman bishop Clement understood this when he wrote to the congregation in Corinth: 'the pilgrim church of Rome writing to the church of Corinth which is in pilgrimage'.⁷ The 2nd century author of the letter to Diognetus said about the pilgrimage of Christians: 'They live in their own countries, but only as sojourners. They have a share in everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them their fatherland is a foreign land'.⁸ Our parish (*paroikia*) is nothing more (and nothing less!) than a temporary place of residence for sojourners and foreigners, where believers of diverse backgrounds worship and minister together. Churches, then and now, act as 'brokers of connection' and suppliers of spaces for joint liturgy, where safe havens for reciprocal recognition of fellow-believers as fellow-pilgrims can be created, and a reframing of identity could take place.

Recommendation d:

i) We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will, in providing biblical-theological perspectives, give careful consideration to the fact that the New Testament writings relate the nature and mission of the church to its multi-cultural and multi-ethnic character and that as such, multicultural mission should be incorporated into the notae ecclesiae.

ii) We also recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will strongly urge Christian 'pilgrim' churches in North and South to participate in conversations on migration and on values that guide the process of integration.

3.3 Migration-shaped church and the unam sanctam

3.3.1 The discussion on a new paradigm, as called for at the Utrecht consultation, should find its starting point in the *unam sanctam* of the Apostolic Creed. The tenet of our faith holds that all Christians, members of newly emerged migrant churches and of well established 'historic' churches, are 'in communion with Christ, and through him, with one another'. As members who are in communion with one another, they are part of the very same 'one, holy and catholic church'.⁹

⁷ K.M. George, *The early church. Defending the faith, witness and proclamation: patristic perspectives*, WCC publications, Geneva 1996, 23-24.

⁸ Letter to Diognetus, chapter 5:5.

⁹ *Confessing the One Faith. An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith as it is confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)*, Faith and Order Paper no. 153, Geneva, 1991, 84.

3.3.2 All churches are one and not just related as members of a worldwide Christian community. Undeniably, the history of the ecumenical movement makes clear that divisions between the related members are, and have been, rampant in both the global Christian community and at a local level. It is equally evident that throughout the ecumenical and missions history the rich diversity of the many colours and shapes of Christian communities and churches has been a source of joy for many. While diversity here is experienced as both division and joyful enrichment, theologically the one constant and unchangeable reality is the oneness of the body of Christ of whom we all are members. As the apostle Paul has written to the multi-ethnic congregation in the multicultural city of Corinth: 'For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we are all given the one Spirit to drink' (1 Cor. 12:13).

3.3.3 To hold the *unam sanctam* to be true and basic to our faith, to follow Paul's reasoning that individual believers are yet one body and that this is an inalienable part of our Christian faith, is to accept the distinctive traits of Christian ministry and mission. Trust that existing ethnic, social and religious divides can be bridged is both hope and belief (faith) for the community of believers. It is for Christians a constant reminder that a disregard of the unity of the body is in itself disregard for Christ, who is the one and single head of the church.

3.4 *Unam sanctam and multicultural ministry*

3.4.1 Paul's use of the imagery of the oneness of the body is clearly not an end in itself. It is followed by an exposition on the essential talents and gifts of the ethnically diverse members of the congregation. These individual gifts of the colourful membership are a necessary and integral part of the ministry and mission of the congregation in Corinth. The oneness of the body, the totality of an ethnically and socially diverse community including the sum of individual gifts, is intrinsically related to the most excellent way, the way of love, which according to Paul is the essence of mission and ministry (1 Cor. 12:27-13:1). Christians, of all colours and ethnic backgrounds, bring their gifts to the ministry.

3.4.2 The oneness of the body evidently does not imply absence of difference. On the contrary, multicultural diversity implies *maintaining* difference. Oneness does not mean that multicultural diversity has to be blended into a given dominant culture. Nor does it mean an open door to the 'absolute relativity' of opinions and values. Rather, oneness of the body refers to people who, as followers of Christ, respect that they are called from the nations and constitute a multi-ethnic communion that is missional in essence. Its missional nature provides and requires a safe space for encounter, mutual enrichment and critique, and difference of opinion (not just difference of colour) where gifts to the ministry can flourish.

3.4.3 Any infringement on the oneness of the body should be responded to in order to honour and maintain both health and mission of the Christian community. The story of the tension between Grecian Jews and the Aramaic community in Acts 6 points out that injustice experienced by some – such as the unequal distribution of bread mentioned above – must lead to pro-active intervention by others (if not all). The 'sinned-against' (the Grecian Jews) appealed to the oneness of the community of believers. The wrong was addressed in order to bring about justice and reconciliation which greatly contributed to the effectiveness of the ministry and mission of this early Christian community. It is no accident that the author of the book of Acts relates to us in this context that the congregation gained members rapidly and that the Word of God was spread (Acts 6:7).

3.4.4 The call to the universal church and local congregations to be one body thus has strong missionary implications and is directly related to the quality of the mission. When

Christian communities actively shape Kingdom communities – with members from all nations and all peoples (Ps. 117:1; Rev. 5:9) who worship, fellowship (*koinonia*) and witness (mission and service) together – this is in itself a powerful and eschatological response to issues of injustice and ethnic divisions. In multicultural mission and ministry the so-called mandate of Matthew 28:18-20 cannot be isolated from the narrative in Luke 4:18-19, where Jesus refers to the year of Jubilee: freedom for prisoners, release for the oppressed, sight for the blind. Only when held in creative tension can these two strands in missionary thinking be fruitful in multi-ethnic and multi-religious contexts, where many do not (sufficiently) have access to education, health, employment, legal status and fundamental human rights.

Recommendation e:

We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will, in providing biblical-theological perspectives, give careful consideration to the implications of the unam sanctam in relation to the contextual realities of multicultural mission and ministry.

3.5 Multicultural ministry and the ecumenical enterprise

3.5.1 Indeed, the ecumenical enterprise (past and present) has devoted much time and energy to enhancing the quality of ecclesial mission and ministry in the context of international partnerships between churches. Yet this international cooperation often took place between largely mono-ethnic/cultural communities. The impact of migration and emerging multicultural communities has confronted us with the necessity to shift our mindset and practice. We are made aware of the need to develop relevant mission and ministry in the context of local multicultural partnerships, taking into account the experiences of locally emerging multicultural churches.

3.5.2 This calls for new patterns of ecumenical cooperation. Reciprocity in relationship and 'intercultural learning' are no longer just an issue between two churches geographically separated by oceans. They are now integral to ecumenical relations at a local level.

Recommendation f:

We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will give careful attention to the shape and challenges of emerging ecumenical cooperation between 'old' and 'new' (migrant/multicultural) churches at a local level.

4 WCC Mission Statements and emerging migrant/multicultural churches

4.1 Tambaram and Mexico City

4.1.1 Previous WCC World Mission Conferences have tried to address the changes and challenges in local Christian communities. The 1938 conference in Tambaram (India) devoted much energy to a debate on the life of the local church. The debate highlighted the much needed independence of former mission churches, whilst maintaining the importance of worship and community as means to give direction to the mission of the church.¹⁰ The 1963 conference in Mexico City elaborated on the principle of mission in six continents and the need for ecumenical partnerships in mission. Both conferences recognized the significant changes in the relationships between churches, and in the dynamics of world power. Increased nationalism had led to a process of decolonization in which some churches acted in the forefront and others lagged behind. H. Venn and R. Anderson's three-part formula of

¹⁰ *The Life of the Church, International Missionary Council Meeting at Tambaram, Madras, December 12th to 29th, 1938*, Vol. IV, Oxford 1939.

self-governance, self-propagation and self-support gained new prominence in an era that required different relationships between newly emerged mission churches and the 'old' sending churches in the West. Between Tambaram and Mexico City there was a shift from underlining independence towards an emphasis on partnership.

4.2 'Mission and Evangelism'

4.2.1 The 1982 Mission Statement affirmed that churches anywhere in the world find themselves in a missionary context.¹¹ Brief reference is made to migrants and refugees who have brought the mission field to the threshold of all local congregations. Every local community should be aware that they are part of a universal church and that involvement in the mission of Christ's church brings this about. Therefore, any Christian declarations about the church's global missionary responsibility will only be credible if it is combined with similar genuine missionary involvement in the individual local context. The document does not dwell on the issue of migration in relation to mission. The fact that migrant missionaries came to Western countries and started migrant churches is overlooked. Its focus is much more on the content of mission, on changes in missional relations and the place of missionaries. It stresses a call to live and witness in solidarity with refugees and migrants, rather than the need to ecumenically develop missional ministries *with* migrant Christians.¹²

4.2.2 The paragraph on perspectives for the future addresses refugees in terms of the call to the churches to be actively present, and to explain the love of God for every person in every situation. It describes refugees (migrants) as objects of mission rather than reciprocal missional partners and members of the one and universal body of Christ.¹³ The chapter on the unity of the missional church discusses the increasing cultural expressions and diversity of Christian life and faith (inculturation). It suggests that the eschatological perspective of the peoples who travel to Jerusalem from East, West, North and South to sit at the festive table of the Kingdom should direct and guide our missionary endeavours. It does not discuss, however, the role of migration in the existence of multicultural communities in many places, wrestling with the associated complexities. It therefore misses the point that the processes of inculturation and identity construction are extremely complex as the people involved have to go through a form of tri-angulation. That is, constructing a new identity in the triangle of reframing the meaning of the Christian faith in a new migrant situation, the identity of the migrant in the country of origin, and the cultural and normative identity of the new country where the migrant (temporarily) resides.

4.3 *Salvador de Bahia*

4.3.1 It was at the Mission Conference in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil (1996) that the diversity of local expressions of church was prominently on the agenda. The relationship of gospel and culture was debated in terms of the manifold cultural expressions of church, the problematic issue of maintaining unity in diversity, and the tension between contextual integrity versus cultural idolatry. Gospel and culture should always challenge each other.¹⁴ In regards to emerging multicultural communities the conference issued a call to local congregations to become 'communities that radiate hope, that offer security and trust'. It encouraged congregations in more plural societies to accept all cultural groups in the society that are uprooted, discriminated against or marginalized. The Conference message affirmed

¹¹ *Mission and Evangelism: an Ecumenical Affirmation*, published as no. 4 in the *WCC Mission Series*, Geneva 1983. Chapter D6 is devoted to 'Mission in and for six continents' (see D6:37-38).

¹² *Mission and Evangelism*, D38-39.

¹³ *Mission and Evangelism*, E46.

¹⁴ See the message of the Salvador de Bahia-conference that acknowledged the plea of German participants not to give in to the temptation to recognize God's spirit in all human cultures. They referred to the risk of becoming enslaved by anti-Christian ideologies such as Nazism (points 8 and 9 of the Conference Message).

the need for such congregations to be strengthened in a spirituality that enables the members to cope with the vulnerability that comes with being an open community.

4.4 Athens

4.4.1 Finally, the Athens 2005 Mission Conference gave some focused attention to the emergence of migrant churches and theologies. These were addressed in terms of healing divisions, reconciliation, and the search for reciprocity in constructing (local and global) theologies. One of the workshops was devoted entirely to the urgency and mandate to grow multicultural churches. Remarkably, the specific impact of migration itself on local church life and on the mission and ministry of the church is hardly mentioned in the conference report. This has probably to do with the fact that many already assumed as self-evident the existence of migrant and multicultural churches as direct consequences of migration. In addition, the conference gave special attention to the ecclesiological and ecumenical ramifications of opening up the dialogue on mission with Pentecostals, Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Evangelicals, which also needed time and space.

4.4.2 Athens, decidedly more so than previous conferences, gave theological weight to the *missio ecclesiae* next to the wide *missio Dei* perspective 'in a specific attempt to find a better balance between the wide and specifically church-related approaches to mission'.¹⁵ It follows then that Athens could have articulated an awareness of migration's impact on local and global contexts and on the understanding of the church's mission more than it did. Instead, it frequently referred to ethnicity, ethnic violence, prophetic reconciliation and its relation to evangelism. It failed to recognize multicultural congregations as ecclesial laboratories of healing that have great relevance for the ministry and mission of God and the churches in the world. The only reference in this respect may be the call to 'offer a place where the victims can themselves speak and tell their stories'.¹⁶ Indeed, such places are urgent and important. In fact, multicultural congregations have and can continue to provide healing places where the stories can be shared and reconciliation can be sought.

4.4.3 The Athens report refers to 'particular solidarity *for* the victims of violence, abuse, injustice, threats, war, racism and other forms of discrimination'. This priority of the victims rephrases the earlier 'preferential option for the poor'. The word 'for' is significant. The paradigm shift in multicultural congregations is from the 'for' to the 'with', from 'they' to 'us' and from the 'I' to the 'we'. In multicultural congregations there is a place for 'victims' and their life stories, yet they are embraced as 'fellow-sojourners' and 'fellow-believers' who seek justice together with the other members of the congregation. The focus is not on the victimized over against the oppressor. Rather it recognises people of all nations as members of the one body of Christ who are all in need of healing. As such they are seeking justice, forgiveness and a way forward towards restored unity and community, without belittling or denying the experiences of the victims.

Recommendation g:

i) We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will underline that Christian migrants are partners in mission, rather than objects of mission. The complexities of inculturation and identity construction in relation to the mission of the church should be given careful consideration.

¹⁵ J. Matthey, 'The significance of Athens', in: J. Matthey (ed.), *Come Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile! Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 2005*, Geneva 2008, 331.

¹⁶ J. Matthey, 'The significance of Athens', 333.

ii) We also recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will explicitly mention and promote that multicultural congregations are ecclesial laboratories of healing and reconciliation and therefore have great relevance for developing ministry and mission.

4.5 Ecumenical sharing of resources revisited

4.5.1 In the history of the ecumenical movement, reciprocity has increasingly been understood in terms of equal relations between churches, most often between former mission churches and older sending agencies (churches). Initially, creating reciprocal relations (as promoted during the process of *Ecumenical Sharing of Resources* last century) was not about equality in resourcing and regulating inter-church cooperation (i.e. the ecumenical process of exchanging personnel and other resources). Rather it was meant to set guidelines for the process of sharing resources in the mission and ministry of the church. It was developed in the context of the missionary work, underlining reciprocity while maintaining the missional focus. Reciprocity was also emphasized outside ecumenical relations, namely in mission, or more precisely, in the one missional ministry of the one body of Christ.

4.5.2 Churches largely failed to implement the principle of ecumenical sharing and reciprocity in relationships with newly emerged (migrant and multicultural) churches in their own contexts. This may be better understood when seen against the backdrop of the struggle in Western churches to come to terms with the rapid decline of the local congregations. The changed map of Christianity in Western countries was not taken seriously for a long time. This meant that the 'old' churches continued to dominate the Christian scene, sometimes based on the premise that migrant churches presented a fragmented and fluid scene.

4.5.3 Although there is some truth to this, it is important to recognise that migrant and multicultural churches do not constitute a temporary expression of church, and that their existence is a natural part of societies that have changed. Migrant churches will change and are sometimes characterized by fluidity of structures and membership. This is best demonstrated in the experience of first generation migrants. They are in a process of emigration, immigration or transmigration and are progressively marking boundaries of their contextual identities. Nevertheless their presence is more than a transitory phenomenon. It has impacted the life of local churches and will continue to do so, especially with regards to the development of local multicultural and/or international churches.

4.5.4 Fortunately, these 'old' and 'new' churches are now more aware of each other, and are increasingly proactive in ecumenical cooperation. Often migrants have a stronger presence in urban areas which proves that migration and urbanization are intimately connected. In years to come second and third generation migrants (and their churches) will move out of the urban areas into suburban territory. This is likely to influence and shape the relationship between migrant and 'old' churches which (in the West) are stronger in suburban areas.

Recommendation h:

We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will carefully relate the concept of ecumenical sharing of resources to missional cooperation of migrant/multicultural churches ('new') and established churches ('old'); and will encourage 'old' and 'new' churches to proactively seek cooperation in mission and ministry.

4.6 Responses to migration

4.6.1 Dutch sociologist P. Scheffer suggests that this world, under the impact of unprecedented migration, has changed forever and that there are 'no emergency exits'. In this context the issue for religious communities is how we can respond to the challenges of migration, including the issues of justice (or rather the lack of justice) and find ways forward. In his opinion anybody who wants to fight fundamentalism should be involved in fighting poverty and providing food security. He makes a plea for the art of equilibrium: in open societies, characterized by the impact of migration and emerging multicultural communities, politicians must balance resisting threats to democracy on the one hand, and being hospitable to 'newcomers' (migrants) on the other. In this process there may not be a way out, but a way forward can be found. He calls this the search for the 'we' in modern citizenship narratives where integration of migrants and 'old residents' is directly and reciprocally related to how the 'I' acts, lives and relates to others. This search has to do with the values, rights and duties of both 'new' and 'old' citizens. He calls us to identify markers of responsible and participatory citizenship.

4.6.2 Scheffer focuses on Muslim migrants and doesn't mention at all that many of the newly arrived migrants are Christians. The same is true for many who publish on migration. The problem with the Western debate on migration is that it has become a debate on Islam in the West. The discourse is on the problematic integration and clashing of cultural and religious values, with a default position that problematizes Islamic values. It neglects the Christian migrant's presence, not to mention other religious groups. This reminds us of the attitude of colonial governments in the past, who often regarded Muslims and other groups as troublemakers, whereas Christian converts were considered to be good citizens. Mission therefore was a political issue and tool, as regions that were Christianized were subdued and used as a barrier between the colonial government and the native dissidents. Nowadays the idea of Christianization of other religious groups is not the issue for politicians. The focus is more on integration and finding ways to navigate between duties (responsible citizenship) and rights (maintaining one's cultural and religious identity).

4.6.3 The 'proximity of the foreigner', both in society and in the Christian communities, gave impetus to different responses. In some Western countries, tolerance was a government policy, in others strict demands were placed upon the immigrant. The much lauded tolerance often bordered on actual neglect.¹⁷ That is, migrants were largely left to themselves and were hardly encouraged to learn a new language, both culturally and linguistically. In daily life in the West this policy easily led to exclusion. A common migrant experience begins with the migrant's presence as (so-called) 'guest labourer' being fully endorsed by the government as much needed for reasons of economic growth. This is understood as a temporary arrangement and the migrant is expected to return home eventually. However, often and especially at times of economic decline, the migrant does not return home. Poor knowledge of the vernacular then makes employment increasingly difficult to find.

4.6.4 The inevitable consequence of this is that migrants often end up in neighbourhoods that are impoverished and where crime rates are high. For example, in a country like the U.S. demands on migrants are high. As a traditional 'immigrant country' the government expects that American values are internalized and that all immigrants would realize the American dream. The cities, being a mix of people of diverse backgrounds, become schools

¹⁷ In countries such as Germany and the Netherlands this recently led to statements that the multicultural society has failed and that the government now promotes a multi-ethnic approach in which integration and adapting to the dominant culture is expected. Multicultural is discarded as promoting the relativity of culture and values – see K. Tahaafe-Williams' 'Multicultural Ministry: Called to Act Justly!' in *JRM* April 2011 (pages 17-25) issue for rebuttal.

of intercultural learning but also of frustration. Issues like differing values, poverty and crime are causes of frustration for many. Without the means, and perhaps the inclination, to research the root causes for these social ills, people become vulnerable targets for right wing politics in Western countries. Playing on their fears, ignorance, and prejudices, and arguing that they have become foreigners in their own country and neighbourhoods are standard right wing political tactics. Obviously all communities have some undesirable elements, but any sign of them within migrant circles only add to the success of such political 'scapegoating'.

4.6.5 This tendency to problematize the 'migrant-foreigner' as the cause of all social ills plays a key role in the now recurring popular opposition to multiculturalism. Even in Canada, the first country in the world to write multiculturalism into its constitution and to adopt multiculturalism as government policy (1971), strong voices are now critical of the multicultural enterprise. Often described as the instigator of multicultural ideology, Canada has one of the highest immigration rates in the world, with 19.8% of the population (nearly 1 in 5) having been born outside the country.¹⁸ The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* was created to ensure that all Canadians receive equal treatment, and that everyone would respect and celebrate cultural diversity. People speak about the Canadian mosaic (as separate from assimilation) as an important part of Canada's identity. Yet, despite its ground-breaking beginnings, multiculturalism in Canada is heavily critiqued on the basis that it offers superficial cultural celebrations and polite social interactions between migrants. That historically, it has not effectively addressed systemic barriers (such as institutionalized racism) and power differentials faced by migrants.

4.6.6 Yet such critiques only expose a prevailing and wide-spread misunderstanding of multiculturalism itself. The notion of multiculturalism that we subscribe to and which informs and shapes our multicultural practices entails deep and meaningful inter-social engagement, mutual understanding and respect. It demands systemic racial justice. This understanding of multiculturalism is implicit throughout this paper (particularly in 3.4 paragraphs 1-4) though for obvious reasons we use the language of multicultural church and ministry. The point is that those critics who claim that multiculturalism has failed miss the point completely. It is not so much that multiculturalism itself has failed. It is more that people have failed to live up to the true meaning of multiculturalism. Put another way, the proximity of the foreigner has a twofold impact: it stimulates the birth of a new society in which all are involved in a search for new and shared identity, and it creates friction and alienation - the latter being more visible and magnified in deprived urban areas where access to higher education is limited. A society and/or community that negotiates and manages this two-fold impact successfully is truly multicultural – i.e. it understands and practices the true meaning of multiculturalism.

4.7 *Response of churches*

4.7.1 For churches – both old and new – migration has starkly exposed the urgent need for intercultural learning, and the necessity of becoming truly multicultural communities of faith. It is a new landscape where societal turmoil (economic crisis, ethnic tension) is further exacerbated by the debate on Islam. It is time for both political and church leaders and professionals to rephrase their rhetoric on migration. The old churches have to understand the different ways, often unconscious, that they can impose and maintain their dominant position. Two obvious examples are refusing to use other languages in ecclesial meetings, and strictly upholding Western academic requirements in relation to the admittance of migrant students. They are not the sole owners and guardians of the Christian tradition.

¹⁸ 'Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population', *Statistics Canada*, 2007; 2006 Census, Catalogue no. 97-557-XIE, 5.

Rather they are members of the one catholic Church who share the responsibility to transform lives.

4.7.2 Christian migrant communities on their part need to learn that they are not the exclusive guardians of Christian truth and tradition either; and that 'old' Western churches, while marking their identity in the context of post-modernity, are not being unfaithful to Christ altogether. The emerging churches do not constitute an ideal as such. In many of these new communities it is trial and error, next to the profound experience of finding meaning and purpose. It is often said that migrant and multicultural churches, especially with a background in African countries, bring the gift of evangelism to declining mainline churches, both in the North and the South. Yet this particular missional contribution leads to debate as well. The 'old' churches sometimes feel migrant evangelists are not sensitive to the different cultural context in which they operate and often remain in isolation, without establishing partnerships with local churches.

4.7.3 The way forward requires new ecumenical patterns of missional cooperation, not a search for emergency exits. Whereas the cities often are places of anonymity, religious communities (and therefore churches) should provide spaces and create ways to foster intercultural friendships and multicultural ministries. The scene is now set for a new phase in the history of mission, as Christians of all nations can join locally in multicultural mission and ministry to the community and communities.

Recommendation i:

We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will incorporate the notion that a new ecclesial landscape is emerging in which 'old' and 'new' churches live side by side and that the way forward requires new ecumenical patterns of missional cooperation, not a search for emergency exits. It should also encourage churches to provide spaces and create ways to foster intercultural friendships and multicultural ministries.

5 Winds of Change: Migration as a new missional framework

5.1 The shape of multicultural mission and ministry shows signs of an emerging new missional paradigm. Intercultural learning and cooperation is certainly not new. What is novel but also essential is that due to global migration inter-ethnic ecumenical and missional processes are now taking shape locally. In the past, intercultural ecumenical learning and ministry were realized through international gatherings and personnel exchanges. In recent times migrant Christians have established multicultural parishes where sojourning pilgrims, both migrants and local residents alike, may find shelter and contextual identity.

5.2 As 'old' and well-established churches face decline and uncertainties about their faith and mission, the newly planted churches are in the process of marking and redefining their identity. Such a reality can be an opportunity for both churches to change. The old churches may want to become intentionally multicultural or have begun to understand that society has transformed. The new churches may begin to utilise the local cultural expertise of the old churches. Initiatives to sit together, to learn, worship and minister together are critically important. Time, energy and patience are necessary.

5.3 For effective witness and service we urgently need a Christian hermeneutic of migration that adequately equips and enables faith communities to grasp the complexities (both gifts and challenges) of cultural diversity from the perspective that all people are God's and that

healing of the nations constitutes both eschatological promise and hopeful mission in the present.¹⁹ What is needed is 'a morality of mobility' that enables both migrant and local residents to redefine and reframe their identity as migrating pilgrims in the process of transforming societies. This will allow for mutual respect of the latter's historical rights to their country and the right of all to emigrate.²⁰

5.4 It is in the laboratory of local migrant and multicultural congregations that new ways of rendering missional service to the community are developed. It is this laboratory that seeks to formulate responses to the challenges and needs of a society in change. Global issues, such as human trafficking, become local and in effect call for and create glocal Christian responses. Research has shown that developed missional responses can be highly effective in terms of contributing to social cohesion in the cities, promoting mutual understanding and contributing to integration.²¹

5.5 Although the use of the word 'paradigm' in this context is contested (confer the use of the term by David Bosch and the ensuing discussion), it is evident that we are talking of a relatively new situation in recent ecclesial history. Churches in the West find themselves in a post-Christendom era, in which the church's dominant position has largely eroded. Society has become multicultural and yet secular. Developments towards multicultural diversity can be observed in other continents as well. In this new context it is helpful to consult the Early Church fathers and non-Western mission theologians in order to understand the extent of the challenges ahead. The Early Church fathers lived in a multi-religious and multicultural context and theologized from the perspective that Christians are sojourners (migrants). This perspective needs to be reclaimed as the theological and practical basis for the actual unity of the body of Christ.

Recommendation j:

We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will reclaim the missiological perspective of the Christian church as a 'pilgrim church' (see 3.2.4), especially in relation to the unity of the body of Christ, both in nature and mission.

5.6 When we consider multicultural ministries in relation to the challenges of mission and evangelism, we find that previous approaches to mission and ministry (for e.g. mission and evangelism with the 'baptized and unbaptized heathens' at home and abroad; pastoral ministry at home etc.) have blended into a fusion of pastoral glocal (both global and local) mission. Pastors lead the community towards life in full (i.e. a ministry that is mindful of God's purpose for all of creation), shape its eucharistic and communal life in its wider social context, and are proactively engaged in the urgent task of transforming the life of individuals and their communities.²² Mission is both prophetic and evangelistic, as it addresses glocal social challenges and calls all people to be Christ's disciples. It is pastoral as it enables people to assume their contextual identity, and to find new meaning through gathering around sacrament and Scripture. It is eschatological as it is rooted in the promise of the coming Kingdom and the gift of the Spirit poured out over believers of all ethnic groups.

¹⁹ 'The *promissio* of the universal future leads of necessity to the universal *missio* of the Church of all nations'. See J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, New York, 1975, 225.

²⁰ P. Scheffer, *Het land van aankomst*, 132-140. The way Scheffer uses 'morality of mobility' is significantly redefined here, as with this term he refers to a manner to locally cope with the results of world chaos (migration) by identifying and developing values and guidelines in relating to migrants.

²¹ J. Castillo, *Tel je zegeningen. Het maatschappelijk rendement van christelijke kerken in Rotterdam en hun bijdrage aan sociale cohesie*, Nijmegen, 2008; J. van der Sar, R. Visser, *Gratis en waardevol: rol, positie en maatschappelijk rendement van migrantenkerken in Den Haag*, Den Haag, 2006.

²² Cf. J. Matthey, 'The significance of Athens', 329.

5.7 Faith and Order, since its inception in 1927, has always stressed the unity and witness of the church. The By-Laws state that the visible unity of the church should be proclaimed and called for in order that the world may believe. This is also made clear in its document on 'The Nature and Mission of the Church' (2005). Whilst it does not deal with cultural diversity and migration as such, the text shows sensitivity for contextual diversity in mission and ministry. It points to the fact that some give witness in a context of armed conflict and others do so in the midst of religious plurality.²³ Diversity here is seen as a gift of God, evident in the use of the plural 'churches' in the New Testament and in a variety of eschatological themes and insights in individual apostolic letters.²⁴ Still missing is an understanding of cultural diversity as absolutely integral to the oneness of the body of Christ – a missing element that ENFORMM in this paper wishes urgently to be addressed.

5.8 The unity of the church doesn't start from the context, but from ecclesiology.²⁵ It is essential for engaging in dialogue with multicultural and migrant churches that the contextual character of the missional expressions of their communal life is recognized. Further, this must be incorporated into ecclesiological frameworks that seek to create space for emerging churches that are in a process of (sometimes fluid) self-identification, self-governance and self-maintenance. The new WCC document on mission should therefore give careful consideration to the oneness of the body of Christ from the perspective of migration and Christian pilgrimage on the one hand, and the contextual missionary and ecclesiological character of the newly emerged communities on the other.

Recommendation k:

We therefore recommend that a new WCC Mission Statement will theologically relate ecclesiological understandings of the oneness of the body of Christ to i) contextual expressions of multicultural churches and ii) contextual expressions of multicultural mission.

6 Winds of Change: Conclusions

6.1 What then is the ecclesiological and missiological enterprise of multicultural churches all about? The church is one by nature, but (much more visible than in the past) also multicultural and multifaceted. Its mission is shaped by Scripture, yet also by diverse cultural readings thereof. The church is a 'pilgrim church' in nature and in its missionary enterprise 'in pilgrimage'. The church of Christ therefore is a church of migrants, who live by Peter's word that we are 'sojourners and pilgrims'. Emerging multicultural churches, both in ministry and mission, push for a new understanding of Christian life: they embrace diversity in unity; they seek to establish Christian identity while in pilgrimage; they seek recognition as equal partners in ecumenical relations and missional work.

6.2 Migration and multicultural ministry are core issues for mission, evangelism and ecclesiology for the 21st century church. They are issues that must be taken seriously in how the church's mission and ecclesial thinking is shaped now and in the future. The church also needs to realise that it simply cannot afford not to make space for contextual and multicultural theologies which obviously are necessary for how we do theology this century.

²³ 'The nature and mission of the church. A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement', Faith and Order Paper 198, Geneva 2005, 2.

²⁴ 'The nature and mission of the church', 6.

²⁵ C. Geevarghese, 'Towards and Beyond Edinburgh 2010: A Historical Survey of Ecumenical Missiological Developments since 1910', *IRM*, April 2010 (99/1), 16.

6.3 The need for a new framework of ecumenism is urgent. A new ecumenical paradigm rooted in a commitment to inclusive, collaborative and equal partnership relationships locally; in which centre is the inalienable Christian principle that each believer is unique yet part of the one body of Christ; that affirms the diversity of gifts as God's own excellent way of love for the world and that takes justice and reconciliation seriously and proactively.

6.4 Such a paradigm understands that migration and multicultural ministry provide an opportunity to reconsider our understanding of mission and ministry in terms of Paul's imagery of the oneness of the body. There is one body, but it needs its different parts to be complete, to be made whole.

6.5 This new framework requires a new understanding of mission and ministry that emphasizes the crossing of boundaries, openness to cultural encounters, courage to face inevitable complexities, appreciation of different values as sources of strength, and intentional efforts at cross-cultural dialogue to build new relationships. This makes hospitality and humility central characteristics of being church and for the basis of ministry to and with others.

6.6 For this to happen efforts to reframe the rhetoric of migration for the church and society are needed. Such reframing must be attentive to both the problematic current understandings of the 'migrant' person and the root causes of 'migration' as a process of globalization and economic survival. The fact that migrant communities are developing migrant and multicultural churches and are pushing the boundaries of identity, ecclesiology and mission are hugely significant. Their present and future impact in how Christianity is shaped and survives in the 21st century cannot be ignored or underestimated. In the very least, the gifts they offer especially in the context of the global North demand great ecumenical and missional imagination and creativity. It necessitates a commitment on the part of WCC to create space, in its missional thinking and envisioning, for this richly diverse reality that is no less than a part of God's promise of a new heaven and new earth. Can the WCC Mission Statement of 2013 afford to ignore that?

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