

# Occasional Info

WCRC Mission Project 2006-2010

# 10

December 2010

## Refreshing

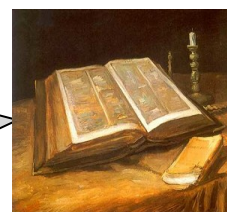


**Heineken** refreshes the parts that other beers cannot reach!

*Heineken advertisement 1980s*

**Narrative theology** refreshes the parts that propositional theology cannot reach!

*Wisdom of religious faith*



As people of faith we live from stories. Passed on from generation to generation, retold and embellished, written down, sung or painted, they are always multi-interpretable. Stories, if they are good and endure, are inclusive and reflect a "both-and" way of thinking rather than the "either-or" way that became so prominent in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment, whereby something is either true or not true. Narrative theology does not speak in statements and doctrines but allows its hearers to make up their own mind about motives and consequences, good and bad, life and death, meaning and senselessness. Our Holy Books are treasure chests of narrative theology that enlightens, sustains, inspires, challenges. It touches not just our minds but also our hearts and souls, our guts and emotions.

One of the narrative contributions to Edinburgh 2010 (see Occasional Info 9) is in the form of a pilgrimage: a journey whereby the purpose lies in the journey itself; in the silence as well as the encounters on the way. As pilgrims walk from 1910 to 2010, they meet historic mission pioneers who offer them glimpses into their lives and their particular ways of testifying to the living God, with their strengths and weaknesses, gifts and blind spots. By "reading" the lives of the pioneers, pilgrims develop their own perspectives: ..... "mission may be this but can also involve that, and about unity her life suggests the importance of such and such whereas his ministry seems to indicate .....", and so on.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches and its antecedent bodies WARC and REC often use stories to facilitate engagement in mission. This methodology (*methodeia* = *going a way together with somebody*. In: Hans-Ruedi Weber, *Experiments with Bible Study, WCC Geneva, 1981, p.269*) is particularly suited when mission reflection and reinterpretation are concerned. For mission, "the church at work", requires each of us to make up our own mind about God's call and our response in our unique way and context.

## Mission is ... means ... involves ....

This Occasional Info highlights a few insights in mission that emerged as people across the world engaged in mission action-reflection processes. Follow the links for the full stories on the WCRC web pages: [www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch) under "Mission Project".

... begins with God ...



You need to have a personal relationship with God in order to discover what your mission might be.

*Marie-Line Demeuse, Belgium, 2010, reflecting on her CAP camp experiences. Link: [www.wcrc.ch/node/456](http://www.wcrc.ch/node/456)*

The classes are not just for members of our Church. People from different churches and faith traditions can join and bring their own views on why they want to fight injustice and discrimination.

The Word of God asks us to go beyond our own group and cross barriers, whether they be ethnic, racial, religious or other.

*Anysie Uwimana, Rwanda, 2007, reflecting on the MADIP Literacy programme. Link: [www.wcrc.ch/node/449](http://www.wcrc.ch/node/449)*



**... is inclusive ...**



When we asked for Reformed mission statements, some churches sent their Church and Unity or Church and Society statement, because WCRC churches use the word "mission" in different ways and some actually do not use it at all. Are we looking for ecclesiological or for missiological statements, or are these the same today?

*Zakaria Ngelow, Indonesia, Working group on Reformed Mission Statements, 2010. Link: [www.wcrc.ch/node/451](http://www.wcrc.ch/node/451)*

**... at the heart of being church ...**

**... needs ears to hear ...**

Call

There was no voice from heaven,  
no temple filled with smoke,  
no light on the Damascus Road,  
But through human voices  
the call comes loud and clear.

If you have gifts, give them freely,  
if you have time, share it,  
if you have strength, march on,  
if you have love, embrace me  
and if you know the blessing of God  
you are needed to become a blessing.

*Bernard Thorogood, Australia, poems for Edinburgh 2010. Link: <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/resources/arts-and-creative-writing/poem-foundations-for-mission.html>*



As we studied the Accra Confession in the Joint Action Team, I was forced to look at things in new ways and to actually do something, and also, to help others to reflect on their own reality.

*Diana-Rosa Ramos Garcia, Cuba, 2008, reflecting on the MADIP Joint Action Team experiences. Link: [www.wcrc.ch/node/481](http://www.wcrc.ch/node/481)*

**... and eyes to see!**



# WCRC mission thrust beyond 2010

The *Section on Mission* at the Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids (June 2010) brought together missiologists and church leaders from WARC and REC member churches. Together they developed a theological understanding of mission that built on the emphases of the antecedent organisations. Under the heading "Theological basis", the Section report highlighted six missiological ideas that would be vital for the WCRC mission thrust beyond 2010:

## **Mission as the Churches' response to God's invitation**

The Section agreed that the churches' response to God's mission is, and must continue to be, at the heart of WCRC. The missional identity and engagement of the churches and of our communion is the *raison d'être* (reason for being) of WCRC, is essential to its Reformed identity, and therefore, must be reflected in its structures, use of resources and programmatic actions.

## **The *Missio Dei* is communal**

God's mission (*Missio Dei*) is God's purpose in Christ to renew the whole of creation. It is communal in nature because God is a communal God. This mission is a dynamic process whereby God's people are called to participate in God's mission. Therefore, engaging in God's mission is God's call to the whole church as a worldwide community. We engage most faithfully in mission when we do so together. The church not only participates but is also transformed by its engagement in the mission of God.

## **Crossing today's frontiers**

Whereas our ancestors understood mission as engaging with those who were geographically "far away", we understand mission to be the crossing of all borders and barriers that separate people from God, one another and Creation, trusting that by crossing borders, the Spirit makes possible reconciliation through Christ. This is the gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ to be shared both within the church and with neighbours with a deep sense of respect, sensitivity, understanding and humility in relation to peoples of other faiths, belief systems and contexts.

## **Primacy of the local community in mission**

Creative engagement in God's mission is the joy and responsibility of every believer. The primary place for missional engagement is the local community in which Christians live, even when mission is undertaken within a global network which brings the people of Christ together as agents of justice, reconciliation, transformation and redemption.

## **Repent for past and present practice that dehumanizes**

The First Nations Peoples reminded us of our responsibilities as participants in God's mission and the need to repent of any form of mission praxis that disempowers or dehumanizes. Mission, bearing witness to the justice of God and overcoming the wrongdoings of the past, requires intentional and continuous efforts of de-linking the historical and enduring connections between slavery, colonialism and Christian mission.

## **The plural, interreligious context**

Mission is practised in partnership with the triune God and among churches reflecting the fact that mission today is done in the midst of religiously plural societies.

Read the full report of the UGC Section on Mission (June 2010) at <http://www.wcrc.ch/node/263>

## Thanks to God, thanks to you ....

After 11 years with WCRC / WARC, of which 6 years also with the John Knox International Reformed Center, I give thanks to God, my colleagues and all of you in the global church for the fascinating missiological ventures we were able to embark upon together. It was a true privilege and pleasure! May our paths cross again. May you and yours be blessed also in 2011.

*Jet den Hollander, Executive Secretary Mission in Unity Project 1999-2005 and Mission Project 2006-2010*



During 2010, as in preceding years, many different churches and organizations were part of the WARC-REC-WCRC search for new expressions of mission and unity and empowered one another for creative "Witnessing to Christ Today". Following the birth of the new World Communion in June, the thrust of the Mission Project 2006-2010 continues in ways that built on what we have learned together over the years. Please contact the WCRC General Secretariat for information on how you can be involved in 2011. Or visit our website at: [www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch)

## Mission Project Advisory Committee

Special thanks are due to the **Mission Project Advisory Committee** which, under the gracious leadership of the Moderator, Rev Lilia Rafalimanana from Madagascar, has given direction to planning, programmes, processes and evaluation.

**Moderator:** Lilia Rafalimanana.

**Representing the WARC Executive Committee:** Gunilla Gunner, Sweden; Roberto Jordan, Argentina; Bureieta Karaiti, Kiribati; Elizabeth Delgado-Ciézar, Costa Rica.

**Representing WARC member churches:** Hunter Farrell /Jon Chapman, United States; Zakaria Ngelow, Indonesia.

**Representing sister and partner organizations:** Rowena Francis, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council; Roswitha Golder / Cyril Ritchie, John Knox International Reformed Center; Douwe Visser / Winston Kawale, Reformed Ecumenical Council; Jacques Matthey / Jooseop Keum, World Council of Churches – CWME; Des van der Water / Randolph Turner / Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, Council for World Mission, also representing CEVAA and United Evangelical Mission; Madeleine Strub-Jaccoud / Martin Breitenfeldt, Mission 21 - Protestant Mission Basel; Kjell Nordstokke / Roger Schmidt, Lutheran World Federation – DMD.

**Youth representative:** Tara Marie EVANS, Jamaica.

## Mission, money and power ....

Besides programmatic sharing in mission, our financial sharing to foster mission in unity, mission reinterpretation and mission empowerment has moved out of stereotype patterns of giving and receiving. Over the past five years more and more churches in the global south have pledged financial support for the programmes. This has made all the difference, in actual Swiss francs but also missiologically: our communion indeed practises the vision of *"mission, all in each place"*.

*The phrase "All in each place" originates from the Section report on "Unity" at the 1961 WCC Assembly in New Delhi, but was ten years later coined to express the idea of mission in six continents and mutuality in mission (Bangkok Assembly of CWME-WCC, 1971-72)*

## Financial partners WCRC (WARC) Mission Project for the 2006-2010 period

CEVAA – Community of Churches in Mission  
Church of Scotland  
Council for World Mission  
Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Evangelical-Reformed Church in the Canton of Basel-Landschaft  
Evangelical-Reformed Church in the Canton of Basel-Stadt  
Evangelical-Reformed Church in the Canton of Schaffhausen  
Evangelical-Reformed Church in the Canton of St. Gallen  
Evangelical Church in Kalimantan, Indonesia  
Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland  
Kiribati Protestant Church  
Mission 21 - Protestant Mission Basel  
Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, South Africa  
Norddeutsche Mission  
Presbyterian Church in Canada  
Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland  
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Protestant Church in the Netherlands  
Reformed Churches of the Cantons Bern, Jura, Solothurn  
Reformed Church in America  
United Church of Canada  
United Church of Christ / Disciples of Christ, USA  
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa  
United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands  
United Protestant Church in Belgium  
United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom



## Financial partners – specific programmes

The **Mission Today** intercultural pilot project was jointly financed and carried out by the WCRC (WARC) Mission Project and the Department of Mission and Development of the Lutheran World Federation, with support from Stichting Rotterdam, the Protestant Church in the Netherlands and the Edinburgh 2010 study fund.

The **Making a Difference Project 2006-2009** (MADIP) was created thanks to a special 3-year funding arrangement with the United Church of Canada in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency CIDA. MADIP received further sponsorship from the Council for World Mission in cooperation with the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission, and the United Evangelical Mission in cooperation with the Evangelical Church in Westphalia.

The **Ecumenical Mission Pilgrimage** was created cooperatively by the Edinburgh 2010 Stakeholders and received funding from: Edinburgh 2010, WCRC (WARC) Mission Project, Hollenweger Stiftung, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, World Council of Churches in cooperation with the Fondation pour l'aide au protestantisme réformé, United in Mission – USPG, Global Office Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Pontifical Council, Korean Methodist Church, Lausanne Movement & World Evangelical Alliance, others.