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COMMUNIQUE

Global Consultation Discusses Issues Concerning the Church's 'Call to Mission and Perceptions of Proselytism' Accra, Ghana, 8-11 June 2017

'Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptise them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey all I have commanded you.'
(Matthew 28:19,20)

An international consultation of some thirty theologians and church leaders from a wide range of Christian traditions gathered in Accra, Ghana, to explore 'perceptions of proselytism' in the exercise of the universal mandate to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

The gathering was convened by the Global Christian Forum, whose purpose is to provide space in which Christians from a wide variety of churches and traditions meet together to foster mutual respect and address common challenges. In these conversations, experiences and perceptions of 'proselytism' have emerged as major themes. 'Proselytism' is defined in multiple ways but is often understood as unethical or unfaithful practices in evangelizing those who are in some way already members of other churches or Christian communities.

Planning and implementation were undertaken together with Catholic Church (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity), the Pentecostal World Fellowship, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance.

Beginning from a strong commitment to witness to the good news of Jesus Christ, the consultation heard keynote addresses which examined 'the call to mission in today's context' and stressed the need for ongoing Christian formation in all communities.

Examining the situation in a wide variety of global contexts, participants also acknowledged ways in which each of their traditions had been complicit in improper behaviour. They told stories of both divisive and reconciling experiences, and expressed hope that this historical moment offers unique opportunities for progress together toward common witness.

The consultation is part of an ongoing process working toward a common Statement to be signed together by the four co-sponsoring bodies, with others invited also to join in support. A working draft was considered, and further steps identified for the next year.

The consultation was generously hosted by the Church of Pentecost at its Convention Centre.

Global Christian Forum

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