

Introduction

Welcome to the latest **GCFNews**.

In this edition there is news about people, important gatherings and the search for the next GCF secretary:

- 'Call to Mission, Perceptions of Proselytism: a Global Conversation' task groups meet in Rome; Pages 1-4
- After several regional gatherings, the Pentecostal Forum of Latin America and the Caribbean meets in Panama; Pages 7-8
- Meet three new members of the GCF international Committee, Pages 5-6
- Plus more from Poland, and the call for a new GCF Secretary, beginning 1 July 2018.



Members and assistants of the 'Call to Mission, Perceptions of Proselytism' task groups in Rome.

Facing proselytism: understanding, hearing and healing

In a series of three articles, GCF News reports on several Global Christian Forum-initiated task groups working conjointly on the troubling issue of 'proselytism' and Christian mission.

GCF task groups come together in Rome to work on issues of proselytism. Kim Cain reports.

The Global Christian Forum continues to provide 'space' for work on one of the most intractable issues facing the Church across the world, that of perceptions of proselytism — the sort commonly referred to as 'sheep stealing' — in the context of Christian mission.

Three distinct Task Groups, parts of the 'Called to Mission, Perceptions of Proselytism' initiative convened by the GCF, came together in Rome last October to work on their respective roles on the matter.

Addressing the issue has become one of two* centre pieces of work facilitated by the GCF, given its mandate to serve as a forum for participants to 'explore and address common challenges', especially in regard to themes "where (churches) are not in agreement with one another."

In both cases, the GCF-convened initiative is carried, planned and implemented together with the Catholic Church (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity/ PCPCU), the Pentecostal World Fellowship, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance.

The issue of proselytism was seen by the GCF Committee (meeting in 2013) as one that affected many parts of the global church and, despite fears that it could be too difficult a subject to handle, they saw the need to do so.

They agreed the problem had to be addressed to help motivate healing and encourage hope on a matter that creates tension and disunity in the Body of Christ.

It is envisaged that a document involving a statement, case studies and recommendations will be a valuable tool to provide a way forward for extensive discussion and reflection by churches and Christian leaders.

Continued on page 2

Facing proselytism: understanding, hearing and healing

Continued from Page 1

Such a process may encourage greater commitment to unity as churches undertake their mission and outreach in contexts where other churches are already operating.

The provisional title for the document, 'Call to Mission and Experiences of Proselytism: Steps towards Common Witness', reflects the intent and approach to the issue.

It is also hoped that the initiative will inspire and facilitate reconciliation and 'healing of memories' between Christian churches and communities which have experienced pain and tension due to conflicting perspectives and practices on mission and evangelism.

Rome

In mid-October last year three select groups met in Rome – graciously hosted by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) – to advance the discussion and planning.

One group was a 'Consultation Task Group', mandated to organise and shape a global gathering of some 35-45 experienced persons who will intensely discuss the issue.

Their work will contribute to the considerable efforts of the second group, the 'Statement Task Group', who were also present in Rome, to begin shaping the global statement to the churches on the issue.

The 'Working Group' who have overall responsibility of the process also met. A further group, with a mandate to encourage healing and reconciliation, is yet to convene.

In their membership, all the groups reflect the breadth of ecclesial participation in the GCF.

** The other area of work was on growing concerns about Christian persecution; which resulted on the global consultation, 'Discrimination, Persecution, Martyrdom: Following Christ Together', held in Tirana, Albania in October-November 2015.*



L-R: Dr Femi Adeleye (Evangelical/Anglican, Ghana) and Dr Catherine Clifford (Catholic, Canada).

• Statement Task Group

The work of the Statement Task Group has begun with early draft sections being written during three days of meetings in Rome, October 2016.

The group of eight people is a collaborative effort drawing together leaders from across the theological and denominational spectrum.

In the first activity to 'get underway', the group opened with general comments, reflections and ideas. They then conferred in pairs – across church families – bringing their work back for discussion and discernment.

The work was guided by reference to a 'Reader', which was a collection of papers, monographs, studies, chapters and statements previously published by scholars and church groups on mission and proselytism. The Reader provided important background, enabling the Task Group to build on and be guided by the wider experience of the global church.

Some thought is being given to the wider publication of the Reader, as it is an excellent resource.



L-R: Bishop Dr Coorilos Mor Geevarghese (Syrian Orthodox, India) and Dr Rosalee Volloso (WEA, UK/Brazil).

Continued on Page 3



Two task groups bringing their respective work to a common plenary session.

Continued from Page 2

As the Task Group met, a strong feeling emerged that the production of the Statement may represent a 'Kairos moment' for the churches, as they seek to speak interconfessionally and globally into an issue that continues to confuse and hurt the church in so many places.

Members of the Task Group present were Prof. Dr Catherine Clifford (Canada, Catholic, PCPCU), Dr Arto Härmäläinen (Finland, Pentecostal, PWF), Revd Dr Femi Adeleye (Ghana, Evangelical Anglican, GCF Committee), Prof Emeritus Petros

Vassiliadis (Greece, Orthodox), Revd John Baxter-Brown (England, Evangelical, WEA), Revd Dr Mel Robeck (USA, Pentecostal) Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell (Brazil/UK, Evangelical, WEA). Another Task Group member, Dr Katalina Tahaafe-Williams (Australia-Tonga, Protestant, WCC), was not able to be present for the discussions.

The group will produce a first draft by the end of March, 2017, so as to inform both the GCF Committee (Cuba, March 2017) and the participants in the global consultation (Ghana, June 2017).

• Consultation Task Group

The work of the Consultation Task Group involves putting together the 'nuts and bolts' of the global consultation, to be held 8-10 June 2017, at the Pentecost Convention Centre, near Accra, Ghana, as well as outlining how to approach the difficult topic of 'proselytism and mission' in such a gathering.

The group is an eight member team, nominated by the GCF and four key global organisations that support the GCF (The Catholic Church through the PCPCU, the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Pentecostal Fellowship, and the World Council of Churches.)

It was agreed that the gathering would have an emphasis on a discerning conversation between the participants, who will come from all major streams of global Christianity: Anglican, Catholic, Evangelical, Independent, Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Pentecostal, Protestant.



Consultation Task Group members (L-R), Prof Dr Thomas Schirmacher, Revd Nicta Lubaale, Fr. Andrzej Choromanski and Revd Dr Keum.

• Steps ahead for the 'Mission and Proselytism Statement'

- The Statement Task Group completes a first draft of statement by the end of March, 2017;
- The global consultation "Call to Mission, Perceptions of Proselytism" to convene in Ghana in June, 2017;
- The Statement Task Group receives comments from global consultation and GCF Committee, then develops 2nd draft of the Statement;
- The 'Working Group' consults further with the "Mission and Proselytism" co-sponsors (PCPCU, PWF, WCC, WEA), as well as with Christian World Communions and mission agencies, about the statement;
- Working Group receives any recommendations on how the final Statement (and any supporting documents)

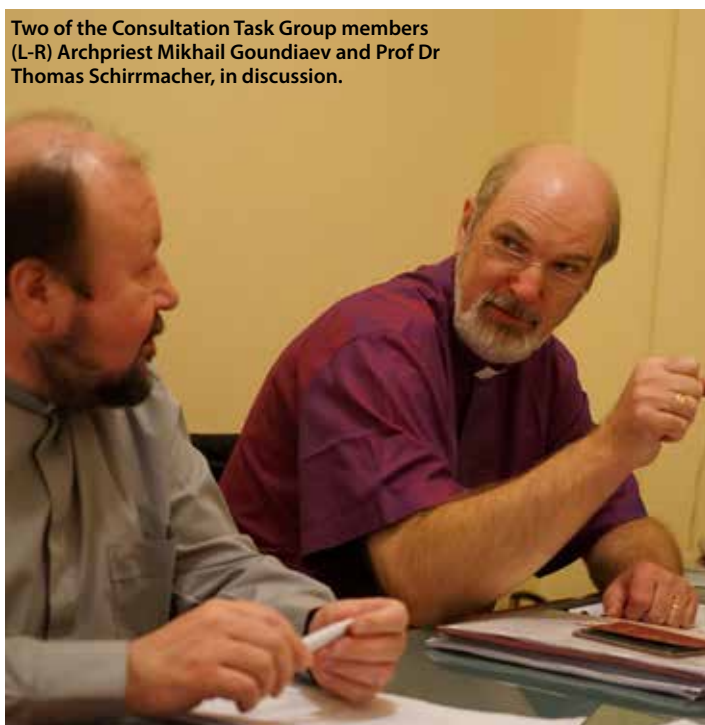


L-R: Statement Task Group members, Revd Dr Mel Robeck (Pentecostal, USA) and Revd John Baxter-Brown (Evangelical/WEA Great Britain), doing their work in a Rome cafe.

can be used to address the issue at local and regional levels;

- End of 2017 the Statement Task Group completes the 2nd draft of the Statement;
- March, 2018, the 2nd draft of the Statement will be presented to the World Mission Conference (Tanzania) for discussion as appropriate;
- April 2018, the Working Group presents the 2nd draft statement for consideration at the Third Global Gathering of the Global Christian Forum.

Two of the Consultation Task Group members (L-R) Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev and Prof Dr Thomas Schirmmacher, in discussion.



Statement Task Group members Prof Dr Petros Vassiliadis (Orthodox, Greece) and Revd Dr Arto Hämäläinen (Pentecostal World Fellowship, Finland) discuss important points of a first draft of the statement.



Committee membership is changing

The membership of the GCF Committee continues to evolve as new people take on new positions or leave their delegating churches or organisations.

This brings fresh energy and insights into the committee, enabling those who have had a long and formative experience with the GCF committee to be enriched by blending their journey with newer members with new perspectives.

New appointments since the last Committee meeting (Moscow, February 2016), include:

- **Revd Dr David Wells**, Pentecostal World Fellowship

- **Commissioner Elizabeth Matear**, Salvation Army International
- **Revd Dr Timothy Macquiban**, World Methodist Council
- **Ms Georgine Kengne Djeutane**, World Student Christian Fellowship
- **Dr Tadeusz Mich**, World Vision International.

In this edition of GCF News we highlight three newer members of the committee. Next copy will have the remainder of the new faces.



Revd Dr David Wells, speaking at the Discrimination, Persecution, Martyrdom conference in Albania, 2015.

David Wells (Pentecostal World Fellowship)

The Revd Dr David Wells has served as general superintendent of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) since May 2008. The PAOC has close to 1,200 churches, 3,700 credentialed leaders and a constituency of close to 240,000 people. It is globally involved in over 60 countries.

David currently serves as the Vice-Chair of the Pentecostal World Fellowship and on the executives of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship and the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America. He previously served on the board of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) from 1999-2013, and served as chair of that board from 2007-2013.

David has a long term connection with the GCF: while serving as Chair of the EFC he participated in the first global gathering of the GCF in Limuru, Kenya 2007.

Since that time he has remained engaged, including serving as the Pentecostal World Fellowship's spokesperson at the GCF-convened global consultation on Discrimination, Persecution, Martyrdom in Tirana, Albania in November, 2015. He strongly values the environment the GCF provides for respectful, open dialogue and mutual response.

David's ongoing ecumenical involvements include participating as an observer with the Canadian Council of Churches.



Dr John Gibaut at the GCF Committee meeting, Moscow 2016.

John Gibaut (Anglican Communion)

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, currently Director for Unity, Faith and Order at the Anglican Communion Office, London UK, is the new Anglican representative on the GCF international Committee.

John comes from the Anglican Church of Canada, where he has served in the dioceses of Quebec, Toronto, and Ottawa.

He was active in ecumenical dialogues in Canada and at the international level before moving to Geneva in 2008, where he served as the Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches until 2015.

He was a member of the Global Christian Forum theological reflection task group in 2013.

On the GCF he says "The Global Christian Forum has become a distinct and vital strand in the fabric of the Ecumenical Movement.

"In addition to its wide constituency, its methodology has practical appeals within and between the so-called 'ecumenical churches' as they venture into the uncharted waters of the next part of the ecumenical journey.

He says he is "looking forward to deepening the already important relationship between the GCF and the churches of the Anglican Communion."

Georgine Kengne Djeutane (World Student Christian Federation)

Ms. Georgine Kengne Djeutane, from the West African nation of Cameroon, is an economist by training, with a Masters of Philosophy in Economics Science.

Georgine says she “is currently serving our Lord Jesus Christ as the World Student Christian Federation Global Chairperson” and her personal goal is to contribute to the best of her ability to “strive for justice and peace in the world and to work with other organisations to eradicate poverty, economic injustices and exploitation.”

She is interested in directing her efforts, “towards actions that aim at improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable people, mainly women and children.”

Having trained in project management, monitoring and evaluation, conflict resolution and advocacy, she worked with peace and justice organisations in the Jubilee 2000 Campaign. She published articles on ‘Debt and Development’ at the national, regional and International levels.

In 2013 she was appointed by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) as the Africa Regional Secretary.

She was appointed as a member of the ‘Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Team’ of the World Council of Churches (WCC) (2004 – 2006). She served on an advisory board of the Nairobi Peace Initiative Africa (NPI-A), the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) based in Geneva, and the Programme for Christians and Muslims Relationship in Africa (PROCMURA).



Ms. Georgine Kengne Djeutane

Georgine is a recipient of the McArthur Foundation Prize on Research on “Real Economy in Africa”, and author of several articles related to debt issues published in journals.

Talking GCF in Poland

Fr Andrzej Choromanski, Catholic Church (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) representative in the GCF Committee, has recently been in his native Poland sharing information and insights on the nature and work of the GCF with Catholic Church leaders.

On 5 December 2016, at the invitation of the Council for Ecumenical Affairs of the Polish Episcopal Conference, Fr Choromanski took part in two meetings in the capital, Warsaw.

One meeting was with the ecumenical officers of the Catholic dioceses and religious orders in Poland.

The second meeting was with the Council for Ecumenical Affairs of the Polish Episcopal Conference. This was a group of about eight bishops plus experts responsible for official ecumenical relations of the Catholic Church in Poland.

The meetings gave rise to specific discussions about the GCF and came as an informal group of Christians (chaired by Rev. Andrzej Perzyński, Theological Faculty of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw) are forming a national ‘forum’, inspired by the GCF’s life, ethos and history.

Currently, the initiative remains in its formative stages but leaders of the Catholic Church, and others, are considering further steps.

In his meeting with ecumenical officers, some fifty people attended a 45 minute lecture by Fr Choromanski explaining the origin of the GCF, its structures and specific vocation in relation to the modern ecumenical movement, as well as the collaboration of the PCPCU with the GCF.

Fr Choromanski said the meeting reflected growing awareness of the GCF: “There is an increasing interest



Fr Andrzej Choromanski

within the Catholic Church in Poland in the idea of the Forum and how it may be instructive on the national and local levels.

“This level of interest is reflected in the hour or so of questions and discussion that followed the lecture,” Fr Choromanski said.

In the subsequent meeting with the Council for Ecumenical Affairs of the Polish Episcopal Conference, Fr Choromanski said there was also deep interest on the kind of collaboration that the PCPCU is now having with the GCF.

-Kim Cain

REPORT: Continental Meeting of the Pentecostal Forum of Latin America and the Caribbean

The following is an edited version of a report by Global Christian Forum (GCF) consultant, Huibert van Beek, on a gathering of the Pentecostal Forum of Latin America and the Caribbean (FPLYC). Held in Panama City, in November, 2016, the meeting concluded a four year process of sub-regional consultations and brought together leaders and their collective learning.



Some members of the Pentecost Forum of Latin America and Caribbean, in Panama City.

Attended by 44 participants, this special event included representatives from 12 Latin American countries and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. In addition, six participants from outside the region were present, including representatives of the Global Christian Forum. Fourteen of the participants were women.

Programme

The first day was dedicated to the history of Pentecostalism in the region and the flow of religious thought from the North (the United States) to Latin America. On the second day, the focus was on the present situation of the Pentecostal churches. On the third day participants concentrated on the emerging pastoral challenges, and the future of the Pentecostal Forum.

History

At the opening, Richar Mendoza, outgoing coordinator of the FPLYC and moderator, recounted the origins of this Pentecostal Forum, its purpose and development. He also summarized the process of four sub-regional consultations, Chile (Southern Cone region, 2012), Colombia (Andean region, 2013), Mexico (Central America and Spanish-speaking Caribbean, 2014) and Brazil (2015). He reminded them that the idea of specific attention towards Pentecostal churches emerged at the 2nd GCF continental consultation for Latin America (Costa Rica, 2010).

As a result, the “Latin American Pentecostal Forum” — the Caribbean aspect was added later — was formed. Mendoza also pointed out that earlier attempts at Pentecostal unity in Latin America, e.g. CEPLA, were no longer functioning. He concluded that FPLYC

is the only space of encounter for Pentecostal churches at a continental level.

Global Christian Forum

Huibert van Beek made a presentation on the GCF: its *raison d'être*, history, the breadth of participation. Importantly, he included background on the regional process, the thematic emphases, and the involvement in Latin America, including the support for FPLYC and the prospect of the third global gathering to be held in the region.

Present situation

The discussions on the present situation of Pentecostal churches in Latin America and the Caribbean brought up, once again, the issues of the diversity of Pentecostalism, Pentecostal identity, and relations between classical Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism.

There was also recognition that the Pentecostal Forum should intentionally address the issues of Pentecostal unity and relations with other Christian families in Latin America. This included the difficult matter of relationships with the Catholic Church. Examples of tensions between Pentecostals and Catholics, but also of cooperation, were given.

GCF Committee member Dr Mel Robeck was invited to address the

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

plenary. He spoke about his calling and experience as a Pentecostal engaged with the ecumenical movement. He shared his conviction that Pentecostals cannot afford to exist in isolation from other Christians, and encouraged the FPLYC to put Pentecostal unity and dialogue with other churches firmly on its agenda.

He invited the leaders to reflect on

the Pentecostal contribution to the unity and mission of the wider church.

Challenges

Participants identified several emerging pastoral challenges for Pentecostal churches, including concern for children and young people, and the question of violence. Examples were given of work with gang members in Guatemala, children in El Salvador, and rural Pentecostal

churches engaging with issues of violence in their communities.

A further series of internal challenges highlighted the inclination of Pentecostal churches to embrace conservative positions with regard to the role of the church, church leaders indulging in quests for power in numbers, denying women the access to ministry and leadership, and, ignoring accountability for administrative and spiritual authority.

Members of the Brazilian delegation.



Future of FPLYC and new committee

With regard to the future of FPLYC, the participants underlined the value of the Forum as a space for encounter, reflexion and unity, and expressed unanimously their desire to continue, hoping to intensify its activities.

Going forward, several suggestions were made regarding the programme for the next five years:

- on-going reflexion on Pentecostal identity and diversity
- Pentecostal unity
- relations with the Catholic Church and Protestant churches
- bringing together Pentecostal church leadership
- involving Pentecostal institutions of theological learning
- Pentecostal youth
- full participation of women.

FPLYC Committee

In planning this consultation, the committee intended to use the event also to name new members. Criteria for replacement were one young person, women, and representation of the Caribbean.

Committee members leaving included the Moderator, Richar Mendoza, Oscar Corvalan, Norberto Saracco, and Expedito de Melo. Prof. Bernardo Campos (Peru) was asked to assume the Moderator's role and kindly accepted the assignment, with the assurance of Luis Orellana's assistance.

The committee selected the following persons for new membership:

- Jeferson Alexis Rodríguez Galeano, young adult, Assemblies of God, Colombia
- Javier Uribe, Apostolic Church of the Faith in Jesus Christ, Mexico
- Laura Saá, Foursquare Church, Ecuador
- Helen Santiago, Evangelical Healing Ministry Church, Puerto Rico

Meeting on the final day, the committee decided it would map out a comprehensive programme for the next five years. Two elements were immediately agreed:

1. an event in 2017 in the context of the 500 years of the Reformation, which would emphasise dialogue with Protestant churches;
2. a meeting with a limited number of Pentecostal church leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean, at the third global gathering of GCF in 2018. It expressed the hope that GCF will appoint a new liaison person to accompany the FPLYC.

GCF looks to fill leadership position



Current Secretary of the GCF, Revd Dr Larry Miller will retire in mid 2018. A search for his successor is underway.

The international committee of the Global Christian Forum has begun the search to find a replacement for the Revd Dr Larry Miller, current Secretary of the GCF, who intends to retire at the end of his contract on 30 June 2018.

A Job Description has been prepared and a letter sent to a wide range of churches, communions of churches and Christian organisations, informing them of the vacancy and encouraging them to let possible applicants know of the position.

The Job Description indicates the extent of the position, especially the need to “have a clear understanding of the significance of advocating for and nurturing unity among Christian churches despite diverse expressions of Christian faith and practices.”

In addition to leadership and communication skills, the person needs to have “ample vocational experience in promoting Christian unity locally, regionally, internationally; accordingly, she/he should also be familiar with different expressions of Christianity and be willing to work in such a context.

“The Secretary shall demonstrate a seasoned theological formation and mature leadership capabilities when dealing with issues of administration, financial accountability and other

social and/or political developments”, the job description says.

In the letter to churches and church communions it is stated, “Applicants are welcomed from every geographical area and every confession and Christian family participating in the Global Christian Forum.

“However, particular attention will be given to applicants from the ‘global South’ and to applicants from Christian traditions that have not normally been participants in historic ecumenical bodies but which represent the changing dynamics in world Christianity.”

The letter also notes: “the Secretary interacts with important leadership in those churches and organizations which play a critical role in working together with the Global Christian Forum, such as the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, leaders of Orthodox churches, and leadership from many other Christian World Communions.

“Thus, it is important that the secretary have a range of ecumenical experiences and an ability to relate confidently to a wide diversity of church leadership.”

Deadline for applications is 30 June 2017.

Applications should be sent to the GCF Secretary Search Committee via email (secretarysearch@globalchristianforum.org). Full details of the Job description and application procedure are available on the GCF website: http://www.globalchristianforum.org/docs/GCF-Secretary-vacancy-notice_EN.pdf