

GCF NEWS 6 – MARCH 2008

Meeting of the Committee

The Committee on the Global Christian Forum has just held its first meeting after the Global Forum gathering of November last year in Limuru, Kenya. The committee met on 21 – 22 February in Geneva. For this occasion seven additional people, six of whom participated in the Limuru gathering, were invited to join the eleven committee members in order to strengthen the group and enhance the representation of gender, regions and Christian traditions. Encouraged by the many positive reactions to the Limuru Global Forum the group engaged in a thorough reflection on the continuation of the Forum process and took several decisions for 2008 and beyond. It affirmed unanimously that the Forum should continue to broaden and deepen its specific approach, keeping the momentum of Limuru and focussing on its purpose of creating space where all Christian traditions can meet in mutual respect and address common concerns. The group recognized the calls to offer opportunities for discussion of issues on which opinions differ and affirmed the importance of moving in that direction, but that care should be taken not to damage the new relationships made possible by the Forum. Future steps in this direction should build on what has been achieved in other settings of inter-Christian dialogue and cooperation.

Keeping up the Momentum

While several activities are lined up for 2008 (see below) a major aspect of the work will be to continue spreading the Message of the Limuru Global Forum and to collect and disseminate examples of follow-up. Participants in the Limuru gathering and previous Forum meetings will be encouraged to put the Forum vision into practice in their local situations and to share their stories. The website, electronic mailings, existing church magazines etc. will also be used to communicate the Forum and make it known more widely. Please send details of any events or other use of the Forum approach to the GCF Secretariat so that these can be publicized and others can be encouraged and inspired.

Evaluation

The Limuru Global Forum recommended that a thorough evaluation of the Forum process be done. The Committee reviewed several proposals and decided to invite the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) and the Centre for Intercultural Theology, Missiology and Oecumenics (IIMO) of the University of Utrecht (The Netherlands) to do this evaluation jointly, in the months March – September 2008. The evaluation will cover the period from 1998 when the first consultation on the Forum was held until the end of 2007, i.e. including the Limuru Global Forum. The Committee also decided to ask the Institute of Theology FIET in Buenos Aires (Argentina) to do the evaluation for Latin America, because of the particularities of this region. It is expected that the results of the evaluation will provide a clearer picture of the expectations, weaknesses and strenghts of the Forum, and will help the planning and implementation of future Forum activities, for example in areas such as methodology, communication, issues etc. Please do support this evaluation process by promptly returning any questionnaires or other requests for feedback which may be sent to you.

Middle East Consultation

In keeping with the emphasis of the Limuru Global Forum on promoting the Forum at regional level the Committee agreed to hold a consultation for the Middle East in 2008, following the same model as the regional consultations held in 2004 – 2007. The meeting will take place from 28th September to 3rd October in Aleppo, Syria and will be hosted by the Syrian Orthodox Church. It will bring together some 40 to 45 participants from the broadest possible range of Christian traditions in the region.

Limuru Report

Another task for 2008 will be the publication of a book on the Limuru Global Forum. It will contain a narrative of the event, a summary of the group reports, the Bible studies, the papers that were presented and other documents, together with the story of the Forum process leading up to Limuru 2007, etc.

Consultation to plan the GCF programme beyond 2008

A major recommendation of the Limuru Global Forum was that there should be a consultation to review the results of the evaluation and plan for the future. The Committee decided that this meeting will take place on 8 – 11 November this year. It will convene in New Delhi, India, hosted by the Evangelical Fellowship of India. Its task will be to plan a 3 year programme based on the evaluation report and the Limuru Message and Proposals for the Future of the Global Christian Forum. It will also give direction for considering the kind of « Global Forum Event » that might conclude such a plan. This consultation of 40 to 50 participants will be representative of all the church families, movements and organizations that took part in the Limuru event.

If you need any more information on these or other aspects of the Global Christian Forum, please visit the website www.globalchristianforum.org or contact the Secretariat at gcforum@freesurf.ch .

If you receive GCF NEWS twice or more please inform the Secretariat.