

EURONEWS

English Edition WB



<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu>

Responsible of the publication :

François Becker, 52 rue de Verneuil 75007 Paris France f.becker@noos.fr

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EDITORIAL

This issue of EURONEWS is essentially devoted to preparations for the forthcoming Annual Conference of the European Network, due to take place at the *Centre Culturel St Thomas* in Strasbourg 1-4 May. So you will find here all the preparatory documents which have been submitted to the Secretariat, the programme for the Study Day and all the information needed to find your way to the Centre Culturel St Thomas.

These documents show that since the Lisbon 2007 Annual Conference the EN has continued to develop and to extend its influence. It continues to attract, as is shown by the application to join the EN from the Spanish group 'Església plural'. In January 2008 the EN obtained a form of international recognition by being accorded participative status at the *Council of Europe*. It has shown its ability to play an active part both in the institutions of the *European Union* [EU] (taking part in a working party of the European Parliament on the separation of religion and politics) and at the *Council of Europe* (taking part in the activities of the *Conference of International NGOs at the Council of Europe*, publication of the proceedings of the Colloquium 31, and participation in the Tangier colloquium).

In collaboration with IMWAC, the network has been active in the Catholic Church both at European and national levels. It is particularly concerned with governance in the Church, how ministry is changing, and the ways in which it is possible to be 'a different kind of Church', as will be discussed at the workshop planned for this topic. It is also important that the EN collaborates with base communities and this will also be taken up at Strasbourg.

These activities depend on the research which the EN is developing both on social cohesion and the relations between religion and society in a multi-cultural and multi-convictional Europe, as well as on a spirituality seen not as the privilege of believers but as the mark of humanity, male and female; researches which show remarkable convergences whatever people's origins or cultures, convergences which are for me a manifest sign of the Holy Spirit. These reflections will be shared at the *Third World Forum on Theology and Liberation* presented in this edition.

Summoned by the call of Jesus, the member groups of the EN intend to involve themselves more fully in the struggles against ever more intolerable inequality and injustice in Europe and the world. This will be the topic of a workshop which will propose formal action. These concerns will be expressed at the next *European Social Forum* due to take place next October.

The strength of the EN is also shown in the numerous activities undertaken by member groups in their own countries, of which some are detailed in the section *News from the Countries* which forms the second part of this issue. To get a better picture, I suggest you look at their various web sites.

Have a good read and looking forward to seeing you in Strasbourg in May

François Becker

Composition of the European Network Church on the Move

1) Member groups

- AUSTRIA** WIR SIND KIRCHE
internet: www.we-are-church.org/at
c/o Hans Peter Hurka, Mosergasse 8/7, A-1090 Wien Austria
tel: +43 1 51 551/31500, Fax: +43 1 51 551/31509
e-mail: hans_peter.hurka@gmx.at
Contact: Matthias Jakubec, Ulanenstrasse 49, A - 4600 WELS, Austria
tel.: + 43-7242-443 15
e-mail: matthias.jakubec@siemens.com
- BELGIUM** POUR UN AUTRE VISAGE D'ÉGLISE ET DE
SOCIÉTÉ (PAVES)
Boudewijnlaan 37, B-1700 DILBEEK, Belgium
Contact: Edith Kuropatwa-Fèvre,
Boudewijnlaan 37, B-1700 DILBEEK, Belgium
tel.: +32-2-567 0964 / fax: +32-2-567 0964
e-mail: ekf.paves@telenet.be
site web : www.paves-reseau.be
- WERKPLAATS VOOR THEOLOGIE EN
MAATSCHAPPIJ (WTM)
Internet: www.wtm.scw.be
Contact: Remi Verwimp, Boomsetsw 269, B 2020 Antwerpen
Belgium/F1
tel.: + 32-14 - 51 35 43 or privat: + 32 - 14 21 79 32
e-mail: wtm@skynet.be
- CZECH
REPUBLIC** EMAUS RYCHNOV NAD KNEZNOU
Fridolin Zahradnik,
Sternberkova 154, CR-51601 RYCHNOV, N K N,
Czech-Republic
- FRANCE** DROITS ET LIBERTÉS DANS LES ÉGLISES
68 rue de Babylone, F-75007 Paris, France
internet : <http://droits-libertes-eglises.tk>
Contact: Hubert Tournès, 10 avenue de Provence, F - 44500 LA BAULE,
France
tel/fax.: +33 - 2 40 11 98 73 e-mail : hubertournes@wanadoo.fr
- NOUS SOMMES AUSSI L'ÉGLISE
68 rue de Babylone F 75007 PARIS
internet : <http://nsae-france.tk/>
Contact :Micheline Convert
Les Cévennes Jl., 949 Av. Louis Ravas, F - 34080 MONTPELLIER,
Tel/Fax : +33 4 67 41 01 93
e-mail : augot-convert@wanadoo.fr
- FEMMES ET HOMMES EN ÉGLISE
68 Rue de Babylone, F-75007 PARIS,
Internet : <http://www.fhe.asso.fr/>

Contact : Marie-Thérèse van Lunen-Chenu,
7 rue de la Liberté, F-89330 ST. JULIEN DU SAULT, France
tel. : +33-3 86 63 20 08, fax : +33-3 86 63 37 95,
e-mail : marie.van-lunen@orange.fr

FÉDÉRATION DES RÉSEAUX DU PARVIS

68 Rue de Babylone, F-75007 PARIS, France
Internet : <http://reseaux.parvis.free.fr>
Contact: Francois Becker , 52 rue de Verneuil, F-75007 PARIS, France
tel/fax : +33- 1 42 86 13 87, e-mail : f.becker@noos.fr

PARTENIA 2000 FRANCE

Contact: Gérard Wagenghem
Email: gerardw@tiscali.fr

GERMANY

INITIATIVE KIRCHE VON UNTEN

Oscar-Romero-Haus, Heerstrasse 205, D-53111 BONN, Germany
Internet: www.ikvu.de
Secretary: Bernd Hans Göhrig,
tel.: +49 - 69 - 42 09 57 80,
e-mail: goehrig@ikvu.de

Contacts:

- Reiner Neises reiner.neises@web.de
Adresse: Untere Str. 36, 76187 Karlsruhe , Telefon: 0721 - 15 19 433
Mobiltelefon: 0179 - 94 78 173
- Markus Gutfleisch gutfleisch@hotmail.com
Adresse: Zur Gräfte 8, 48161 Münster, Telefon: 02533 - 71 28
Mobiltelefon: 0151 112 63 998

INITIATIVE CHRISTENRECHTE IN DER KIRCHE

c/o Dorothea Nassabi
Wacholderweg 4, D-65760 ESCHBORN, Germany
Contact: Gerd Wild, Wacholderweg 4, D - 65760 ESCHBORN
tel.: +49-6173-65 220 / fax: +49-6173-317590
e-mail: gerdwild@aol.com

WIR SIND KIRCHE, KirchenVolksBewegung

c/o Christian Weisner, Postfach 65 01 15, D 81215 München Germany
e-mail: info@wir-sind-kirche.de,
Internet: www.wir-sind-kirche.de
Contacts:
- Christian Weisner, Auf der Scheierlwiese 1, D 85221 Dachau Germany
Tel + 49 8131 260 250, Fax: + 49 511 98 86 049
mobile + 49 172 518 40 82 ; tel priv : + 49 8131 66 85 05
e-mail. : weisner@wir-sind-kirche.de
- Annegret Laakmann, Flaesheimer Str. 269 D 45721 HALTERN,
Germany
Tel + 49 2364 5588, Fax: + 49 2364 5299 e-mail: a.laakmann@versanet.de

HUNGARY

BOKOR

c/o Anna Deliné Szita, Keleti K. u. 33, H-1024 BUDAPEST,
Contacts:
- Anna Szita Deliné, Keleti K.u. 33, H-1024 BUDAPEST, Hungary
tel.: +36-1-316 1368, e-mail: dgyuszi@t-online.hu
- Daniel Bajnok, Biro Lajos str. 3, H-1089 BUDAPEST, Hungary,
tel. +36-1- 33 43 656, e-mail: daniel.bajnok@freemail.hu

IRELAND

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

Internet: www.iol.ie/~duacon/basic.htm

basic@indigo.ie

Contact: Colm Holmes

Saint François, Avoca Avenue 26, Blackrock, County Dublin, Ireland

Tel: +353 1 288 5520 e-mail: avocapublishers@eircom.net

ITALY

Single Members

Vittorio Bellavite, (Member of NOI SIAMO CHIESA)

Via Vallazze 95, I-20131 Milano, Italy

tel. & fax: + 39 02 2664753

e-mail: vi.bel@iol.it

Romeo Fabbri, Via Mantova 35, I - 43100 PARMA Italy

tel.: +39-0521-488 276 / fax: +39-0521-465225

email: rfabbri1@aliceposta.it

NETHERLANDS

MARIENBURG VERENIGING

Secretariat : Postbus 212, NL 5080 AE HILVARENBEK, Netherlands

Tel: + 31 13 50 43 002, Fax: + 31 13 46 104

Internet: www.marienburgvereniging.nl

Contact: Henk Baars, Nieuwendammerdyk 75,

NL 1025 LD AMSTERDAM

Tel: + 31 20 63 70 221, Fax + 31 6 51 290 429

e-mail: baars.goddijn@wxs.nl

WRK (study group on the culture of Law in the Churches)

Contact: Ruud Bunnik,

mr. P.J. Oudsingel 136, NL - 6836 PT ARNHEM, Netherlands

tel.: +31-26-323 51 93, e-mail: bunnikkeizer@hetnet.nl

Kerk Hardop

Internet www.rk-kerkplein.org.

E: contact@rk-kerkplein.org

Contact:

Henk Baars, Nieuwendammerdijk 75, NL-1015 LD Amsterdam,

T: +31-20- 637.0221. E: baars.goddijn@wxs.nl.

Isaac Wüst, Erasmuslaan 92, NL-1185 BJ Amstelveen,

T: +31-20-441.3339, E: Isaac.wust@wxs.nl.

POLAND

Single Member

Pawel Skiba

pablos70@gmail.com

PORTUGAL

WE ARE CHURCH PORTUGAL, NOS SOMOS IGREJA

Contacts:

- Ana Vicente, Av. Joao XXI, 4, 3º Esq, P - 100-301 LISBOA, Portugal

tel: + 351 - 218 409 104, e-mail: anvicente@netcabo.pt

- Maria Joao Sande Lemos

Rua Joao de Deus 19 -1º P 1200-694 LISBOA

Tel : +351 21 396 71 69, fax + 351 91 460 23 36

e-mail mop65610@mail.telepac.pt

SPAIN

COLLECTIU DE DONES EN L'ESGLÉSIA

Contact: M.-Antonia Aragay-Prades,

Mare de Déu del Pilar, 15, principal.

E/Cat. – 08001 BARCELONA, Spain
tel.: + 34 - 93 - 3199 23 42, e-mail:dones.esglesia@terra.es

IGLESIA DE BASE DE MADRID
San Bernardo, 12, 2.º, S-28015 MADRID, Spain
e-mail: iglesia.base.madrid@nodo50.org,
Internet: www.nodo50.org/iglesiabase
Contact: Hugo Castelli, Anastro 34, E-28033 MADRID, Spain
tel: + 34- 91- 3020 294, fax: + 34 91 415 8716,
e-mail: hccastelli@hotmail.com
CORRIENTE SOMOS IGLESIA
Contact: Raquel Mallavibarrena
C/ Embajadores 106, 7º C, 28012 Madrid, España
e-mail: rmallavi@mat.ucm.es

SWITZERLAND

NETZWERK OFFENE KIRCHE SCHWEIZ (NOKS)
Administration: Margrith Krebs
Spittelweg 5, CH-3600 Thun Schweiz
Tel: + 41 33 223 2694 e-mail: margrith.krebs@gmx.ch
Contact:
Emilie Schumacher, Mühlezelgasse 39, CH - 8047 ZÜRICH, Schweiz
tel.: +41-44-31 83 69 / email: haschu@gmx.ch
Maria Hauswirth, Dorfstrasse 30, CH - 8165 SCHLEINIKON, Schweiz
tel.: +41-1-856 05 48 / email: hauswirth@swissonline.ch

UNITED KINGDOM

CATHOLICS FOR A CHANGING CHURCH
14 West Halkin Street, GB – LONDON SW1X 8JS, UK
internet : <http://www.ccc4vat2.co.uk>
Contact: Simon Bryden-Brook,
14 West Halkin Street, GB - LONDON SW1X 8JS, UK
tel.: +44-20-7235 2841 / fax: +44-20-7823 2110
e-mail: brydenbrook@talk21.com

WOMEN WORLD SPIRIT

Contact: Mairin Valdez, 17 Hillbrow, GB-READING, RG2 8JD, UK
e-mail: mairinv@aol.com
Myra Pool, 210 Compass House, Smugglers Way GB-London SW18 1DQ
Tel: +44 208 874 7364 e-mail: myrapoole@aol.com

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORDINATION

210 Compass House, Smugglers Way GB-London SW18 1DQ
Contact:
Myra Pool, 210 Compass House, Smugglers Way GB-London SW18 1DQ
Tel: +44 208 874 7364 e-mail: myrapoole@aol.com

LIVING WORD TRUST

1 Carysfort House, 14 West Halkin Street, GB-LONDON SW1X 8JS, UK
Contact: John Gibson, Prospect Cottage, 16 South Furzeham Road,
BRIXHAM, DEVON TQ5 8JA, United Kingdom
tel.:+ 44 – 1803 85 62 76,
e-mail: j.c.gibson@eclipse.co.uk

ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE (GB-section)

36 Court Lane, GB- LONDON SE21 7DR, United Kingdom
Contact: Ianthe Pratt,
36 Court Lane, GB- LONDON SE21 7DR, United Kingdom
tel: +44 20 8693 1438 e-mail lumen@globalnet.co.uk,

WE ARE CHURCH UK

69 Poplicans Road, GB-ROCHESTER, ME2 1EJ, United Kingdom
internet: <http://www.we-are-church.org/>

Contact:

Valerie Stroud, 69 Poplicans Road, GB - ROCHESTER ME2 1EJ UK
tel. and fax: +44 -1634 -715 278,
e-mail: valeriejstroud@we-are-church.org
Barry Norris, St. Mary's Vicarage, Bishopswood Rd
Tadley HANTS RG26 4HQ, United Kingdom
tel. and fax: +44 -1634 -715 278
e-mail: wacuk@we-are-church.org

EUROPE

CATHOLICS FOR A FREE CHOICE-EUROPE (CFFC-EUROPE)

Contact: Elfriede Harth, Postfach 190371 D 60090 Frankfurt am Main
e-mail: charth@catholicsforchoice.org

**THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC MARRIED
PRIESTS
FEDERATION EUROPEENNE DES PRÊTRES CATHOLIQUES
MARIÉS**

Contact : Pierre Collet
3 Chemin Barbette, B-1404 NIVELLES Belgique
+ 32 67 21 02 85

pierrecollet@hotmail.com

- Emmanuel Binder,

e-mail : soman.binder@free.fr.

- Ramón Alario, San Roque 17, E-19171 Cabanillas del Camp,
Guadalajara (Spain)

tel : + 34 949 33 22 24

e-mail : ramonalario@hotmail.com

2) Affiliated Organizations

**UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA**

**ASSOCIATION FOR THE RIGHTS OF CATHOLICS IN THE
CHURCH, (ARCC)**
PO BOX 85, Southampton, MA 01073, U.S.A
Internet: <http://www.arcc-catholic-rights.org/>

CALL TO ACTION

4419 N Kedzie, Chicago, IL60625, U.S.A

CATHOLIC ORGANISATIONS FOR RENEWAL

c/o Bill Thompson, 18 Ruggles Street, Melrose, MA 02176, U.S.A

CATHOLICS FOR A FREE CHOICE

1436 U Street NW, Suite 301, Washington DC 20009, U.S.A.

Internet: www.catholicsforchoice.org

Contact : Frances Kissling fkissling@CATHOLICSFORCHOICE.ORG

INTERNATIONAL

**INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF MARRIED CATHOLIC
PRIESTS**

Contact: Lambert van Gelder,

Archipelstraat 286 / 6524 LR Nijmegen NETHERLAND

Tel : 024-3233749 email : gelder-lambert@planet.nl

3) Observing Members

CZECH REPUBLIC ECCLESIA SILENTII (ES), PRAG-COMMUNITY;
Contact: Pavel Kouba, Havlic`Kova 1304,
CZ-50346 TREBECHOVICE P.O., CZ
e-mail: pkouba@seznam.cz
Simon Hradilek, CZ-PRAG , e-mail: simon.hrad@atlas.cz

4) Secretariat of the European Network:

François Becker : Secretary general
52 rue de Verneuil, F-75007 PARIS, France ;
Tel/Fax: +33- 1- 42 86 13 87
email: f.becker@noos.fr

Simon Bryden-Brook : 14 West Halkin Street, GB ^ LONDON SW1X 8JS, UK
Tel.: +44-20-7235 2841 / Fax: +44-20-7823 2110
email: brydenbrook@talk21.com

5) Co-ordination Group

François Becker (F), Simon Bryden-Brook (UK), Hugo Castelli (ES), Matthias Jakubec (Au), Edith Kuropatwa-Fèvre (B), Raquel Mallavibarrena (Es), Dorothea Nassabi (D), Maria Joao Sande Lemos (P), Anna Szita-Deliné (H), Hubert Tournès (F), Gerd Wild (D)

List of documents for the 18th Annual Conference

of the European Network Church on the Move

Thursday 1st May - Sunday 4th May 2008

Venue : Centre culturel Saint Thomas, 2 rue de la Carpe haute, 67000 Strasbourg
tél : 03 88 31 19 14/fax, 03 88 31 85 74 e-mail: centre.st.thomas@wanadoo.fr

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18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

INVITATION

The European Network has much pleasure in inviting you to its

from Thursday 1st May 5.00 pm to Sunday 4 May 2008 after lunch

*CENTRE CULTUREL SAINT THOMAS, 2 RUE DE LA CARPE HAUTE, 67000 STRASBOURG
FRANCE*

Topic of the Study day on Saturday 3rd May, 2008

Secularisation in a multicultural and multiconvictional Europe in search of social cohesion based on common values:

Implications for individuals of different convictions, for civil society (including religious institutions), and for the state

This study day proposes a reflexion in the line of the move started in Madrid, confirmed in Wiesbaden and of which two important stages were the seminar held in January, 2007 at the World Forum Theology and Liberation in Nairobi and the Colloquium 3I held in Strasbourg on 3 and 4 October, 2007 on the topic Social cohesion in a multicultural Europe: role and impact of schools of thought and religions. This reflexion, animated by speakers and workshop work, will focus on three closely linked problem fields: 1) Concepts of secularisation and laïcité, 2) The process of secularisation in the European melting pot: implications for states, European institutions and civil society (organisation, structure, relationships with citizens and religious institutions); 3) The process of secularisation in the European melting pot: implications for Churches and religious institutions (lived out faith and its expression,, organisation and structure, relationships with members, nation states, and European institutions)

The programme of this meeting and the division of the Study day according to the various problem fields above will be set out in detail with the names of speakers in the next issue of EURONEWS.. A first survey is to be found on page 4 of this bulletin.

Organised by: Fédération des Réseaux du Parvis

Venue: CENTRE CULTUREL SAINT THOMAS,
2 RUE DE LA CARPE HAUTE 67000 STRASBOURG FRANCE
(TEL : 03 88 31 19 14 ; FAX : 03 88 31 85 74 E-MAIL : centre.st.thomas@wanadoo.fr)

Le Centre Culturel St Thomas is situated in a park of 2 hectares, 10 minutes walk from the Council of Europe.

Transportation (detailed information will be available after booking)

- 1) By plane to Strasbourg airport then by taxi or by shuttle and tram as far as Centre Culturel St Thomas
- 2) By train to Strasbourg station (2:20 h from Paris by direct TGV departing from the Gare de l'Est)
- 3) By car

The organising team looks forward to welcoming you to Strasbourg

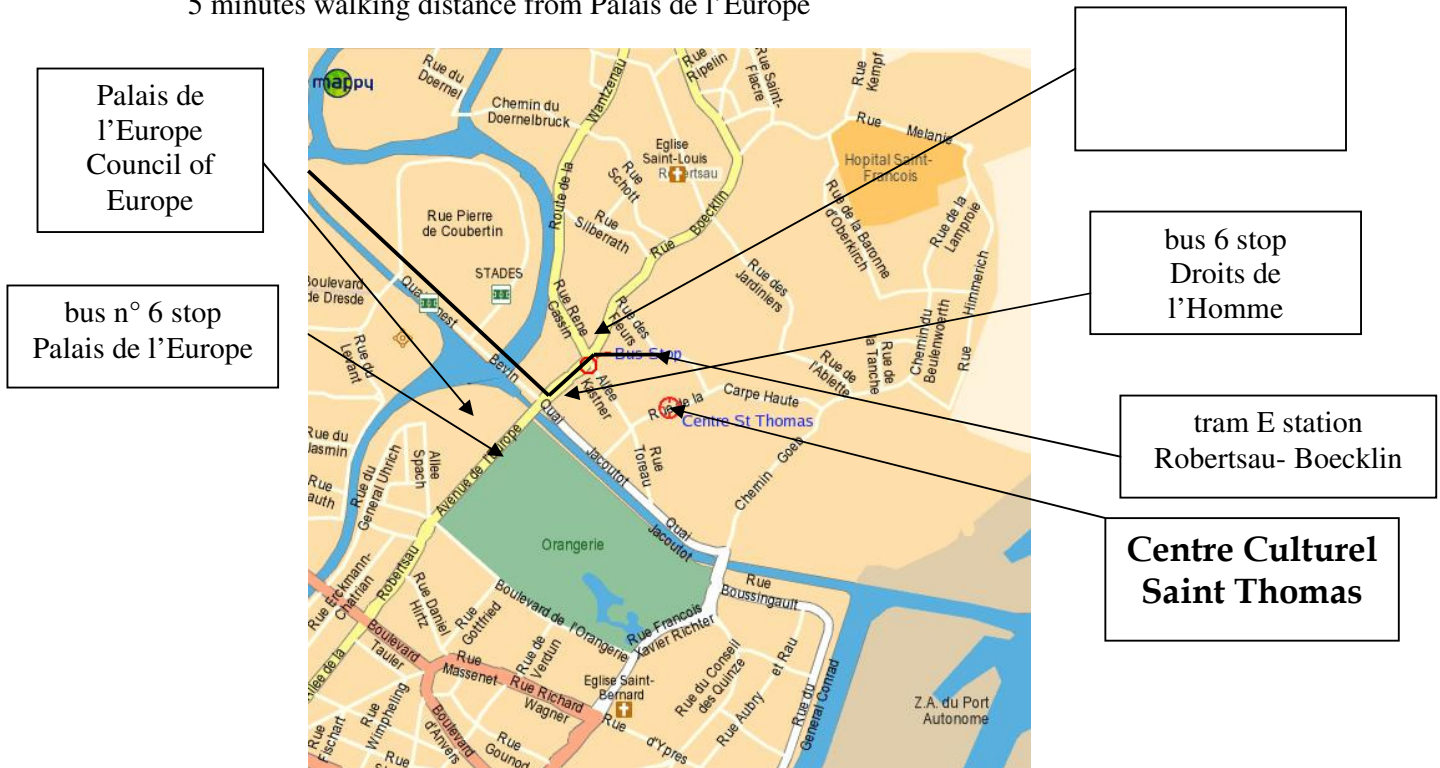
Access to Centre Culturel St Thomas

1) Situation

Address : 2 rue de la Carpe Haute 67000 Strasbourg

Tel : 03 88 31 19 14

5 minutes walking distance from Palais de l'Europe



2) Access from the railway station

The same ticket is valid for the whole trip whatever you change from bus to tram or conversely during your trip. Tickets may be bought in the bus with a slight supplement.

Two possible ways :

1) Go through place de la gare et walk on rue Kuhn. After a 5 minutes walk until rue du faubourg de Saverne, take bus n° 6 (direct) at Faubourg de Saverne stop and get out at droits de l'homme stop then you have a 7 minutes walk

2) Take bus 2 place de la gare, direction « Pont du Rhin », get out at Lycée Kleber stop and then walk (2 minutes) to the tram station across rue Jacques Kablé and take tram E direction Robertsau Boecklin. Get out at the terminus, Robertsau Boecklin and then have a 5 minutes walk to reach centre St Thomas.

Note : It is obviously possible to take a taxi, but it is more expensive..

3) Access from the airport

Take the shuttle (one every 20 minutes during rush hours otherwise, one every 40 minutes). The ticket includes the tram at Strasbourg. Get out at the terminus, Baggersee stop. Go to the tram station (1 minute walking) and take Tram E direction Robertsau-Boecklin. Get out at Robertsau-Boecklin (terminus) and then have a 5 minutes walk to reach centre St Thomas

Note : It is obviously possible to take a taxi, but it is more expensive..

**18è Annual Conference of the European Network
Church on the Move**

Thursday 1er mai – Sunday 4 mai 2008

*Centre culturel Saint Thomas, 2 rue de la Carpe haute, 67000 Strasbourg
tél : 03 88 31 19 14/fax, 03 88 31 85 74 e-mail: centre.st.thomas@wanadoo.fr*

Proposed programme for the whole Conference

Thursday 1st May

16:00 Meeting of the coordinating group

17:00 welcome around a glass of Alsatian wine

18:30 Dinner

20:00 Plenary session: welcome, presentation of Alsace and its specificities (Vincent Steyert, priest of St Maurice parish), introduction to the evening at Hautepierre by a member of the GRI of Hautepierre, news from members and finalisation of the organisation of the conference (workshop, amendment of the agenda).

Friday 2 May

7:45 Breakfast

8:30 Workshops I (two workshops in parallel; proposal: (1) social justice; (2) cooperation with cdb and communication)

10:15 break

11:30 Workshops II (two in parallel; proposal: (3) Spirituality; (4) Church, ministries and relations with NAF)

12:15 Lunch

14 :00 Business session I

16 :00 break

(no visit to the Council of Europe)

16h15 Session on Europe : 1) Présentation of European institutions (FB et HT), 2) role at the Council of Europe of INGO having hte participatory status (Annelise Oeschger, President of the INGO's Conférence of the Council of Europe; 3) discussion (François Becker representing the European Network at the Council of Europe)

17 :15 – 18 :15 Workshops or business session

18 :30 départure by bus to Hautepierre

19h Meeting with an interreligious (muslims, christians, jewish,) group of youngsters and pastor Setodzo dinner , Interreligious celebration and gospel concert

22h30 Back to Centre Culturel St Thomas by bus

Saturday 3 May

7:45 Breakfast

8.30 Workshops III (two workshops simultaneously : proposal : (5) Africa ; (6) Europe)

9.45 Break Welcome of the participants to the study day

10:00 Study day (see attached programme)

18:15 End of the study day

18:30 transportation by bus to the center of the city

18: 45 Pedestrian visit of the historical parts of Strasbourg, cathedral, St Thomas, Petite France
20 :00 Dinner in a winstub in Petite France
22:30 Back to Centre St Thomas by bus

Sunday 4 May

7:00 Eucharist in the chapel of the Center St Thomas
7:45 Breakfast
8:30 Second business meeting (*cf. agenda*)
10.30 Break
11:00 Third business meeting (*cf. agenda*)
12.15 Lunch

13.30 End of the Conference

Possibility to make a private visit to the European Parliament building

DRAFT AGENDA
for the meeting of the co-ordinating group

of the

EUROPEAN NETWORK CHURCH ON THE MOVE

to be held at 16.00 on Thu 1 May 2008, before the Annual Conference in Strasbourg

- 1 Decisions about a Chair for this meeting and a minutes secretary
- 2 Adoption, amendments and additions to this draft agenda
- 3 Report on decisions taken by the co-ordinating group and secretariat since the last Annual Conference.
- 4 Proposals for the venues for the next three annual conferences. (London 2009, then 2010 and 2011)
- 5 Communication within the Co-ordinating Group this past year
- 6 EURONEWS production and distribution
- 7 EN website
- 8 Preparing the workshops for this conference (to be decided by those present this evening after supper)- proposals by the preparation team:
 - o AFRICA
 - o EUROPE (including Council of Europe, EU, Poland, COMECE and Forums)
 - o COMMUNICATIONS (including EURONEWS and website)
 - o JUSTICE & PEACE (Hugo Castelli)
 - o SPIRITUALITY (including Theology & Liberation Forum)
 - o Relations with North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Priesthood
- 9 Preparing any other decisions for the programme before the meeting at 20.30 after dinner
- 10 Proposals for new members for the co-ordinating committee?
- 11 Any other business

DRAFT AGENDA for the BUSINESS SESSION

Strasbourg, France, Thursday 1 May to Sunday 4 May 2008
Centre Culturel St Thomas, 2 rue de la Carpe Haute, F-6700 Strasbourg

Friday 2 May and Sunday 4 May 2008

1. Chairing, amendments to and adoption of the agenda
2. Constitutional matters:
3. Minutes of the Lisbon conference, May 2007 (EURONEWS Bulletin 1)
4. Report from Secretariat (François Becker and Simon Bryden-Brook)
5. Report from the Treasurer (Gerd Wild): Approval of accounts for 2007
6. Elections and Appointments:
 - (a) Election of officers: secretariat [EN Constitution 4 (b)(1)]
 - (b) Election of officers: treasurer [EN Constitution 4 (b)(2)]
 - (c) Admission of groups to membership [EN Constitution 2 (c)]
 - (d) Admission of individuals to membership [EN Constitution 2 (b)]
 - (e) Appointment of members of the Co-ordinating Group [EN constitution 4 (e)]
 - (f) Appointment of Correspondents for each country [EN Constitution 4 (c)]
 - (g) Appointment of Distributors of EURONEWS for each country [EN Constitution 4 (d)]
7. Common projects for the European Network – reports, recommendations from workshops, motions and decisions
 - (a) Council of Europe
 - (b) European Union with a particular point regarding Poland
 - (c) European Social Forum, Sept-Oct 2008 in Denmark or Norway
 - (d) Report on 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly of churches, Sibiu 2007
 - (e) 3rd World Forum for theology and Liberation, 2009 – Spiritualities
 - (f) Social Justice – proposals for EN initiatives [Hugo Castelli]
 - (g) Shadow Synode Rome in the middle of October 2008 (A. Laackmann, Ch. Weisner)
 - (h) Reports from other workshops and other matters for decision, where not covered by the above items: (1) IMWAC, (2) Base communities and the EN, (3) communications within the EN and with other organisations, (4) EURONEWS, (5) EN web site, (6) Africa, (7) COMECE, (8) Church and Ministry, NAF workshop, (9) feminist spirituality, (10) press release
 - (i) Future activities of the EN – other proposals from workshops
8. Relations with the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Priesthood including proposal that the network join the NAF (EURONEWS 30)
9. Financial decisions:
 - (a) Financial contributions for 2008 [EN Constitution 5 (a)]
 - (b) Budget proposals for 2009 [EN Constitution 5 (c)]
10. Annual Conference 2009
London – Spirituality – including Feminist Spirituality – Thu 7 May to Sun 10 May 2009
11. Annual Conference 2010
Proposed locations (Austria or Italy?) – topics – dates [Ascension Thursday 13 May]
12. Annual Conference 2011:
Proposed locations – topics – dates [Ascension Thursday 2 June]

18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

Programme of the Interconvictional Study day

Saturday 3rd of May 2008 from 10 h to 18 h15

Centre culturel Saint Thomas, 2 rue de la Carpe haute, 67000 Strasbourg
tél : 03 88 31 19 14/fax, 03 88 31 85 74 e-mail: centre.st.thomas@wanadoo.fr

Secularisation in a multicultural and multiconvictional Europe in search of social cohesion based on common values:

Implications for individuals of different convictions, for civil society (including religious institutions), and for the state

This study day proposes a reflexion in the line of the move started in Madrid, confirmed in Wiesbaden and of which two important stages were the seminar held in January, 2007 at the World Forum Theology and Liberation in Nairobi and the Colloquium 3I held in Strasbourg on 3 and 4 October, 2007 on the topic „Social cohesion in a multicultural Europe: role and impact of schools of thought and religions“.

For any information, please contact DLE : droits.libertes.eglises@grali.fr

Draft Programme

9h30 Welcome

10h Opening and Session I

How the relationships religion/culture/society are lived in Europe at the level of individuals , of the civil society and of the political sphere (states and european union)?

Session I Part I :

How the relationships religion/culture/society are lived in Europe at the level **of individuals** in their social relationships?

- presentation : X (tbd)
- discussion

11h **break**

Session I Part II :

Description of the different ways the relationships religion/culture/society are organized and are functioning at the level **of the European Union and of european states.**

- presentation by Hubert Tournes, Président of DLE, and representing the european network in the multi parti group of the european parliament on separation of religion and politics.
- discussion

12h15 **Lunch**

14h Session II Sécularisation and laïcité

- Introduction to the issues : Jean Riedinger (Vice Président of Parvis, Secretary of the Christian Observatory for Laïcité, and Espérance 54)

- organisation of the workshops and of the work in the workshops

i) What are do secularisation and laïcité mean for you?

ii) How do you react to what is said in Europe about these concepts and to what was said in the introduction ?

iii) As for you, do the laws of states hold for religious institutions and conversely? Are religious institutions part of the civil society ?

- Mise en commun du travail

16 h **break**

16h15 **Session III**

Implications of secularisation and laïcité for the lives of individuals, of religious institutions and for the understanding of the faith.

- Session III Part I :

Work in workshops

- Presentation of the work in the workshops

- work in workshops :

i) How and why your life, your faith or your conviction is transformed by the secularisation process ?

ii) Is this transformation positive or negative for you ?

17 h Session III Part II

- On what and how secularisation and laïcité do question the theology as well as the expressions of the faith and the way it is actually lived ? Joseph Moingt, sj, theologian

- Discussion

- Conclusions

18 h 15 **End of the study day**

18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

MINUTES of the BUSINESS SESSION

of the 17th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move and 18th European Conference on Human rights in the Church

Lisbon, Friday 4 May and Sunday 6 May 2007

Seminario da Torre d'Aguilha, San Domingos de Rana, Portugal

Friday 4 May. 2007.

The meeting began at 15.00, with prayers led by the Portuguese and Jacques Gaillot.

- 1 Matthias Jakubec took the chair and Simon Bryden-Brook took the minutes. There were no amendments and the agenda was adopted.
- 2 **Constitutional matters:** Simon Bryden-Brook explained that copies of the definitive versions of constitution and standing orders were now available. One per member group and additional copies are available at €2 each. Please inform Simon Bryden-Brook of any typographical errors. Becker said that these were also on the web site.
- 3 **Minutes of the Wiesbaden conference:** published May 2006 (in EURONEWS No.27, pp 19-31) were approved correct.
- 4 **Report from Secretariat:** François Becker noted that this report was available in EURONEWS 28, pp 32-4. The Co-ordinating Group has agreed procedures for taking decisions between annual conferences (cf point 7g3 below). FB thanked the Portuguese for their important and well-done work in organizing the meeting and for their close co-operation with the Secretariat in planning this conference. EN website was now up and running (www.european-catholic-people.eu). EURONEWS was now electronically edited and placed on line on the web site. No questions or comments. The two members of the secretariat were thanked.
- 5 **Financial Report:** Gerd Wild reported that the annual figures for 2006 were published in EURONEWS 28, p 36. Noted that cost of EURONEWS was lower than anticipated, as were the travel expenses, a saving of some €700. He drew attention to paragraph 5 (b) of the EN Constitution which allows that some member groups can be exempted from paying dues. The accounts were approved. Hans-Peter Hurka requested that future accounts should reveal how much had been paid in per country but Gerd Wild says it was clear from the accounts.
- 6 **Elections and Appointments:**
 - (a) Election of officers: secretariat [EN Constitution 4 (b)(1)] François Becker and Simon Bryden-Brook were re-elected but appealed for some help from other members rather than remaining in office seemingly for ever.
 - (b) Election of officers: treasurer [EN Constitution 4 (b)(2)] Gerd Wild was re-elected with Simon Bryden-Brook operating the UK bank account. GW would be happy to resign when someone else is willing to come forward.
 - (c) Admission of groups to membership [EN Constitution 2 (c)] – Kerk Hardop (EURONEWS 28, pp 27-30) Henk Baars spoke for the group about the developing situation in Holland since the collapse of the 8th May Movement. Elected.
 - (d) Admission of individuals to membership [EN Constitution 2 (b)] Simon Bryden-Brook reminded the meeting of our constitution which provides that individual members are only allowed where we have no member group for a country. Matthias Jakubec hoped that the two Italians could apply to join as a group.
 - (e) Appointment of members of the Co-ordinating Group (EURONEWS 28, p 10 but it was noted that Hugo Castelli and Matthias Jakubec should also be listed there). François

Becker explained what membership of the CG would entail and invited anyone to join. All were re-elected.

- (f) Appointment of Correspondents for each country [EN Constitution 4 (c)] (EURONEWS 29 p 5). All re-elected. Changes in details to be notified to François Becker. Aasbund Robert Vik will remain an observer and *We Are Church Norway* will apply for membership. Helen McCarthy representing *We Are Church Ireland* said they would do the same for their group.
- (g) Appointment of Distributors of EURONEWS for each country [EN Constitution 4 (d)] All re-elected. François Becker noted that the electronic version meant that much less work was involved in this now as it could all be forwarded by e-mail. Hugo Castelli said that it appears on the website of *Iglesia de Base de Madrid*.

7 Common projects for the European Network – reports, recommendations from workshops, motions and decisions

- (a) **Council of Europe:** François Becker referred to the report published on pp 37-41 of EURONEWS 28 and the progress of the network's applications for participatory status at the Council of Europe. A lot of work had been done over the past year, including initiating a working party on 'inter-convictional' dialogue welcomed by the *Council of Europe*. The application file for participatory status had been updated and submitted in April (a copy of which was made available to the meeting) and we await a decision not before November of this year to be notified to us formally in January after a meeting of the Committee of Ministers. The resolution published in p 39 (41 French) at para 5 was adopted.

The session was interrupted at 16.10 and resumed at 16.39.

- (b) **European Union:** Hubert Tournès spoke to update the report in EURONEWS 28 (pp 42-51). Resolution on pp 45, 48 and 51 of EURONEWS 28 was approved (11-2-3) although the Austrians were against item (a). Ruud Bunnik mentioned a Dutch initiative by WRK on the subject of a Constitution for the EU which he would refer to the Co-ordinating Group. It was noted that it is more likely that discussions on a new constitutional treaty for Europe will start soon and that the EN should give its point of view on the European values to be included and on the relationships between the European union, religions and churches. It was suggested therefore that this topic be addressed during the next conference at Strasbourg (see point 11).
- (c) **Poland:** Hubert Tournès said that the working party this morning had suggested that the team "Poland" would carry on developing relationships with Poland and networking. Agreed the EN does what it can and hopes one day to have its conference in Poland.

The meeting ended at 17.20 and resumed on Sunday 6 May at 09.17.

- (d) **European Social Forums:** Vittorio Bellavite gave a brief report on past forums (see EURONEWS 27 pp 58 and 59), and insisted on the fact that in the last two forums (London and Athens), the European Network was the only association that proposed seminars dealing with religion/society interaction, although it is an important issue dealt with in the World Social Forums. He proposed that the EN continues to support various groups working in this area, and even the World Social Forum and to organize a seminar for the next European Social Forum planned to be held in September-October 2008 in Denmark or Norway. Agreed.

Vittorio Bellavite informed the EN that an alternative charter for Europe is being prepared by alternative movements, but nothing is said about freedom of religion, rights of religions, etc.

- (e) **3rd European Ecumenical Assembly of churches in 2007.** François Becker noted that at Wiesbaden in 2006 we had agreed to support the assembly planned for Sibiu (see the

minutes of Wiesbaden §7c published in EURONEWS 27). He reported that the EN contributed to the preparation of a text dealing with European issues that will be submitted to the Ecumenical Assembly by the ICOs [international Catholic organisations] with participatory status at the Council of Europe. This text will be published in EURONEWS 29. No proposal.

- (f) **2nd World Forum for Theology and Liberation Nairobi Jan 2007.** (See the first report published in EURONEWS 28 pp 52- 68). A report had been given the previous day in the course of the study day. Evaristo Villar reported. The relationship between spirituality, religions and values needs to be examined, said François Becker. Many questions have been raised in the workshop dealing with this topic, such as the spirituality as a dimension of human being, spirituality and secular society, feminist spirituality, spirituality and ecology, spirituality and the gospel requirements of justice and eradication of poverty. These questions will be addressed by a working group led by Evaristo Villar with the Spanish network *Redes Cristianas*; this working group was invited to prepare a contribution to the 3rd World Forum for Theology on “spiritualities” to be held in 2009. Those who are interested are invited to contact Evaristo Villar. It was agreed that the present work is not yet sufficient for a publication, but that this forthcoming work with the comments received at Nairobi be published perhaps as a special edition of EURONEWS. Some discussion followed on the place of feminism and women in spirituality. Agreed we concentrate on this in the future.
- (g) **Reports from other workshops** held Friday morning and other matters for decision:
- (1) **EN and IMWAC:** Raquel Mallavibarrena reported that François Becker had been invited to attend the informal IMWAC meeting held here at Lisbon. It was agreed in the meeting that there should be greater collaboration between the two organisations.
- (2) **Base communities and the EN:** Several base communities are members or parts of members of the European Network. The point is to collaborate with the European coordination of the base communities of Europe and to develop more links at this level. François Becker had had an exchange of mails with Pierre Collet who is involved with the coordination of *Base Communities of Europe* and it was agreed that there should be closer collaboration and creation of more links between the two organisations such as attending each other’s meetings. It is proposed that a delegation of the European Network contact the coordination of base communities of Europe and propose to attend the next general assembly of the base communities of Europe and invite a delegation of the coordination of base communities of Europe to attend the EN Conference in Strasbourg. Agreed. The delegation composed of Gerd Wild, François Becker and Martha Heizer is approved.
- (3) **Communications within the EN and with other organisations:** In order to clarify the internal communication it was agreed during the meeting of the Coordinating group, in response to a request by Rachel Mallavibarrena, that
- the addressees of any mail be clearly identified
 - the purpose of any mail be clearly indicated, either as “for action “ or “for information”
 - in the case of a document, be indicated whether it is for internal use or external use
- (4) **EURONEWS:** François Becker reported that he had had some feedback and would in future put EURONEWS on the web site for down-loading rather than send it by e-mail as a huge attachment. Following the recommendations of the working group, he would produce in future four versions, each in one of the following languages (French, German, English and Spanish) with the English text being used where a translation into another language is not available. He asked for people to assist in translation to volunteer but that articles for EURONEWS should if possible be sent to him in all four languages. Deadlines are the beginning of February and October if he has to arrange translation, the end of those months if four language versions are provided. The working group recommended also to include more pictures and make the texts easier to read. This last point is a recommendation to authors. It recommended also that financial accounts and minutes of the business session at annual meetings be no longer published in EURONEWS, but in a separate

information sheet for members only that will be sent by mail and published on the web in the section not available to outsiders.

EURONEWS will then be accessible to everyone, either members or outsiders on the web. Agreed.

- (5) **EN web site:** François Becker reported as web-master and was rather disappointed that apparently few of those present had visited the site, as this affects how high up it appears in the search engines, such as Google. He pointed out that the EN web site has links to all sorts of other organisations and asked these organisations to create a link to ours. He asked for comments on the web site, especially the home page and the topics covered. He needs a constant supply of new information from member groups to keep the web site topical and also needs help with making translations. Illustrations and pictures are welcome. Word and pdf formats acceptable. During the discussion, the use of the term 'catholic' in the web site address was questioned. François Becker and Dorothea Nassabi responded that the address was a decision approved at Wiesbaden and that it was presently important to show that catholic people do not agree necessarily with the institution of the catholic church. A workshop in Strasbourg would be desirable to discuss these matters again.
- (6) **Press Release:** Christian Weisner said the workshop on Sobrino had produced the draft of a relevant press release in English and Spanish and requested by noon that day other suggestions for points that should be included in a second press release. The document prepared for the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome deserves greater publicity. Agreed Christian Weisner be delegated to send out the press release on Sobrino and that any proposals for other matters be given to him before noon and that he proceed with distribution, with assistance from the Portuguese. Christian Weisner asked for help in updating his list of journalists' e-mail addresses.

The meeting broke for coffee from 10.50 to 11.27. [Further reports from workshops were to be taken later in the agenda.]

- (h) **Future activities of the EN** – other proposals: this item was postponed to later in the agenda.

8 **Financial decisions:**

- (a) Budget proposals for 2007 [EN Constitution 5 (c)] had been agreed in Wiesbaden
- (b) Financial contributions for 2007 [EN Constitution 5 (a)] agreed in Wiesbaden – €125 per country with flexibility for countries to give more or less with Czech Republic and Hungary, Italy and Poland exempted. Italy later offered €100 for 2007 and €100 for 2008.
- (c) Budget proposals for 2008: François Becker presented the proposals for 2008 prepared with Gerd Wild in visual form via his computer, displaying also the budget as agreed in Wiesbaden for 2007 and the anticipated budget for 2008 displaying expenditure by projects and income per country as suggested by several members (see Appendix). After discussion and amendments, expected expenditure for 2008 was thus €2,530 against €1,950 for 2007, with an anticipated income of €1,619, a shortfall of €911 which would have to come from our current reserve €3,000 or so. It was emphasized that this shortfall was mainly introduced to support financially the members who could not afford otherwise to attend the Annual Conference of Strasbourg in 2008 The treasurer should try not to exceed the total of €2,530 but groups should be told to make a clear declaration if a full claim is not made so that we are aware of this hidden subsidy. Agreed.

9 **More reports from workshops:**

- (a) Africa: Hugo Castelli reported briefly that a workshop had been set up which would continue its work. Gérard Warengem is to be the contact for this workshop.

(b) The other workshops had been covered earlier in the meeting.

10. **Future activities of the EN – other proposals**

- (a) **Actions regarding COMECE** :Vittorio Bellavite presented the actions at the level of the European Commission of COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community : <http://www.comece.org/>), a lobby of Catholic bishops at the EU directed by the Vatican aiming, in particular, at including God and "Christian roots" in the European constitution, and at giving the Catholic church a particular say in the activities of the European commission. He quoted particularly the report ordered by COMECE on "The Europe of values: the ethical dimension of the European union", recently published in March. He noted that COMECE is not the same as CCEE (Concilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae : <http://www.ccee.ch/>), the Council of European Bishops' Conferences which includes bishops of all countries of Europe, has wider concerns and is more open, nor CEC-KEK (<http://www.cec-kek.org/>), the Conference of the European Churches (grouping all christian churches including Orthodox churches, but not the Catholic Church). CCEE is preparing with CEC-KEK the meeting at Sibiu. VB urged that EN remain concerned and continue to take appropriate action regarding COMECE. Agreed that this is to be co-ordinated by Vittorio Bellavite and to be published in EURONEWS.
- (b) **Objections to the proposed beatification of John Paul II.** Eulalia Gorina spoke about a proposed submission to Rome raising some objections. Vittorio Bellavite or Giovanni Franzoni would be happy to receive further comments.
- (c) No further proposals.

11. **Annual Conference 2008:**

Proposed location: Strasbourg at the Centre Culturel St Thomas, close to the Council of Europe which can be visited during the conference (see EURONEWS 28); three topics for the study day were at first proposed by the French members: 1) Secularisation as a process of liberation of humankind from religious guardianship in political, moral and scientific domains, 2) theology and ecology, 3) immigration and operational co-development. Then a longer list was drawn up during the discussion – Church, religion and State as an extension of the first topic proposed by the French team, Spirituality and Values as a follow up of the work started at Nairobi and pursued by the working group led by Evaristo Villar set up earlier, Ecumenism with an address by Margot Käsmann, a Protestant female bishop from Germany, Feminist spirituality with an address from a female theologian, Ecological issues; After a first indicative vote, the two topics spirituality and Church, religion/State were equally approved. Considering that Strasbourg was the city of the Council of Europe and that the year 2008 will be important regarding the definition of values for Europe and the relationships between religion, churches and the European Union, it was agreed on that for 2008, the topic of the study day will be Church, religion/State (i.e. European institutions).

For 2009, the topic of the study day will be Spirituality and Values, including feminist spirituality

It was noted that IMWAC may make its own decision to organise an additional day before or after the Annual Conference of the EN.

Dates: agreed Thu 01/05 to Sun 04/05 [Ascension Thursday 1 May].

12. **Annual Conference 2009:**

Proposed locations: London – topic of study day to be Spirituality and Values with a strong emphasis on Feminism – dates: Thu 30/04 to Sun 03/05 [Ascension Thursday 21 May]. Agreed

13. **Annual Conference 2010:**

Proposed locations: Austria or Italy mentioned but no formal proposal was made – no discussion of possible topics or dates [Ascension Thursday 13 May]

14. Any other business:

- (1) François Becker proposed a vote of thanks to the Portuguese for arranging the conference, to the interpreters and to those who had organised the study day. Agreed a small presentation be made to Valenti Gonçalves, who had shown us his slum parish, in the name of the EN for his parish
- (2) Maria João Sande Lemos thanked all who had assisted in the preparation of the conference.

The meeting ended at 13.05.

Minutes prepared by Simon Bryden-Brook

18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

REPORT from the EN Secretariat

Since the last Annual Conference, which took place in Lisbon in May 2007, the Secretariat has accomplished the following:

1 Minutes of the Business Session in Lisbon

The various language versions (English, German, French and Spanish) of the MINUTES were published in EURONEWS B1 (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/euronews.html>) and also distributed to member contacts by e-mail.

2 EURONEWS and EURONEWS Bulletin

In accordance with the decisions taken at Lisbon :

- (a) internal information of the EN was published in EURONEWS Bulletins distributed by e-mail and placed on the website in the section accessible only to members. There have been two editions. B1 contained the Lisbon Minutes and Budget, while B2 contained details of the forthcoming Annual Conference in Strasbourg. Each of these bulletins appeared in four editions, one for each language.
- (b) EURONEWS 29 and 30 have been published on the EN website in the public area: (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/euronews.html>). As far as was possible, these have been published in the four EN languages. It has not been possible this year to achieve four separate language editions, because of difficulties encountered in arranging translation. François Becker particularly thanks Hugo Castelli for his efficient translations into and from Spanish. **It is essential (1) that we have a network of translators and an editor for each language edition – German, English and Spanish (2) that deadlines are adhered to. This must be one of the tasks for the workshop planned on this topic for Strasbourg.**

3 Managing the Website (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu>)

The website has been updated periodically but essentially only in the French language version, lacking as we do correspondents for each of the other three languages. This failure obviously affects visits to the site. Since the Lisbon meeting, there has been an average of 600 hits per month up to September 2007, then a sharp increase since October reaching a high of 1,200 per month in January and February. Two thirds of these visits are from the USA and only a minor percentage from the member countries of the EN. They manage 10 to 20 hits a month, with the exception of France and Spain which reach 90 per month. This represents an anomaly that requires attention.

In order to increase the audience of the website, the following are needed:

- (a) **Each EN member group must provide a link to the EN website**
- (b) **A co-webmaster be appointed for Spanish, German and English**
- (c) **An effort be made to communicate updates.**

4 Support to the French team preparing the 2008 Annual Conference

The Secretariat has prepared the AGENDA for the Business Session with the assistance of the Co-ordinating Group and has also, for the first time, produced an Agenda for the meeting of the Co-ordinating Group due to take place on 1 May.

François Becker has assisted the French team preparing the 2008 conference and has been involved in its organisation.

5 Various other initiatives

The Secretariat has co-ordinated the deliberations of the Co-ordinating Group since the last conference in Lisbon and the decisions taken:

- Press release on the Treaty of Lisbon (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/communiquetraitelisbonnefr.pdf>) and the appeal to MEPs "Non à la directive de la honte!" ('No to the shameful directive!' on the retention and expulsion of foreigners).
- Support to the president of the multi-party group in the European Parliament (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/enrefrlettre081asinveld.pdf>)
- Responses to requests from the *INGO Secretariat of the Council of Europe* (dossier of information on the EN and its competences, questionnaire on how INGOs are established in different countries)

Conclusions and recommendations

The work involved in the production of EURONEWS and maintaining the website in four languages is huge and must be shared, as indicated above, namely that:

for EURONEWS

(a) we have a network of translators and an editor for each language edition – German, English and Spanish

(b) deadlines are adhered to. This must be one of the tasks for the workshop planned on this topic for Strasbourg.

for the website

(c) Each EN member group must provide a link to the EN website

(d) A co-webmaster be appointed for Spanish, German and English

(e) An effort be made to communicate updates.

The Secretary-General, who also represents the EN at the *Council of Europe* and the *G31 Group*, can only continue with this work if his recommendations above are acted upon.

François Becker

18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

Report on the relationships with the Council of Europe

by François Becker,
representative of the European Network at the Council of Europe

I) The point on the application to the participatory status

(http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/participatory_status/_Summary.asp#TopOfPage)

The European Network is awarded the participatory status to the Council of Europe from the 1st of January 2008 as proposed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.(cf. http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/SGINF200711_E.asp#TopOfPage). This award is a recognition of the quality of the work done by the European Network , of the interest of what it is doing for the Council of Europe, of its credibility and of its ability to contribute to the works of the Council of Europe and to increase its awareness. The European Network is now part of the 407 INGO enjoying the participatory status.

This implies that the Network organizes itself in such a way that it will be able to meet the requirements and the requests of the Council of Europe, otherwise it would loose its credibility. It is a key point that will be dealt with during the 18th annual conference at Strasbourg.

II) Work done since the Lisbon Conference.

François Becker and Gerd Wild insured the participation of the European Network to the work of the ICO (International Catholic Organisations) that have the participatory status. As well as to the work of the groupings of the INGO of the Council of Europe.

1) Participation to the work of the IOCs preceding the meetings of the groupings of the INGOs of the Council of Europe. Contribution to the third ecumenical assembly at Sibiu.

The IOCs had four meetings since May 2007 : June and October 2007, January and April 2008. It should be noted that the European Network is not an ICO, but that it is always invited to attend these meetings to which it is actively participating and contributing. The last papers published by the ICO were prepared to be submitted to the 3rd ecumenical assembly of Sibiu in Romania (<http://www.eea3.org/>) that took place from the 4th to the 9th of September 2007. These papers are published on the web site of the European Network from which they can be downloaded at the address (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/sibiure.html>). These reports could not be discussed during this assembly that was particularly closed and controlled by the official representatives of the institutions, except during the last plenary session for the writing of the final message where the people succeeded to express itself. This final message can be downloaded from the address:

http://www.chiesacattolica.it//cci_new/PagineCCI/AllegatiArt/2843/FinalmessageEN.pdf

It is worth noticing that the President of the European Commission made an important talk in one of the plenary sessions.

The January meeting was devoted to a reflexion on the 3I colloquium. It was decided to think at the following questions:

- in which respects the motivation change the way of acting ? Is there a christian specificity in actions? Is it to have local people implicated in these actions ?
- is there a specific role of the grass-root christians in the interreligious dialogue, particularly in the frame of the Year 2008, decided to be the year of the dialogue by the European Commission.
- how to better welcome the migrants, particularly at schools ?

2) Contribution to the work of the groupings of INGOs

Detailed minutes of the works of the groupings can be found at the address : (<http://www.coe.int/T/E/NGO/Public/>) To access the information you are interested in, you just have to click on the appropriate items. The European Network attended the 4 meetings of the year of the groupings, as well as the plenary sessions of the INGO. In particular, it supported the following reports and recommendations:

- support the actions proposed to fight the sectarian trends
(cf. http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/Report_studyday_sects_en.asp#TopOfPage)
- support the declaration of the INGOs to support Amnesty International's stand against attacks based on religious doctrine
(<http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/AmnestyDecEng.asp#TopOfPage>)
- support the resolution on the statement by Patriarch Alexi II of Moscow and all of Russia on homosexuality
(http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/Resolution_Patriarch_021007.asp#TopOfPage)
- defense of persons prosecuted by religious institutions because of their sexual orientation in Croatia, Macedonia, Moldavia and Lithuania (action still in progress)

A particular session to present the role of INGOs enjoying the participatory status was organized at the end of the January session. Annelise Oeschger, the president of the INGO-s conference will meet the European Network, during its Annual Conference at Strasbourg to present this role with François Becker.

3) Contribution to the work of the Council of Europe

a) on social cohesion :

The European Network contributed intensively to the work of the G3I and to the organisation of the 3I colloquium with the INGO's Conference (see the report on the work of the G3I below and the summary published in this issue). It is worth noticing that the proceedings of this colloquium are published on the site of the Council of Europe, as well as the summary paper written by François Becker. They can be found at the address:

http://www.coe.int/t/F/Ong/Public/Actes_colloque_3I.pdf

http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/Actes_colloque_3I_V5_en.asp#TopOfPage

b) on intercultural dialogue and its religious dimension

- François Becker was invited to attend the colloquium organised by the Council of Europe from the 22nd to the 24th of June 2007 at Lisbon with the theme : au 24 juin 2007 à Lisbonne sur le thème « Promoting intercultural dialogue: issues and perspectives of the Council of Europe ». Le programme se trouve à l'adresse :

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/lisboa2_EN.asp#TopOfPage

et the speech of the deputy secretary general at the address :

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/DSG_Lisboa2_EN.pdf

See also the report published by François Becker on the web site of the European Network (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/rapportcoejuin07.pdf>)

- François Becker is invited to contribute to the discussion « Religion and intercultural dialogue » during the euromediterranean meeting held at Tanger from 24th to 26th of April 2008 with the North-South center of the Council of Europe.

III Motion

The European Network, aware of the responsibilities given to it by the award of the participatory status commit itself to continue its work and its cooperation with the Council of Europe and to give itself the means to fulfill the mat the best.

It renews for one year the mandate of François Becker, as representative of the European Network to the Council of Europe and confirms Gerd Wild and... as deputies.

The members of the European Network comit themselves to support their representatives to the Council of Europe and to provide them with information and supports as needed fot their work with the Council of Europe.

18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

Report on the Activity as a conviction-based NGO

with the European Union's institutions (EU)

May, 2007-May, 2008

The European Network's activity with the European Union's institutions on a participatory democracy basis continued through participating to the work of the All Party Group Separation of religion and politics (GSRP) in the European Parliament(EP). The Group was specially mobilized toward the institution of an inclusive, balanced and democratic dialogue of the EU with conviction-based organisations, among which the EN/RE carried on taking its place, offering a contribution to a debate being carried out in a fairly tense climate.

1. Events and trends in 2007-2008

The debate on Europe's values (see report 2006-7007) was re-launched on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Rome treaties and the working out of the Lisbon Treaty.

The adoption of this treaty brings provides a legal framework for EU relationships with religions and other conviction-based organisations which these intend make profit of as the EU is from now on bound to maintain a dialogue. Art. 16 C ter of the Treaty takes up Art. 52 of the ex-Constitutional Treaty which opens the possibility of a privileged dialogue as asked/requested by the churches (it does not mention the other religions). The non-confessional organisations on the contrary want/claim to be treated as actors of civil society on a participatory democracy basis (art 8 B ex-47 ECT). The European Network circulated at the end of December, 2007 -in particular to the All Party Group- a press release on the Lisbon Treaty (www.european-catholic-people.eu).

A growing religious pressure is affecting the European and national political life. At the Forum on Religion and Politics held on 27 November 2007 at the EP (see below), Sophie In't Veld, chair of the All Party Group stated : « *Laïcité/secularism is increasingly under pressure. Religion is back in politics. I am specially worried about the so called intercultural dialogue, the topic of the European Union's intercultural Year being prepared for 2008, euphemism for the dialogue between religious leaders, who claim an exclusive right to define the moral values of our society* »,

For its part, on the occasion of the approval of the Lisbon Treaty by the European Council, a Catholic spokesperson, called « *very anticlerical* » the attitude of a minority of European Parliament members (MEPs) (*La Croix*, 25 November, 2007) , that which may be directed against the All Party Group and the MEPs who support it. At the same time the official in charge of the relationships with the conviction-based organisations to the Commission's presidency, taking up the churches' point of view, stated that, unlike the latter, NGOs like enterprises pursue specific interests, this implying that they could not be seen as conviction-based organisations. At the Forum on 27 November the EN/RE representative dissociated himself personally from this outlook and stressed the values that motivate and guide their action. The political pressure of religious conservative forces sometimes united proves to be a cause of tension with the forces committed to the neutrality of EU institutions.

EU dialogue with conviction-based organisations such as it is carried out is still little democratic. The criteria of inclusiveness, equality, transparency and representativeness are not complied with. The Commission and the Parliament, whose current president involves himself into this dialogue only invite, with very few exceptions, high level, mostly male and conservative religious leaders. At the EP , they deliver speeches which are monologues since they are not followed with a debate, as requested by a number of MEPs. « *These are bad signals given to European citizens* », (Sophie In't Veld at the Forum on 27 November). As part of the European Year of the intercultural

dialogue, the presidents of political groups of the EP approved a list of political and religious figures¹ which sparked outrage among MEPs, Sophie In't Veld asked why they only planned an 'intercultural monologue and whether the list of religious leaders could not be widened to include women and non-religious representatives.

2. RE/EN participation in the activity of the All party Group

(<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/groupemultiparti.html>)

The EN/RE attended the meetings on 5 June, 3 July and 10 October then the Forum on 27 November 2007 organised in the EP with CFC (see annex 1: meetings of the Group)

Among the issues addressed in the meetings: the EU dialogue with religions and schools of thought, the Lisbon Treaty, freedom in religion (hearing of ex-muslims), religions and education. The Group is interested in intercultural dialogue and its convictional dimension, in the programme of the EU Intercultural year in 2008. On 18 September, 2007, it tabled a parliamentary question about a funding the Polish government had decided to grant within the framework of a European programme to the High School for social and media culture belonging to the same group as the television chain Tran and Radio Maryja, which have a great political influence and whose leader, Tadeusz Ryszyk, is well-known for its anti-semitic, homophobic and anti-european stances. The EN/RE sent to the Group information received from members of our Poland team on the subject. The government stemmed from the latest election cancelled the subsidy²

The chairwoman of the Group sent to the presidents of the EP, the European Council the Commission a series of letters on « art 15 ter » dialogue. A letter of 10 April, 2007 to the president of the EP, which the EN/RE supported by a letter of 30 April to the president of the EP. Hans-Gerd Pöttering addressed an argued answer which we can understand as a sign of recognition of the EN/RE as a conviction-based organisation. During the exchange which took place on 3 July, with a wide attendance (between 50 and 80 people), explicitly mentioned the European Humanist Federation and the EN/RE. The letter of 10 April was followed in May by a letter to all 3 presidents. These letters call to broadening the dialogue beyond religious leaders, criticise the invitation made to the pope to address the EP without planning a debate³. The letter to the president of the EP (10 April) invited him to meet the Group with a view to exchanging views. We also actively contributed to the exchange which took place on 10 October between the Group and the EP representatives to the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)⁴.

Just before the signature of the Lisbon Treaty, in a letter to the presidents of the Parliament, the Council and the Commission of 12 December⁵ (see Annex 2) **the Group called to an 'article 15' dialogue structured in compliance with the criteria laid down in the Treaty for all civil society organisations. It reiterated its recommendation to all three EU institutions to broaden the dialogue to leaders of non-confessional organisations, such as European Humanists -a première- and representatives of liberal religious groupings and to see that women be represented. It also suggested a list of issues to be put on the agenda⁶.** The EN/RE supported this stance (letter of January, 2008 to the chairwoman of the Group). In effect the battle against Article 52 being lost and that

¹ EUobserver, 15 January, 2008

² Le Monde 24 janvier 2008

³ We also forwarded to the chairwoman of the All Party Group our letter of 30 April, 2007 to the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) about the invitation made to the pope to address this assembly

⁴ Correspondence with the chairwoman of the Group about art. 15 ter

⁵ Letter of 12 December, 2007

⁶ Racism, xenophobia, extremism, gender discrimination and violence against women, homophobia and violence against LGBT persons, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, discrimination in education, sexual and reproductive health, role that churches and non-confessional organisations can play as they address these issues

on references to cultural, religious and humanist heritages won, the claim is now that of a democratic dialogue on an equal footing with civil organisations.

3. A break-through of the base Christians and the Humanists with European institutions

Admission to participatory status at the Council of Europe brings a reference for our relationships with EU institutions. The 3i colloquium was appreciated and will be followed by a colloquium to which religious and humanist conviction-based organisations – including feminist ones – will be invited (cf. the report on G3I's activity in this issue of EURONEWS)

At the EP the Forum on 'Religion et politics in the new Europe' (Brussels, 27 November, 2007).organised by the **All Party Group with Catholics for Choice** and the support of the socialist group and MEPs belonging to other political parties offered the EN/RE an opportunity to have its voice publicly heard by a widely pluralist attendance of about a hundred people (1/5 coming from the Parliament and the Commission, 2/5 NGO representatives, 2/5 academics and experts). HT was invited to speak about the topic 'secularism and faith' (a report on the Forum and the text of the presentation were circulated to the Coordinating Group in December, 2007).

The Commission made a step forward towards broadening the dialogue beyond religious institutions. The BEPA7 invited the European Humanist Federation to organise as part of the EU intercultural Year, in Brussels on 16 April, 2008 a colloquium on the topic: « *Human rights and secularism/laïcité, undissociable values* » (among the three sub-themes: *religion, politics, secularism/laïcité*). JM. Barroso is to speak as he did at the 3rd Ecumenic Assembly of the Churches in Europe (Sibiu, September, 2007). **The Humanist European federation invited François Becker, as Secretary General of the European Network to contribute to the round table on the topic religion, politics, secularism/laïcité.** Vittorio Bellavite, Bernard Quelquejeu, Hubert Tournès were to attend. A long time was scheduled for a general discussion.

Encouraged by this context and the success of the colloquium held in Strasbourg in October, 2007, the G3i is studying, as a possible follow-up, a project of colloquium to be held around the years 2009-2010 on the theme :« Europe: Convictions and democratic expressions in public life ». This colloquium could be a joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Union (commission and parliament). It will be submitted to Bruxelles on due time.

The dialogue and collaboration developed between Humanist organizations, other ones of various religions and cultures -including feminist organisations- put all of them in a better situation to be parties in the dialogue that the EU is now bound to maintain with conviction-based organisations.

The question, raised by the previous report, of EN/RE's possible participation in the EU dialogue as a convictional organisation now arises in relation with the Lisbon Treaty which lays down a specific legal framework for the dialogue with this category of organisations which we belong to. It is proposed to answer positively to this question, owing to the current overtures in parliament and Commission and without slacking off the mobilization with a view to a dialogue complying with democratic criteria laid down in the Treaty.

⁷ . Bureau European of European policy advisers of the Commission, in charge of relations with religious institutions

DRAFT RESOLUTION

1. *The EN/RE shall pursue its activity as a conviction-based organisation with the institutions of the European Union as a party in the EP All Party Group*
2. *Are approved:*
 - a) *the principle of a participation in the setting up by the 3i Group of a colloquium in Brussels in 2009/10, if possible within the EU Commission and Parliament) and the Council of Europe frameworks*
 - b) *the principle of a possible participation in a democratic dialogue with the EU institutions as a convictional organisation within the framework defined by the Lisbon Treaty*
3. *The team 'European Institutions' is in charge of carrying out [among others] the above decisions*
4. *Form part of the team....; Mandate is given to .. represent the EN/RE in the EP All Party Group*

Rapport presented by : Hubert Tournès

Seconded by: François Becker, Vittorio Bellavite, Hugo Castelli, Elfriede Harth, Matthias Jakubec, Maria Joao Sande Lemos, Ana Vicente, Gerd Wild

ANNEX 1 Meetings of the All Party Group in 2007-2008

Since our meeting in Lisbon the Groupe held 5 meetings:

5 June, 2007 (report to the Coordinating Group, Enws 29, p. 37) : Dialogue between churches, religions and non-confessional organisations and the European Parliament _Invitation to pope Benedict XVI

3 July, 2007 (report to the Coordinating Group, Enws 29, p. 39) : Exchange of views with the president of the EP, Hans-Gert Pöttering on the intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The EN/RE and the EHF advocated a dialogue opened to non-religious convictional organisations and with base religious organisations.

12 September, 2007 : Hearing of representatives of national organisations of ex-muslim organisations (DE, R-U, NL)

10 October, 2007 (report to the Coordinating Group, Enws 30) : Exchange with two of the three EP representatives to the IGC about the Lisbon Treaty . The EN/RE and the EHF expressed their critics on taking up Article .52 and its shifting from the Chapter on participatory democracy to that on policies in the Treaty on the functioning of the Union, possibly entailing inclusion into the state sphere , a breach of the principle of separation of religion and state . They advocated Art. 52 be lined up to that relating to dialogue with civil society organisations, thanks to taking up the criterium of representativeness.

29 January, 2008: religions and education.

ANNEX 2 Letter from the EP All Party Group Separation Religion Politics] Strasbourg, 12 December 2007

To Mr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament. To Mr. José Manuel Durao Barroso President of the European Commission, To Mr. José Sócrates, President in office of the Council of the European Union, To Mr. **Janez Janša** Incoming President in office of the Council of the European Union

Re: Dialogue with churches and non-confessional organisations under art. 15 EU Treaty

Dear Sirs, In recent years, the three EU institutions have organised regular High Level meetings with religious leaders. On different occasions we have expressed our concern about the format of these meetings. The EU institutions should be seen to be neutral, and no organisation, religious or otherwise should have privileged access to the EU institutions and have privileged influence on the decision-making process.

Freedom of religion and freedom of conscience are fundamental rights in the European Union. They can only be guaranteed in a secular context. It is unbecoming for any of the EU institutions to provide an exclusive platform to any particular grouping, including religions, in particular as the majority of European citizens are not religious or no longer practice their religion. Thus millions of individual citizens do not have a voice in the dialogue.

The new Reform Treaty has integrated the paragraph from the Constitutional Treaty stipulating an "open, regular and transparent" dialogue with churches and non confessional organisations.

Churches and non confessional organisations have an important voice in the dialogue with civil society. Therefore the dialogue with churches and non confessional organisations should meet the same criteria as the dialogue with other civil society organisations, notably on transparency. Therefore we reiterate our recommendation that such meetings take place in public and that the agenda and meeting documents are published beforehand and the minutes and the conclusions and the names of the participants afterwards.

Furthermore, the dialogue must be inclusive and representative. So far, the meetings were attended by religious leaders only, representing the most conservative strands of religions and churches, and all male. We therefore recommend to:

Invite leaders of non confessional organisations, such as the European humanists

Invite representatives of liberal, progressive religious groupings

Ensure that women are represented too and demand an effort from the participants in this respect

Finally we suggest an agenda that deals with issues such as racism, xenophobia, extremism, gender discrimination and violence against women, homophobia and violence against LGBT people, freedom of

speech and freedom of religion, discrimination in education, sexual and reproductive health, and the role churches and non confessional organisations can play in addressing these issues. Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the All Party Working Group on the Separation of Religion and Politics,

Sophie in 't Veld

Karin Resetarits

Magda Kosane Kovacs

Chair

Vice Chair

Vice Chair

Report on the interconvictional activities of the European Network in the frame of the G3I working group

Summary of the Colloquium 3I

Relationships Society Convictions

by François Becker

The Intercultural, International, Interconvictional working group G3I, was born in March 2006 under the impulse of the European Network, in order to prepare the colloquium that was suggested during the Madrid conference in 2005 and confirmed by the Wiesbaden Conference in May 2006. The G3I is composed of members of associations of Jewish, Muslim Christian and humanist cultures, as well as of believers, atheists and agnostics. Since the Lisbon conference, the G3I met two times in 2007 to finalise the 3I colloquium and then two times to draw the conclusions from the 3I colloquium and to prepare the follow-up of the work.

The key point of the activity in 2007 was the running the 3rd of October at University Marc Bloch and the 4th of October at the Council of Europe of the 3I colloquium on the theme : « **Social cohesion in a multicultural Europe, role and impact of currents of thoughts and religions** » The success of this colloquium was one of the elements that gave its credibility to the European Network allowing it to get the participatory status of the Council of Europe. A summary of this colloquium was published as an article by the journals Parvis (issue Lettre 1) and Diasporiques (issue of March 2008). This article can be downloaded in French from the European Network website at the address :(<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/articlecolloque3i.pdf>). This paper is copied below. The proceedings in French are published on the European Network website and can be downloaded from the address (<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/actecolloque3i.pdf>). These proceedings are also published on the website of the Council of Europe at the address:

http://www.coe.int/t/f/ong/public/Actes_colloque_3I.pdf) and

http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/Actes_colloque_3I_V5_en.asp#TopOfPage

The G3I decided

1) to continue its work and to organize a colloquium in the years 2009 or 2010 on the theme : « **Europe: Convictions and democratic expressions in public life** ». The G3I is thinking at running this colloquium at Brussels, if possible in cooperation with the BEPA (Bureau of European Political Advisors) to demonstrate its willingness to work as well with the Council of Europe as with the European Commission, as a complementary actions to what the European Network is doing in the frame of the multiparty group religion and politics of the European parliament (see the previous report)

2) to enlarge its memberships to more European countries and to people with more different convictions.

ANNEX An international, intercultural and interconvictional colloquium: « Social cohesion in a multicultural Europe : Role and impact of religions and currents of thought »

(article published in la lettre n° 1 de Parvis and in the March 2008 issue of Diasporiques) It is placed on the website of the European Network and of that one of the Council of Europe

http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/Actes_colloque_3I_V5_en.asp#TopOfPage

by François Becker

Why does the message of love and fraternity delivered by all religions, induce some believers and religions to behave in contradiction with the message ? Why does not this message drive always the believers and their institutions to develop social cohesion, as the current reality shows it? Why do men and women leave themselves to be misled by those who instrumentalize religion ? While Europe goes on enlarging, with a growing cultural and religious diversity, and less and less believers, what can be done to build a cohesive Europe in accordance with democracy and human rights ? Which values are to be shared, which attitudes are to be adopted?

These are some of the questions which the colloquium tried to answer. The G3I, an intercultural, international and interconvictional working group and the Council of Europe's NGO Conference organised this colloquium with a view to remedy to the fact that European institutions as a rule only consult with religious hierarchies, thus neglecting the differences sometimes important of thought, culture and understanding the social realities between the hierarchies and the grass-roots, and also the contributions from currents of thought that do not refer to religious convictions. The colloque was held in Strasbourg and attended by 150 to 200 people, first at Marc Bloch Université on 3 October in the evening where it was welcomed by Pr. B. Michon, President of the University , then at the Council of Europe on 4 October all day long where they were welcomed by Ms. Farrell, head of the Conseil de l'Europe's Division for Social cohesion and Ms. Oeschger, President of the OING Conference.

It is impossible to report in a few words on this rich and dense colloquium the proceedings of which are about to be published. Giving voice to European citizens, whether atheists, agnostics or believers or not to institutions, and allowing a dialogue between individuals of different convictions rather than between communities, this colloquium allowed to publicize experiences bringing social cohesion and to show, with examples and testimonies, that associations, Non-Governmental Organisations, characterized by the diversity of their members, are able to offer original reflexions and contributions that need to be taken into account while building up a cohesive society.

From the start the colloquium pointed out that the growing cultural, religious or convictional plurality of Europe and its democratic context imply that, if the religions and currents of thought can and must express themselves, none of them may either claim to prevail over the others nor get hold of the state's apparatus and conversely. « The law protects faith as long as faith does not want to lay down the law ». In effect history has shown that, if the union of religion (or current of thought) and state was a source of cohesion for the followers of the state religion or current of thought, it led to excluding the other people, which makes it impossible for the state to build up cohesion in a multicultural and multiconvictional society .

The colloquium emphasized the fact that this cohesion can only be achieved within the framework of what the Council of Europe calls « european laïcité » that is : separation of the secular and the sacred, separation of the spiritual and the temporal, freedom of conscience, thought and religion, same rights and same duties for the citizens, whatever their religion or philosophical reference, and autonomy of the states and religious communities in their relations. The Council of Europe adds that the fundamental values on which Europe is founded : human rights, democracy and the rule of law are not negociable in the relations with religions and currents of thought.

As was stressed by Philippe Lazar in the conclusion of the colloquium one of the keys of social cohesion is the dissociation of two spaces. The concret space of individuals, each one being as important and deserving respect as the other, each one unique by his own history, and the abstract space of references and representations: cultures, religions, states, symbols. The space of individual is private, inviolable. The other space, the social space, belongs to all ; no individual and no religion or current of thought may take it over and reduce it to their own vision without risking communitarism, exclusion or totalitarianism. Thus there is no opposition between the individual and society.

In this way it can be hoped to avoid the perversions of the relation of each individual which B. Quelquejeu called the « Ultimate »: perversion of his identity search (all ideologies and the attitudes based on the denial of differences : racisms, antisemitisms, race exaltation, genocides, aggressive nationalisms, exacerbated imperialisms, extreme communitarisms), perversion of his

search for sense (pathology of certainty : dogmatic fanatisms, proud sectarisms, frenzied messianisms and all kinds of claiming monopoly of access to truth), perversions resulting in violence (all forms of repression of deviants or heretics, Inquisition going as far as capital executions, goulags, autodafés, ordalies, fatwas calling to murder, etc.) as was demonstrated by heart-rending testimonies. This does not mean that a cohesive society composed of free individuals, of different, possibly having divergent interests or visions would be a society without tension or conflicts : it is a society in which these tensions and conflicts are managed in a democratic and non violent way, respecting the individuals and their dignity, respecting also the fundamental values accepted by all, hence the imperious need to teach and transmit them. The colloquium showed a number of examples of this.

1. François Becker, vice-president of DLE represents the Fédération des réseaux des Parvis in the European Network Church on the move, of which he is the Secretary General and the representative at the Council of Europe. He thanks Jean Riedinger and Didier Vanhoutte for rereading attentively the manuscript and for their comments.

2. « Social cohesion is the ability of a society to ensure welfare to all its members, to minimize disparities and avoid polarisation. A cohesive society is a solidary community composed of free individuals pursuing common aims through democratic ways ». (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, 31 March , 2004).

3. The G3I gathers associations of Humanist culture, gathered in the European Humanist Federation, an association of Muslim culture, the Manifeste des Libertés, an association of Jewish culture, the Cercle Gaston Crémieux, the International league of Teaching, Education and Culture and associations of Christian convictions, gathered in the Fédération des réseaux du Parvis and the European Network Church on the Move.

4. *Interconvictional* est is a word created by the G3I to mean that are concerned in this colloquium not only believers belonging to various religions but also humanists, agnostics or atheists having convictions different from religious ones.

5. The NGO Conference of the Council of Europe groups round 400 associations enjoying participatory status granted by the Council of Europe.

18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

Workshop : Ministerial Priesthood, and relationships with NAF

1) European Network invited to become a member of the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Priesthood.

Founded at a meeting in Wiesbaden in August 2003, The North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Priesthood was originally a grouping of national associations of married Catholic priests including CORPUS (National Capital Region) in Canada, CORPUS, FCM RC Faith Community Council and the International Society of the Apostles, Saints Peter and Thomas, all in the USA, and groups in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Ireland and the Netherlands. (The totally separate and distinct *European Federation of Married Catholic Priests* is a member of the *European Network, Church on the Move*.)

The NAF believes that a radical renewal of the ministerial priesthood is needed which goes far beyond the abandonment of mandatory celibacy for the clergy and the re-admission to public ministry of married priests. For this reason it has recently welcomed into membership the US *Women's Ordination Conference* and it would welcome the lay-led *European Network* as a member.

Simon Bryden-Brook, in his capacity as member of the EN Secretariat, has been an observer member of the Board of the NAF since its inception and would welcome greater involvement in the work of the NAF by EN member groups. A conference is planned to take place in Vienna 6-9 November 2008 on the topic *A Future for Gods People - Service responding to Needs*. EN would be entitled to send three voting delegates if it became a member of the NAF.

Open to critical thinking and pastoral reform in all aspects of Catholic teaching, the NAF believes that the Catholic Church must accept that its ministries are effectively human creations and thus open to being radically re-envisioned by modern Catholics.

Recognising the growth in lay ministries in the Catholic Church and the urgent need to right the injustices of mandatory celibacy and the exclusion of women from ordained ministry, the NAF believes that new forms of ordained ministry must be developed, where clericalism, patriarchy and power abuse have no place.

The EN is invited to join the member groups of the NAF in this radical work and this proposal will be considered at the Annual Conference in Strasbourg in May 2008.

2) Excerpts of the STATUTES of the European Federation of Catholic Married Priests (for information)

Article 3 : Objectives and perspectives

The particular aim of the European Federation is the renewal of ministries with a view to the renewal of the church as it works towards a more just world.

The Federation wishes to promote this awareness and commitment. The groups who are members of the Federation consider it necessary to renew the ministries within the Catholic Church particularly in the following directions :

1. There should be an absolute priority of the person over the law :

- A refusal of all discrimination, whether due to marriage, gender, age or sexual orientation.
- The suppression of any obligatory link between one's status in life and one's function, particularly the obligation of celibacy for priests.
- The right of everyone, including the priest, to exercise whatever profession he desires, to choose his social commitments and to strive in the political arena.
- The granting of all dispensations at the time of a change of status or function for reasons of conscience.

2. There should be an absolute priority of the community over the ministries :

- The right of the community to benefit from the ministries which are suited to it.
- Freedom of access to functions, ministries and services whenever the community feels the need and demands it.

3. There should be a dimension of democratic sharing :

- A recognition of the fundamental equality of all the baptised as the basis of a truly democratic order and of a participation at all levels of decision making.
- An insistence on the obligations linked to every engagement in responsibility and service.

4. There should be solidarity with every struggle for justice :

- An option for the poor and the marginalised in our countries and in the third world.
- Support for the struggle to recognise the equality of women and men in the church.
- A welcome for and help for priests in the process of secularisation and to women and children who are victims of the law of celibacy.

Article 4 : Members

The members of the Federation are the different member groups. Though diverse, these groups are composed, at least in part, of married priests and their wives, or historically they have been constituted as such. These groups can be open to others who share their objectives. They have in common also their European setting and their willingness to respond in a collaborative fashion which is linked to the objectives of the Federation.

These groups participate in the Federation on the following conditions:

- Agreement with the objectives and respect for the statutes of the Federation.
- Acceptance of their candidature by the committee of the Federation.
- Payment of the annual subscription fixed by the committee.

Article 5 : The Organisation of the Federation

1. The European Federation functions in the form of a coordinating committee which is made up of representatives of the member groups. Each group will send one delegate for a minimal period of two years.

2. In its work the committee will always seek for a consensus. Where there is a difficulty and one is obliged to take a vote, each country has three votes, whatever the number of groups it represents. Decisions are then taken according to a two thirds majority of those countries present or represented.

3. The decisions have force of law for the member groups.

4. The committee designates internally a president, a secretary and a treasurer.

5. The committee meets at least once a year on the invitation of the president and the secretary.

6. The expenses for the working of the committee are the responsibility of the Federation, but the expenses of the members are the responsibility of the groups who send them.

3) Position of Evaristo Villar about ministries

Simon Bryden-Brook is proposing in our Annual Meeting in Strasbourg in May that the EN/RE joins the North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Priesthood. Iglesia de Base de Madrid believes that Simon's proposal should be debated in a workshop to discuss the whole nature of the priesthood bearing in mind the proposals of the Dutch Dominicans (cf. <http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/followupdominicains.html>) and the practical experience of Community Priesthood re-instituted in the grassroots Christian Community of St. Tomas Aquinas in Madrid 5 years ago by Evaristo Villar, celibate priest and theologian, co-founder of the Spanish Association of Male and Female Theologians John XXIII, Iglesia de Base de Madrid and Redes Cristianas and which is proving such a rewarding experience for our community so I asked Evaristo to describe the theological justification for the Community Priesthood and here are his comments:

“The Priesthood

When we think of a priest nowadays, we automatically think of an ordained man belonging to the hierarchy carrying out a specific ministry but originally the role of the “Hierarchical” priest was quite different. In this article, Evaristo describes the development of the priesthood in three historical moments.

1. Firstly during the generation of the New Testament, we can observe a tendency to the formation of hierarchies in the process of the Christian experience becoming increasingly complex. But we can conclude that the most important fact in those times was that everybody was convinced that Christians were a “ Priestly People” (Peter I, vv2, 9 & following) since the Faith embodied the priesthood of Christ, the only priest. In this process of development of the New Testament we can clearly make out two distinct levels of priesthood, intimately related to each other but with one having much more importance. The “*koinonia*” or Community Priesthood of a Priestly People and the “*diakonia*” or ministerial, functional priesthood. Both of these are complementary and necessary but the ministers of the diakonia were responsible to the community or koinonia.

2. With the enlargement of the Church from the 3rd Century to the Council of Trent in the XVth Century, the *diakonía* gradually superimposed itself on the *koinonia* and the Ministerial or Hierarchical Priesthood completely cancelled out the concept of the Community Priesthood. Indeed, the Council of Trent, in a reaction against Martin Luther, decreed that the Hierarchical Priesthood was a sacrament instituted by Christ for the Eucharist and the Forgiveness of Sins that imprints character on the candidate for ordination. In this way, the priestly ministry evolved into “Magisterium” and the ordained Hierarchical Priest became separated from and superior to the community as a whole and especially with respect to the ordinary members of the faithful.

3. The 2nd Vatican Council found that the Church had been sequestered by the hierarchy and the “Community Priesthood” had been completely forgotten. The Constitution *Lumen Gentium* was forced to debate the subject to try and restore the Community Priesthood to its original purpose in the New Testament. In this way, the Council Fathers reaffirmed the mutual relationship between both types of priesthood: The Community Priesthood of the believers and the Ministerial or Hierarchical Priesthood, although different in essence and not only in degree mutually ordain each other since both participate in the sole priesthood of Christ (LG 10).

It is important to underline that, in the context the Council was describing, the most important element of the phrase is the “mutual ordination” in which the “Community Priesthood” belongs to the essential or prime dimension of the Church, the *koinonía*, into which we are integrated by Baptism whilst the “Ministerial or Hierarchical Priesthood”, is a service or function and takes second place as the name *diakonía* implies. The Community Priesthood is the objective and the Ministerial Priesthood, the means to get there. That is why Rahner is of the opinion that “the Community Priesthood, seen from this angle, is superior”. The Ministerial Priesthood has no value “in itself” unless it serves the

Community of the Priestly People. The only theological reason for the Ministerial Priesthood of priests and bishops is in its union with the constituent reality of the koinonia, which by Faith and Baptism is united with the sole priesthood of Christ.”

4) A reflexion from Anthony Padovano

of *The North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood* and the *International Movement We Are Church*]

It seems to me that three great Catholic reform movements have come out of Europe following the Second Vatican Council [1962-65]:

1. *The International Federation of Married Catholic Priests*
2. *The International Movement We Are Church*
3. *The European Network Church on the Move*

The oldest of these is *The International Federation of Married Catholic Priests* with which I, as a married priest in the USA, have been closely involved over the years. North Americans and Europeans, together with Latin America and some countries in Asia, found strength and common cause in redefining priesthood and making it more responsive to the needs of God’s People.

The International Movement We Are Church is a lay movement of baptised Christians, originating in Austria, who seek the reform of priesthood and ministry but who struggle for reforms across a broad horizon of issues, reforms even more urgent than a reformed priesthood. *IMWAC* led many of my colleagues and me into a strong sense of solidarity with God’s People and into a larger vision for the Church and the human family. It led many of us in the *North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood* to include in our membership women and laity in numbers that equal or surpass those who once served as clerics. We believe and hope that the participation of married priests groups in *IMWAC* also contributes something to their growth as we work as sisters and brother in a common endeavour.

The European Network Church on the Move, about to meet for its 18th annual conference, has always been for many of us in the USA and the married priests organisations a movement we admired, a movement that inspired us. So enamoured of it were we that, from the first day of the founding of the *North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood* in 2003, we invited Simon Bryden-Brook to be our liaison with the *European Network Church on the Move*, to sit on our Executive Committee and help us to shape a vision in line with how the *EN* sees the world and the Church.

We come to the *EN* meeting in Strasbourg, grateful to be invited, eager to work in closer collaboration with you. We in the *NAF* ask you to enter into formal relationship with us so that we can benefit from your wisdom and charisms and, perhaps too, so that you might benefit from getting to know us and working with us.

The whole intent of Vatican II was collegiality and inclusivity. We, who have gained so much from our European colleagues in the *IFMCP* and in *IMWAC*, ask you to help us encounter a wider way of seeing our common future by our working together more closely.

I believe that these three movements have come from God’s Spirit. I know that they have all given me hope and courage. I shall be at your meeting in Strasbourg and I trust that you will find a place for us at your table by joining in the work of the *NAF*. You have no idea how much that would mean to us.

18th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

Workshop : Spirituality and follow up of the work for Nairobi

1) Report on workshop about Nairobi

At Lisbon, the European Network recommended the publication of a special issue of EURONEWS devoted to the workshop about Nairobi. It turned out that the 24 contributions from groups and individuals to the workshop amounted to 120 pages and it was too heavy a work for our capabilities to present such a long text in the four languages of the European Network.

We think however that the European network could benefit from the work done at Iglesia de Base de Madrid to summarise these contributions in order to introduce them in the workshop spirituality of the Conference of Redes Cristianas.

What we have done is to summarise each of the 24 contributions in one page and then to gather the coincidences in a document of 7 pages that is presented below.

The workshop Spirituality of the Conference of Redes Cristianas worked with the support of 77 people divided in two sub-workshops. There is still a group of 24 persons willing to continue the workshop Spirituality who are living in different parts of Spain and in foreign countries; therefore the workshop will continue by emails and only in Spanish.

The workshop spirituality cannot dedicate itself to feminist spirituality because most of the participants are males, but the European Network is rich in cultures, organisations and people able to think and it is to them to develop this new theology.

Analysis, as an example, of the contribution of François Becker, *Secrétaire General of the European Network Church on the Move and member of Parvis:*

I value:	The provocative approach to share a <i>trialectic</i> vision (religion-spirituality-Convictions) between religions & beliefs.
I disagree:	I do not understand the use of the word <i>epistemology</i> (the search for scientific origins) in this context. I find it strange that the text does not talk of the faith nor about what makes Jesus different.
I propose:	A greater in-depth study to arrive at an acceptable declaration for the European Network
<u>1st Chapter</u>	
I value	I agree that the development of religions helped to found and strengthen civilizations. Now there is a contradiction between the abandonment of religions and an admiration for their wisdom, ethic codes, etc.
I disagree	With the idea that now is a specially critical time for religions. Throughout history, there have always been moments of crisis. We must not abandon what Jesus tells us about ourselves.
I propose	A more profound reflection about the search for a truth in construction rather than an exclusive vision which compares old and new forms of beliefs. (François explains his classes in the Space University where he shows his pupils how to grasp a part of the truth)
<u>2nd Chapter</u>	

I value:	The provocative approach to share a <i>trialectic</i> vision (religion-spirituality-Convictions) between religions & beliefs.
I value	I agree with the text on the development of religions and with the Twelve Theses of Spong.
I disagree	With the massive abandonment of Christians from their Churches. You have to make a more rigorous analysis. What is a Christian? Likewise, I am surprised there is no mention of the historical rupture related to the personalization of the relationship with God, as promoted by Jesus.
I propose	A greater study on the differences between belief and faith.
<u>3rd Chapter</u>	
I value	The golden rule in its positive formulation but you must also maintain the negative formulation. (François cites the golden rule in the Hindu-Brahmanist, Confusionist, Taoist, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, Islamic and Bahaist religions.
I disagree	With the application today of the golden rule because if it was really valid, there would be no wars and no poverty.
I propose	We must always remember how Jesus applied the golden rule.
<u>4th Chapter</u>	
I value	A lay people's spirituality (not developed by clergy) because, Jesus was a lay person; provided this lay spirituality can transcend.
I disagree	With the second question because it forgets to mention convictions and my convictions are what confirm my faith in Jesus.
I propose	A greater in-depth study about an “adult, critical spirituality without beliefs or myths, etc” taking into account that if we limit its communication with humanity, we are converting it into a belief.

FINAL SUMMARY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NAIROBI 2007 TEXT

17 Contributions

9 - By Chapters

8 - Global

Method employed:

1. We made a summary of each of the contributions which evaluated each chapter summarising each one, following the schema: a) We value; b) We disagree; & c) We propose.
2. We made our FINAL SUMMARY by synthesizing the one-page texts using the presentation made by the Base Community of Nuevas Palomeras (Madrid) since its answers to the questions on each chapter was the most complete. We placed a number in brackets after the text to indicate the coincidences with other contributions and we also added other summaries of other texts due to their importance or opinion, even though they were not based on a chapter by chapter study.
3. As the global contributions are difficult to summarise by chapters, we summarised them, as a whole, using the same method of: a) We value; b) We disagree; & c) We propose.
4. We also introduced other proposals not directly related with the contents of the Nairobi text.

5. Finally, under “Terminology Questions”, we suggest other words that can be used instead of “spirituality” and we emphasize the need to use them correctly to facilitate understanding and dialogue.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY CHAPTERS

Chapter 1. After Exclusivism

a) We value

The justifiable criticism made of the official Church which has made Christianity, throughout history, an element of domination, intolerance and estrangement; (5)

The superation of the attitudes of both exclusivism and inclusivism since they presuppose a degree of superiority that prevents a true dialogue on a basis of equality;(7)

The sharing of a trialectic vision (religion-spirituality-convictions); (2)

The humanity of Jesus which is *the axis and configurating principle* of all Christian activity. (3)

b) We disagree

- That the task of religions is to “disappear and be replaced by uncontrolled spiritualities”; (2)
- With the possibility of a spirituality without religion since we cannot consider possible “a spirituality liberated from all kinds of beliefs and religions”;
- We cannot see that all religions are equal and have the same values. An equalizing relativism does not appear to us to be either correct nor is it the solution to the problem of pluralism; Furthermore, it reduces Jesus as a person to being just another human being.
- With displacing the traditional vision of Christianity and forgetting about its origins.

- We propose

- That religions do not have to disappear but rather “develop the thesis of divine transcendence in a way that coincides with a more radical humanization”;
- To confirm that being without religion does not mean being without spirituality;
- To recognise differences and cultivate dialogues which is the most real and positive way of building peace in the world; (4)
- We are aware of the existence of theologians who propose a more balanced religious pluralism, without ceding to the relativistic idea that “all things are equal”. We should get to know these opinions.
- To reconfirm our faith in Jesus as the presence of God, the incarnation of God and the saving action of God in the world; (4)
- To apply the *New Man* of the historical Jesus to our context of today; (4)
- To simplify our creeds to approach people of different religions (2); We have to accept ourselves in the different aspects of Catholicism since sometimes the “internal pluralism” is more difficult than the “external one”.

Chapter 2. After religion

a) We value

- In many occasions, the beliefs, rites and norms of religions have been and are oppressive especially when they are controlled by a clerical elite. (3)
- The distinction between spirituality and religions: One thing is the religious experience, essential for human beings, whilst quite another is what specific religions have become and which are relative and can be modified. (4)
- Human conduct which implies religiosity and spirituality and does not necessarily have to separate them.

- We agree with the development of religions and with the Twelve Theses of Spong

b) We disagree

- Although religions have negative elements, not everything about them is bad. Beliefs, rites, moral norms, etc., can be criticised and modified but cannot be eliminated just like that. The religious experience always has to become a part of people and societies to be real and effective and that is what religions are. (6)
 - That the crisis of religions announces their end but it does mean they have to be modified;
 - With the comment about the massive abandonment of Christians from their Churches; You have to make a more rigorous analysis. What is a Christian? Likewise, I am surprised there is no mention of the historical rupture related to the personalization of the relationship with God, as promoted by Jesus.
 - It is not religion that is no longer valid but the world of money, the consumer economy and individualism that rules in our world. The text does not mention this.
 - With the statement: “Humanity has lived the greater part of its existence without religions but not without spirituality” because it is illogical to apply the term “religion” to the beliefs and religiosity of the Neolithic Era since this paints a negative picture of religion.
 - Jesus lived in an agrarian world but, even so, he had an exceptional experience of God and he dedicated himself solely to his fellow human beings and especially to the underprivileged. Oscar Romero and Theresa of Calcutta also lived their religions with an agrarian mentality and with an enormous generosity.
 - With the statement that “ Ancient, pre-technical, infantilised religion, or whatever we want to call it, is no obstacle for a profound religious experience and does nothing to prevent a very personal, purified and engaged spirituality.”

- We propose

- Jesus criticised the religion of his time and wanted to show the true image of God which had been concealed and misrepresented by the religious authorities. We propose that the Gospel should always be the criterion for evaluating a religion and searching continuously for a religious expression that best responds to the God of Jesus.
- To think in new concepts, images and beliefs to configurate the religious world;
- You can live without religion or beliefs when these are foreign to you but you cannot live without faith in values for which you fight for human beings and which give a meaning to life. (2)
- To search for a spirituality orientated towards the humiliated people of this Earth; (2)
- To give a more positive meaning to what are called agrarian, pre-technical religions...;
- “To respect and accept ... and love our neighbour, we have to elaborate a lifestyle which can be sustained with a spirituality and beliefs and even with a liberating religion”;
- To challenge all religions and people of goodwill to ensure that Human Rights are complied with everywhere in the world.

Chapter 3. An essential spirituality: Love-Justice-Liberation

a) We value

- The “golden rule” which forms part of the most elemental and profound human wisdom.
- In its most basic concept, it coincides with the essence of the Gospel: “Love God above all things and your neighbour as yourself”.
- We can live without religion but not without beliefs.
- We propose that ethics should be the meeting point between religions, leaving aside the different beliefs. We must place the praxis of love as the fundamental centrepiece of Christianity and other religions. (4)
- We must conceive the praxis of love as justice-liberation: the option for the poor, the

denunciation of injustice, the construction of new life situations. (4)

b) We disagree

- We do not believe that the golden rule requires the disappearance of religions. The major figures of history like Jesus, Ghandi, Buddha, Martin Luther King... were profoundly religious and, as a result, lived with great intensity the praxis of love. The solution is not to eliminate religions but to study them in depth and live the originality and radical nature of their founders and practitioners. (3)
- The religions would not have to disappear if they had practiced the “golden rule”.
- With the application of the “golden rule” nowadays because if it was valid there would be no war or poor people;
- With using the expression “spirituality without religion” because if there exists a spirituality that goes beyond the individual dimension, that experience can only be communicated, understood and shared by means of celebrations, symbols, rites, formulas. “It is not possible to live any form of community spirituality, or, at least shared spirituality, without some form of religious expression.

a) We propose

- Dialogue, as a means, to understand the “golden rule” as love-justice-liberation and its practice as a basis for human spirituality, which demands the casting off exclusivism and the opening of ourselves to religious pluralism; (The “golden rule” is the jewel and the jewel caskets are the religions; it is perfectly acceptable to change the casket to maintain the jewel”).
- For us the golden rule has a specific formulation: “Love one another as I have loved you”. That is to say, in Jesus, we find the example that inspires, animates and orientates our praxis of love-justice-liberation. And this is unrenounceable. Therefore, in interreligious relationships and dialogue, we offer Jesus and propose his Gospel. (4)
- To not insist so much on the distinction between religion and spirituality because this clarifies nothing and causes confusion. Instead of using a “layperson's spirituality” it would be less confusing to speak of an “adult, critical, liberating religiosity”.

Chapter 4. Life in plenitude

a) We value

- The basic intuition, that there is a human spirituality: Profoundly human, lay/secular, liberating that neither limits nor manipulates; like the mystics; it is the human capacity to live life to the ultimate consequences; it lives the “golden rule” without destructive claims; its model is the good Samaritan, sensibility and compassion for human beings; an image: Wine (spirituality) and cup (religion). (6)
- We consider not only the positive aspects of other religions but also of the agnostics. We do not deny the inheritance of our fathers in the faith and we continue to value our religion as the motive force for action and communion with all things.

b) We disagree

- a) With the reductionist and disparaging concept of religion as a necessity which constitutes a lower level of human development that must be surpassed;
- b) With the concept of religion as a need that must lead us to suspicion, but not necessarily rejection, except when its alien exaggeration is out of touch with reality;
- c) That spirituality is only the experience of a requirement; It is also an experience of gratuity.
- d) With the proposal for a spirituality without God, only human, in other words, atheist, with no recourse to transcendence: The negation of God.

a) We propose

- The need for a profoundly human lay/secular spirituality adaptable for all people;
- We prefer to speak of a “basic lay/secular spirituality”: As a possibility and capacity for a knowledge, based on experience; as the pathway and integrating method for all aspects of mankind; as a meaningful wish that all things are transcended by the mystery that we call God. (2)
- Together with students of the religious phenomenon, we propose to value religion from the characteristics of religious experience (a new contact with the divinity), the experience of meaning, a call to plenitude...). These characteristics are common to all religions and are at the heart of the mystics, those people who have most drawn different religions together.
- From the religious experience, we accept the possibility of the existence, presence and action of the transcendence of God – in our lives. Precisely, the God of Jesus shows us that wherever God has a greater presence, Man has a greater sense of fulfillment.
- To live spirituality as a profoundly human experience like the New Man of Jesus of Nazareth. We must immerse ourselves deeper in Christian spirituality: Jesus was a layperson: We propose to live his experience to let our lives be influenced by the Spirit of God. The centre of his spirituality is the sensibility, compassion and denunciation with respect to human suffering: the “golden rule” is the centre of the message of Jesus: “Whatever you do to one of these, you do to me.” (3) A spirituality valid for everyone.

GLOBAL CONTRIBUTIONS

a) We value

- a) The fact that the new spirituality is not just an intimate spiritualist spirituality but that it incorporates social and political action.
- b) We do not doubt the importance of debating these theological and religious problems, etc. In European ambits, we believe these subjects are best left for “specialists”.

b) We disagree

In general, with the whole document because it forgets about the grave problems facing the world.

- The terrible poverty and hunger of half of humanity.
- What kind of spirituality can the African boat people immigrants have?
- What is the relationship between spirituality and the Class War?
- Can we speak of a “real community” of the peoples and individuals annihilated by capitalism?
- How can we relate spirituality with the right of peoples to defend themselves against invasion like in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Afganistan, Haiti?
- The texts correspond to European worries.
- We would have preferred the method to have begun by asking the communities simple questions and then build up a text as the basis for discussion.
- In the first chapters, the text deconstructs without reconstructing.
- It appears that the object is to go beyond Christianity; not as something unimportant or interesting but rather as the foundation of an irrelevant construction.
- The basis for the complete concept is a kind of free religiosity which arises simply from human understanding. Naturally, this is legitimate and it is not unthinkable that sooner or later, religion will be developed in this way.
- We think that the text lacks a rejection of everything that has gone before; it contains a degree of destructive radicalism, unworkable and, at times, without any valid basis.
- We do not see the mutual dependency between agrarian civilization and religions.
- We are of the opinion that the presentation of this text in a World Social Forum is questionable since it does not make any vital contributions of interest to the majority of people.

- We propose
- a) We consider it is important to mention that the texts are not positioned near the poor but they are separated from the grief of the peoples and their fight for improvement.
 - b) We propose to take into account that the poor constitute the principle of interpellation to analyse reality. The poor of this earth tell us the state of the world and the service spirituality should bring to the world.
 - c) The total reality, including the religious reality, seen from the viewpoint of the victims, invites us to unmask the alien types of all kinds of spirituality which are out of touch with reality.
 - d) We think that the text has been elaborated following excessively individualistic opinions.
 - e) We propose to study in depth the history of spirituality, which is the result of a difficult process of interiorisation and personal prayer.
 - f) We should centre our discussions on the following questions:
 How can we create a Church of our time?
 What type of organization do people want for the Church today?
 How can we experience God nowadays?
 What does it mean to think and live as a Christian with the challenges of modern science and the growing tendencies towards fundamentalist attitudes?
 How is it possible to achieve a dialogue with other religions without arriving at a (completely utopical) “uniform” religion?

(e) OTHER PROPOSALS

- Negotiate a declaration acceptable for the European Network Church on the Move
- Celebrate a universal round table of all religious traditions and discuss the following points:
 The internal problems of all cultures;
 A dialogue on the visions of the world of the different religions;
 The harmony of Mother Earth;
 The responsibility of mankind to a transcendent reality which we call divine.
- Keep in mind the text of SPONG: “Twelve theses. A call for a New Reform”.

(f) A QUESTION OF TERMINOLOGY

Due to the ambiguity of the term “spirituality” we offer some alternatives:

- Basic lay/secular spirituality
- Humanism
- Empathy
- Adult, critical and liberating religiosity

In all cases, we consider it is necessary to define, as precisely as possible, the terms used, both for understanding the text and for dialogue.

We consider it is very important to specify the meaning in the text of “post-religious”, “post-theist” and “life in plenitude”.

2) Information for the preparation of the 3rd World Forum Theology and et Liberation Belem 2009

(excerpts by François Becker of the report on the Organizing Committee’s meeting of 25-26 october 2007 at Porto Alegre)

a. Main Theme proposed : WATER – EARTH– THEOLOGY for another possible world

The juxtaposition of the words “Water – Earth – Theology” expresses a searching for a relational understanding among them, through a interdisciplinary and inter-contextual discussion from a theological perspective, in view of answering for issues on sustainability of life on the planet and what it involves for faith tradition, religions, cultures, etc. in commitment and desire “for another possible World”.

Globally, the International Committee agrees with the topics “Water and Earth” altogether. But it pointed out to a necessary vision not limited to distributive justice issues, although without forgetting them. Another point raised by the Committee was on the relation of Theology with topics of Water and Earth. In fact, with exceptions of specific discussion in feminist theologies, eco-theology and others, for the theology as a whole, there are more demands than ways of relating already done. So this Forum will be an opportunity for an ecological and plural reflection in theological views that looks for ways of relations, theories, methodologies, possible dialogues in order to contribute to this world-wide discussion.

b. Thematic-keys:

b1 Methodological remarks:

Rather than determining subjects of reflection or specific discussions, the thematic-keys draw up zones and boundaries of theological discussion, in order to encourage to a sharing of experiences, hermeneutics and understandings. It is not intended to develop an unanimous theme, but rather to give opportunity for a diversity of perspectives and issues, although inspired by the main theme of the Forum.

1. Each thematic-key will define a place of meeting for theological discussion and disclosure of research/studies in Theology.
2. Two activities will be offered in these places: workshops, by delegations only, and presentations, by individual participants. Proposers will have to identify what thematic-key is related to their proposal of activity, so that they will choose the space where they will go to contribute with their experience and reflection.
3. A Delegation is a group of participants belonging to institutions or organizations, with or without a representative character of that, and registered as a delegation.
4. An individual participant is any other participant.
5. Note: any individual participants who represent an institution/organization and want to contribute with a workshop can propose it with another workshop during the registration process. The Permanent Secretariat can help on these cases.

b2) enumeration of the thematic-keys

The term “theology” joined to most titles of the thematic-keys is on singular mode because it is referred to theological science that, as an area of knowledge, should carry out discussions and put at light the diversity of methods, issues and experiences which it is constituted of.

- Religions, Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Dialogue
- Cultures, Ethnicities and Theology
- Policy, Economy and Theology
- Human Rights, Democracy and Theology
- Peace, Alternatives to Violence and Theology
- Sacred Texts and Theology
- Ecology, Embodiment do you mean Corporality? and Theology
- Gender, Feminisms and Theology
- Option for the Poors and Theology
- Art, Communication and Theology
- New Technologies and Theology

* Cult, Rituals and Theology: it will consist in a permanent space, named “Tenda de Rituais” (“Tent of Rituals”).

c) First draft Program :

Note: there are no titles for the conference yet, just themes/ subject were suggested.

1°day	2°day	3°day	4°day
Ritual (15 min) Local group, “Pajelança”	Ritual (15 min) African Group	Ritual (15 min) Asian Group	Workshops / Presentations
Opening	Conference: Economy, System, Models of sustainable development	Conference : Ethic, Ecology, Exclusion, Poorest	Theological Coffee Gathering
Opening conference Religion, Liberation, Life, Theology.	Plenary session	Plenary session	Tenda de Rituais
LunchBreak			
Workshops/Presentations	Visits	Workshops / Presentations	Closing Panel
Theological Coffee Gathering		Theological Coffee Gathering	Plenary session
Tenda de Rituais		Tenda de Rituais	Ritual
Cultural evening: “Pavulagem”	Cultural evening: “Pavulagem”	In Debate: “Amazônia”	Public conference: “Future of the Earth

Workshop : Justice, democracy and Church

Theology and Politics

DEMOCRACY'S CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

Benjamín Forcano

Our model of democracy

Power sharing for all is the the only means of ending exclusion, privilege and domination and modern democracies have made significant progress in this respect.

The working classes have found, however, that those who previously held power – the clergy and the nobility - have been replaced by others: the captains of industry and commerce and, more recently, the multinational companies: “In modern times the power of the State has been seen as independent, autonomous, the guarantor of justice and prosperity through the participation of citizens whose rights and equity are defended by law. Domination would be at an end because all citizens would rely on the protection of the law applied within an impartial system of justice (J. Comblin, *Crisis de la democracia*, Latinoamericana 2007, p. 323).

Economic dictatorship within democracy

From within our comfortable way of life, we sustain the myth that democracy is the best means of harmonious living. It is, of course, better than tyranny but it is essential that we recognise that the new forces of the economy have acquired, and are exercising, immense power in our democracies.

What are the characteristics of these new economic forces? They are:

- Controlled by world-wide financial groups.
- Their wealth is increasing and becoming more highly concentrated.
- They impose their will on States which are losing all control over them.
- The multinational companies control trade, the strong triumph over the weaks, they enjoy exemption from tax amongst other benefits, and they acquire monopolistic status.
- Their greatest achievement has been to persuade others that the State is incapable of taking effective economic initiatives - which should left as the exclusive preserve of private companies. In this way political parties are transformed into apologists for neoliberal philosophies and become the servants of the multinational companies.
-

Democracy loses its *meaning* from the moment when the State concedes autonomy to the multinationals. “Those who control globalized financial capitalism exercise the right to life or death of thousands of millions of human beings. They decide, day by day, through their investment strategies, their stockmarket speculations, their alliances, who will have the right to live and who is condemned to die” (J. Ziegler, *Derechos Humanos y democracia mundial*, Latinoamérica 2007, p. 26).

The consequences are those which all of us see and suffer: The neoliberal dictatorship distracts us with its leisure industries, makes us forget about human rights, convinces us that there is nothing we can do about the system, that there is no alternative. How else can we explain the fact that, in the period since the invasion of Iraq, a nation which proclaims itself to be the leading world power- and is recognised as such – can claim, with the complicity of other democracies, that it is

normal and inevitable to prolong the effects of an invasion which is responsible for over one hundred assassinations and deaths every day?

As Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said, "Human Rights are, by definition, the standard which underlies all politics, are absolute and fixed and for that reason are unrenouncable and the quintessence of the values which allow us to affirm that we are a single, human community (J. Ziegler, *idem*, pg. 27).

Despite all these deficiencies and inadequacies, we must persist in making a reality of human rights, while recognising that, even within democracies, these rights may be exploited for ideological purposes and not for the benefit of the citizenry at large. It is iniquitous that human rights should be the preserve of powerful minorities and may even be used as a weapon against majority rights. This is what must be unmasked. When a minority has the power to impose its commercial conditions on the marketplace, it has the power to *dominate lives*, creating conditions which threaten biological existence.

Our task, the battle, must be to put ourselves on the side not of those who enjoy these rights but rather of those who are deprived of them. We must be on the side of the weak and oppressed and not allied with those who are strong and may be oppressors.

The traditional role of the Church in Democracy and its recuperation in Vatican II

Taking into account the evolution of our society and of our Church, it is clear that in its task of structuring and developing human relations, the Church of Jesus has propagated fundamental values which are concomitant with its nature and which are incompatible with other forms of relationships which do not reflect such values. Let us pose to ourselves a question in the light of the great problems which threaten our democracy, knowing that the Church offers solutions and that no economic-political process can be free of cultural connotations (philosophical, ethical, religious) and that the culture of democracy has been invaded and perverted by the neoliberal ideology and that democracy requires certain essential values if it is to survive and be regenerated: what are these energising values, which the Church, at its best, should put forward?

Let us specify just four of these values:

1. The first shall be last.

The Church must proclaim as a touchstone for all socio-political and educational forms of organisation, that all men are brothers and, as brothers, must fight for equality and abolish all obstacles to equality, notably money and power. The priority must be to ensure that the majority, those who are last, suffering in misery and exclusion shall be first. In this way their deprivations, of rights and needs, will form the basis for a new organisation of society. When Jesus calls the poor blessed it is because he is assuring them that their situation will change and that a movement will be created which will achieve that change and will restore dignity and hope to them. The last must be first:

"The Christianity of the early days is faced with a kingdom in which money and power are used as instruments of domination. It requires a passionate determination to ensure that those who are now last will not always be so and will adopt patterns of behaviour and organise themselves economically and politically in such a way that a new society will be born in which the concept of first and last vanishes or in which, at least, inequality is minimised between men who are destined to be brothers" (R. Díaz Salazar, *La Izquierda y el cristianismo*, Taurus, 1998, p354.

2. Detect the causes of inequality.

In accordance with our love for those who are last, we must be aware of, and sensitive to, the causes and mechanisms which produce the fundamental problems of inequality and injustice.

3. Give priority to the needs of those who are last.

Create the collective will to put first the needs of those who are last and to articulate policies and determine social behaviours and forms of solidarity which will lead to common efforts and

self-deprivations. If our love for those who are last becomes a mobilising concept and force, it will become possible to develop international policies which direct themselves to solidarity, to economic democracy, to the acceptance of evangelical poverty. By these means new men will be created, pursuing new anthropological values and with new personal and collective objectives in their lives.

4. Spirit of the Samaritan.

We must adopt the spirit of the Samaritan in the face of our brothers who are in need, feel the grief of the oppressed as if it was ours, come close to them and liberate them. Without such commitment, all religion is false.

"Christianity in its origins consists of fundamental values which seen as a whole comprise a spirit, or socio-political force, of great importance to the left. Socialist culture must embrace the principle of the last becoming the first, the love of liberty, the opposition to riches, the solidarity with the victims of exploitation, the urge to build brotherhood on the basis of justice – and beyond this a style of life which is based on self-deprivation and the sharing of worldly goods, and the union between the inner changes in man and the transformation of history etc.." (R. Díaz Salazar, *Idem*, p. 399).

Jon Sobrino, for his part, in an article (*Concilium, Crítica a las democracias actuales y camino de humanización*, Sep. 2007, pp. 83-97), in which he refers to the biblical Christian tradition in the light of what is happening in our democracies today, makes the following proposals in the hope that they will make democracy more human:

- . Compassion in the face of the crucifixion of the people
- . Justice
- . Option for the poor

To start from the cross borne by the people is to start from those who have no power and, as such, suffer all the penalties of their condition. Our eurocentric democracies deprive them of everything: life, culture, dignity, and liberty. Faced with those who have been crucified, the only honest reaction is to "bring them down from the cross" because God is present in them.

It is because of injustice that many men die of hunger or are assassinated. God's mercy, which reaches all his creatures, must transform an unjust world into a just world. Justice is opposed to contempt, violence, untruthfulness, slavery and death. They must be eliminated if the world is to be just and human.

In its practices, a democratic policy of Christian origin, must opt for the poor. It is wrong to go on talking about equality in our democracies.. That is not the point. Positive discrimination must be introduced. It is the suffering poor who must be put first. It is not equality that matters but rather the need to make the poor the focus of our democratic policies.

The following words were pronounced by Jesús of Nazareth – and I want this to serve as my conclusion – and should be remembered by all those who hold authority, whether it be civil or religious, democratic, monarchical, socialist or of any other kind: "As you know the leaders of nations govern with absolute authority and the power of the mighty is used to oppress others. Let it not be so amongst yourselves. The first shall be the last and the master shall be the servant." (Mc 10,41: Mt 20,25).

18^{ème} Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move

Request of membership to the European Network



ASSOCIACIÓ ESGLÉSIA PLURAL

Apartat de correus 22115 – 08080 Barcelona - Tel. 697 976 545

www.esglesiaplural.cat - info@esglesiaplural.cat

Inscrita en el Registre d'Associacions de la Generalitat de Catalunya amb el núm. 27954/B - NIF. G63266670

1) Letter of request of membership of the association Església plural

Mr. François Becker
Secrétaire Général du réseau Européen

Dear Secretary General,

The Association “Església Plural” has the pleasure to request to be accepted as a member of the European Network.

We agree to **its Constitution** and Standing Orders.

The interest of **Església Plural** to become a member of the European Network is the desire to share the work carried out in the different parts of Europe, establishing an international network to join efforts and sharing strategies, to achieve common goals.

We attach a brief presentation of our Association and the Chapter I of our Constitution, in multilingual version, to this request.

Best regards,

Josep Torrens
President

Barcelona, 20th february 2008

2. Presentation of “Església Plural”

Església Plural is an association constituted according to the private **law** and the own regulations. **It** is build up by grass root Christians, coming from different areas of the Catalan Church, with a clear will of working for the renewal of the Catholic Church, in which we feel deeply rooted.

We pick up the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, and we want to constitute a meeting point for those who claim a Church more plural and more nearby to the realities and the needs of the people of present times, ecumenically oriented, open to the dialog with all religious traditions, the world of the thought and the science.

We want to contribute to make the voice of some ecclesiastical sensitivities that generally they are hidden and silent in **society** and in the Church.

We work in favor of the recognition and the respect of the plurality in the Church, the value of a life of faith founded in Jesus, in **his** Gospel, and in the very personal call that the Spirit makes to each one.

Església Plural is organized in territorial teams. There are stable groups in the diocesis of Barcelona, Girona, Terrassa and Sant Feliu de Llobregat, at the moment.

It is managed by a Steering Committee in which are represented all territorial teams.

The main activities are:

Trough Internet:

- The website www.esglesiaplural.cat **updating** the contents weekly.
- Sending the newsletter to more than 7.800 people who receives **it** free of cost.

Public actions:

- The “Day for the respect to the plurality in the Church”, on the occasion of the apostles Paul and Peter feast.
- “Església Plural Awards”, to recognize the work carried out by a person or a group, along their lifetime; a second prize, to an innovative pastoral project and the third prize, to a social project to fight against exclusion and marginality.
- Specific conferences along the year.
- Participation in actions organized by other bodies, church groups or not. Last January we have participated in the first Catalan Social Forum celebrated in Barcelona.
- The Christian Forum of Reus, co-organized together with other group of that city.
- We keep in contact and dialog with other similar groups in Catalonia and Spain, either individually or by means the participation of **Església Plural** in networks, like *Cristianisme al segle XXI* (Christianity in the 21st century), from Barcelona and *Redes Cristianas*, from Madrid.

After six years of activities, **Església Plural** has achieved a well-known reputation in the media and it is considered a reference group when asking for opinion that serves as counterpoint to that of the Catholic hierarchy.

Last January 10, the radio station *Deutschlandfunk*, issued an interview to Josep Torrens, chairman of **Església Plural**, recorded by the correspondent of this broadcasting station in Barcelona.

February 2008

3) Statutes of Eglésia Plural

Chapter I. The denomination, the purposes and the address

Article 1

Under the name of “Església Plural” an association is created, which will regulate its activities in accordance with the Law 7/1997, of 18th June, of associations (DOGC 2423, of 1st July) and their statutes.

Article 2

The purposes of the Association are:

1. - To offer a space of dialog and participation for a new way of human relationship in the society and into the Church.
2. - To facilitate the dialog between faith and culture.
3. - To foster interfaith and multicultural dialog, to advance towards a culture of peace, justice, brotherhood and integrity of the Creation.
4. - To promote the coordination among those who work to achieve an alternative model for Church organization including the democratization of its structures.
5. - To communicate and to make available for everybody who wishes it, all the information and opinion that is produced about subjects and similar activities in the goals of the Association. Especially through Internet.

Every desire of profit remains excluded.

Article 3

1. The Association's head office is settled in 08003 Barcelona, and is situated at Carrer Mare de Déu del Pilar, nr. 15, pral.
2. The area of main activity of the organization points out the head office. However, also considers indicative of the area of activity any other geographical reference such as local, national or international character related to the activities of the Association.

Barcelona, 3 de setembre de 2003

Press release

The Lisbon Treaty

The 27 governments of the European Union have signed in Lisbon a treaty worked out behind the scenes and even more unintelligible for citizens than the former Constitutional Treaty (ECT), which excludes any possibility of referenda. This is a twofold setback for democracy.

As for substance, one must welcome the fact that the Treaty adopts the main institutional progressive proposals of the ECT; the fact that reference is made to the cultural, religious and humanist heritage, in the Treaty as in the Charter of fundamental rights; the fact that the latter becomes legally binding while the European Union commits itself to ratifying the European Human Rights Convention.

It is to be regretted that the member states unanimously agreed that Poland and the United Kingdom be allowed to opt out of the Charter. Also regrettable is the weakness of the social part of the Charter and of the Treaty, especially the weakness of the guarantees of implementation. As for the subject of peace, this regrettably appears in the Treaty not as a value but only as an aim of the Union. This entails no commitment to rejecting resort to war.

DIALOGUE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH THE CONVICTION-BASED ORGANISATIONS MUST BE DEMOCRATIC

As regards the relationships of the Union with the Churches and non-confessional conviction-based organisations article 15 ter of the new Treaty takes up the terms of ex-article 52 of the ECT, to which the European Network Church on the Move has stated its opposition from the beginning. Indeed it provides by its mere existence a legal basis for the privileged treatment of conviction-based organisations and religious leaders in particular, who are unable to represent the diversity within their communities. Contrary to article (8 B, ex-47 ECT) on dialogue with civil society, article 15 ter does not require that the Union's interlocutors be representative, as is required in a democratic dialogue.

Article 15 ter is to be found no longer found in the chapter on participatory democracy but only in the provisions on the policies in the Treaty on the functioning of the Union. Does this mean that the Churches, which define themselves as special entities in the public sphere where they have a role to play, and the other conviction-based organisations do not belong to civil society in keeping with the principle of separation of religion and politics, a common value of Europe?

On the occasion of the signing of the Treaty, the European Network Church on the Move calls on EU institutions to dialogue with conviction-based organisations according to the same rules that apply to civil society associations and to consult not only religious institution *leaders* but also *associations* of religious, humanist, atheist or agnostic convictions.

Contact: vi.bel@IOL.IT hubertournes@orange.fr

Australian petition

An appeal to the Bishops of England and Wales to ordain priests for our parishes.

Following the successful petition in Australia (some 17,000 signatures from a Catholic population of 5 million) calling for the ordination of women and married men and the recall to ministry of resigned married Catholic priests, several UK Catholic organisations have decided to launch the petition in England & Wales. These include Catholic Women's Ordination, Catholics for a Changing Church and We Are Church UK. It is intended to present the results to the November meeting of the English and Welsh bishops.

We, the undersigned Catholics, wish to express our support for our bishops who are preparing the Catholic Church in England and Wales for new forms of ministry and leadership. We request the Catholic Bishops Conference to place the following items on the agenda for their next plenary meeting.

We ask that the bishops to:

- 1 Acknowledge that there is a major crisis in ministry within the Catholic Church in England and Wales.
- 2 Acknowledge that there is no doctrinal or theological barrier to the ordination of married men. Our church has already ordained married former Anglican priests.
- 3 Take practical steps toward ordaining suitably qualified married men.
- 4 Encourage a wide-ranging discussion of the role of women in ministry and in the authority structures of the Church, including the question of women's ordination.
- 5 Establish appropriate scriptural, theological and pastoral training programmes (campus, distance and online) to prepare suitable women and men for ministry. These candidates should have the recommendation of their parishes and communities, and should participate in mentored pastoral work.
- 6 Invite priests who have left the ministry to return to active priesthood, subject to negotiation with the local bishop.

[Simon Bryden-Brook]

News from the Countries

Austria

Annual Report about 2007

Author: Matthias Jakubec Date: 2008-01-28

Activities and Events Of the "We are Church" Movement

- October 12th to 13th 2007, Kirchenfolks-Konferenz „Kirche ohne Priester? – Dienste in den Gemeinden heute“ (conference of the people of the church, “A Church Without Priests? – services in today’s communities” with Prof. Roman SIEBENROCK. See also our homepage (German only)
<http://www.wir-sind-kirche.at/Aktuelles/Kirchenvolkskonferenz> .
- Letter to Benedict XVI at his 80th birthday.
- Meeting with the nuncio in Vienna, Dr. Edmond FARHAT, following his invitation. The nuncio asks for a paper about the theological position of the church reform movement and promises to report about the meeting to the Pope and Cardinal SCHÖNBORN and to arrange a meeting with the congregation for doctrine in the Vatican.
- Mai 3rd to 6th 2007, participation in the annual conference of the European Network “Church on the Move” and the meeting of the International Movement “We are Church” (IMWAC) in Lisbon, Portugal.
- Mai 17th to 19th 2007, participation in the lay conference (Tagsatzung) in Allschwil, diocese of Basel, Switzerland.
- 3 issues of our magazine “Wir sind Kirche” (We are Church). In cooperation with the Julius-Morel-Funds for a renewal of the church in every edition of the magazine a paper with theological contents appears.
- Several press releases.

Events in the Church in Austria and World Wide

- September 7th to 9th 2007: Pope Benedict XVI visited Austria. “We are Church” managed to appear frequently in the media at that time with its slogan “Benedict, listen to the people of the church!”. Especially in the ORF TV several representatives of the movement (H. FEICHTLBAUER, H. P. HURKA, M. HEIZER et al.) got plenty of time to speak. (Cardinal SCHÖNBORN was pretty angry about this.) We also distributed postcards to invite people to write to us what they would like to tell the pope.
- In a Viennese church at the beginning of the year the pastor decided to reactivate the high altar and celebrate mass with his back towards the people. Cardinal SCHÖNBORN defended this as a step towards a greater diversity in the church. “We are Church” opposed this and intensified the discussion about the old rite.

Looking Forward to 2008: Activities and Events Planned By "We are Church"

- Further Kirchenvolks-Konferenzen (lay church conferences) and intensified theological work are planned.

- **Belgium**

PAVÉS (Pour Un Autre Visage d'Église et de Société)

Report of activities of the Belgian French-speaking network : Pavés.

February 2008

We have published two issues of our common quarterly bulletin "Réseau Pavés" and we are preparing the third bulletin for March 2008. In December we had three articles on the topic "Kerk en Ambt" (Church and Ministry) as proposed by the Dutch Dominicans. The debate will continue in the next Bulletin.

We are actively preparing an encounter day where grassroots Catholics can consider what we need in a bishop: we are thus preparing for the succession to Cardinal Danneels, as he will be 75 years old this year, when bishops offer their resignation.

We published in our bulletin a summary of Mgr G.Thijs "Choosing the bishops, choosing the Pope?" (1970). We were also invited to participate in a discussion programme on that subject by public Belgian radio. Other articles on the same subject are being prepared, though not everyone sees it as a priority.

For almost a year, the political situation in Belgium has been worrying, for us too. Many groups are engaged in reflection, dialogue, positions increasing solidarity - but this is not everybody's priority.

Because of community disputes and a long political gap (For 6 months we had a government 'for current affairs' and we now have for the past 3 months a temporary government without any internal agreement and without a common aim!), the situation of undocumented stateless persons in Belgium is desperate. This is particularly so for those who in January began a hunger strike which does not seem to be achieving anything. Many parishes and other non-religious groups are showing solidarity with them but the institutional problem remains.

Pierre Collet and Edith Kuropatwa-Fèvre.

France



DROITS ET LIBERTES DANS LES EGLISES

68 rue de Babylone, F-75007 Paris

raymondgodefroy@grali.eu ; hubertournes@orange.fr
<http://droits-libertes-eglises.tk>

Rapport au Réseau européen Eglises et libertés 2007

DLE a consacré une part considérable de ses ressources à l'activité européenne:

- préparation de la rencontre de Strasbourg (coordination dans le cadre de la commission internationale de la Fédération des réseaux du parvis; collaboration des groupes d'Alsace),
- participation du RE/EN aux travaux du Conseil de l'Europe avec Christenrechte in der Kirche (François Becker et Gerd Wild); animation du G3i qui a organisé le colloque d'octobre 2007 au Conseil de l'Europe, coordination du colloque,
- participation aux travaux du groupe multipartis du parlement européen Séparation de la religion et de la politique (Hubert Tournès) et au Forum de novembre Religion et politique dans la nouvelle Europe.

Ces activités ont fait l'objet de rapports.

DLE et FHE (Femmes et Hommes en Eglise), engagées dans un processus de rapprochement, ont intensifié leur collaboration et c'est conjointement qu'ont été menées les actions suivantes :

des prises de paroles communes d'un ton inhabituellement dur, face à la politique conservatrice de la papauté:

Lettre de catholiques aux évêques de France (Pentecôte 2007), adressée à chacun des 95 évêques, appelant à passer d'une politique de regroupement de regroupement administratif autour du clergé restant, destructeur des communautés, à une promotion des communautés de proximité

Lettre aux évêques au sujet de l'injonction du président du Conseil pontifical Justice et paix faite aux catholiques de ne plus soutenir financièrement Amnesty International accusée d'encourager l'avortement à travers son action (lettre qui a reçu une réaction approuvée de la Commission française Justice et paix qui s'exprimait également de manière critique dans sa lettre d'information de juin),

Communiqué au sujet du Motu proprio libéralisant la messe tridentine

Ces prises de parole ont reçu le soutien d'un certain nombre d'associations de Parvis.

Des soirées mensuelles « Les mardis de Babylone » autour d'une personne extérieure ou d'un livre ouvertes au public sur des thèmes d'actualité d'ordre religieux, philosophique, spirituel, culturel.

Poursuite de l'activité en réseau de l'atelier *Faire Eglise autrement*: préparation d'un opuscule à visées pastorales destiné à un large public et notamment aux paroisses. Nous adhérons à l'appel des dominicains néerlandais 'Eglise et Ministère', qui fait l'objet d'une large *réception* dans les paroisses et communautés et constitue pour nous une référence. Nous comptons nous relier au groupe de travail pour la rénovation du ministère dont nous espérons la constitution à Strasbourg.

Nous participons au projet de la Fédération des réseaux du parvis : un grand rassemblement national en 2010, auquel il est souhaité donner une dimension européenne (soutiens, participations, intervenants) et que nous voudrions présenter à Strasbourg (lors d'un atelier). Non pas une manifestation « anti » mais un rassemblement de personnes qui proposent et agissent tournées vers l'avenir. HT

NSAE : Nous Sommes Aussi l'Eglise

Notre Avenir, comment y faire Eglise autrement ?

NSAE pour nous tous, et plus particulièrement pour ceux d'entre nous, qui ne se retrouvent plus dans les mouvements d'Eglise "officiels", doit rester un lieu essentiel de partage, voire de révision de vie, sur ce qui est le moteur de notre espérance et de nos combats : l'Evangile.

Notre spécificité c'est de revendiquer un lien profond entre foi et politique. Ainsi, même si cela paraît à certains un peu vain, il convient de maintenir un travail soutenu de critique des positions politiques et sociales de l'institution Eglise, dans la mesure où celle-ci contribue à maintenir des structures de dominations par ses compromissions avec l'ordre néo-libéral. L'actualité récente nous montre que ces débats peuvent gagner l'institution elle-même (conférence des évêques d'Amérique latine à Aparecida...). D'une façon plus large, notre dénonciation de l'expansion toujours plus forte des inégalités, de l'exclusion sociale et de la précarité, pour garder sa pertinence, se devra de toujours remonter aux causes fondamentales de ces troubles.

Pour atteindre ces objectifs, nous devons dépasser notre "pré carré" de militants NSAE pour envisager, quand cela est possible, l'action et la réflexion avec d'autres mouvements d'Eglise ou de société (par exemple avec le "réseau chrétien - immigrés"). Il est aussi utile de rappeler que la participation aux commissions n'est pas réservée aux membres du CA, elle est ouverte à tous au sein de NSAE !

Nous devons aussi, pour être efficaces et pertinents dans nos analyses, être capables de remettre en cause certaines de nos habitudes de pensée héritées de notre passé militant. Ainsi, en est-il, en particulier, de la catégorie de "classe ouvrière" qui s'est profondément modifiée durant ces dernières décennies (cf. le dossier du numéro 36 de "Parvis" sur le sujet "peuple ouvrier et foi").

- Notre ambition commune : repenser le christianisme pour notre temps

Bousculer nos schémas de pensées nous permettra aussi de revoir à nouveaux frais notre socle commun de pensée et d'action : l'Evangile. Il ne s'agit pas, sous les coups de boutoir de la modernité, de renvoyer le texte biblique et toute la tradition de l'Eglise aux oubliettes de l'Histoire, mais de relire notre héritage chrétien à la lumière des aspirations profondes des hommes d'aujourd'hui. Nous ne renions pas nos racines, mais nous écrivons, d'une certaine façon l'Evangile de notre temps avec les mots, les concepts, les désirs de nos contemporains. C'est un travail sur le sens que nous devons effectuer, et non un simple ravalement de façade concernant la rhétorique, l'art de dire les choses avec les "bons mots".

Le sens du message chrétien ne peut, en effet, qu'évoluer dans la société plurielle, pluraliste, sécularisée que nous connaissons en Occident. Peut-être pourrions-nous aller jusqu'à dire que Dieu lui-même évolue. Nous sommes toujours en chemin, nous ne cesserons jamais d'approfondir notre "christianité".

Open letter addressed to the bishops of France by the Association "We Are Church-France"

It is with joy that we have received the report of the Dutch Dominicans "Kerk en Ambt"(Church and Ministry). The situations described and the questions raised are in effect directly transferable to France.

The advanced age of priests and the lack of recruitment constitute a grave crisis. Like you we have seen our communities progressively deprived of the services of an ordained priest. As rank and file Christians we have the right to question you in freedom and respect: despite the numerous cries of alarm, have you not ignored the crisis and preferred to keep silent rather than displease Rome, leaving communities in turmoil and often without the Eucharist? Have you not perceived the positive side which we put to you to adapt to the new situation of the Church in a world which has changed?

We do not under-estimate the difficulties of your Episcopal responsibility. But we must advance. The great merit of the authors of the Dutch report is to have had the courage to go public. People are talking. The questions posed arouse debate and discussion: why do you not allow communities to democratically chose their leaders and the women and men who will preside at the Eucharist and the sacraments which they celebrate? Is it necessary to recruit them from among celibate men? What is the status of women? Is it necessary to give priority to this structure of priesthood contrary to the right of communities to the Eucharist? Is it not necessary to review the exercise of power in the Church?

The mess is immense. It is plain to all. As the French Dominican Herve Legrand said, commenting on the text of his Dutch brethren: " You must give credit to the Provincial authorities that their alarm-cry is justified as such... Now that the debate is launched, it is necessary to conduct it according to clear and adequate rules."

The request which we address to you is simple: that you put in place a major discussion within the wider Church community and that you stimulate the debate. Far from being a menace to the Church, it will turn out to be a true godsend from which it is bound to profit.

"When the Spirit of Truth comes to you , He will lead you to all truth."

Note for journalists.

An alarm -cry has been sounded by Catholic Christians. Faced with a deep crisis in the Church they have questioned their bishops and asked them to open a wide-ranging debate on the Church in the modern world in the light of a report by the Dominican Province of Holland, widely circulated in the parishes of their country. This text, entitled "Church and Ministry" poses publicly burning questions about the status of ordained priests and clerical power. It proposes, for example, that the future leaders of communities be chosen democratically by the rank and file, and then presented to the bishop; it would no longer be obligatory to have celibate males. Far from being anodyne, these questions and many others, touch extremely sensitive nerves and are revealing of profound changes of mentality which go hand in hand with the evolution of our societies. It would no longer be possible to say " Church" to mean "Institution" or "Hierarchy"

It is nothing more than that.

You will find these different texts on the web-site www.nsaefr

Germany



We Are Church

Spring 2008

KirchenVolksBewegung Reform Movement 'We Are Church',

Contact address: »Wir sind Kirche« c/o Christian Weisner Postfach 65 01 15, D-81215 München
Tel.: +49 (08131) 260 250 Fax: +49 (08131) 260 249 Info@wir-sind-kirche.de
www.wir-sind-kirche.de

International Coordinator: **Thomas Arens** arens@we-are-church.org

Compilation: Christian Weisner; *Translation by* Katharina Konopka

About recent projects of We are Church Germany since Autumn 2007:

22nd National Convention of We Are Church Germany under the topic "Lived Freedom"

Dr. Erwin Koller, Swiss theologian, journalist and vice president of the Herbert Haag-foundation "For freedom within the Church" gave the main lecture "Lived freedom – liberation from being forced to justify" on the 22nd public **national convention** from October 26-28, 2007 in Muensterschwarzach near Wuerzburg.

New We are Church Team elected

At this **national convention** the following persons have been elected into the national organisational team of **We Are Church Germany** for the next two years (in the photo from left to right): **Sigrid Grabmeier**, **Christian Weisner**, **Doris Ahlers** (new), **Herbert Tyroller** (new), **Dietgard Heine** and **Georg Kohl** (new).



Unscheduled change in chairmanship of the German Bishops' Conference

We are Church deeply regretted that Cardinal Karl Lehmann had to leave his post as chairman of the German Bishops' Conference "out of sanitary reasons" after more than two decades on February 18, 2008. Some requests of *We are Church* concerning laymen, remarried divorced people and ecumenism are also his requests. It can be assumed that the growing divergence inside the bishops' conference, but especially the argument in Rome about pregnancy advisory service and about ecumenism with the churches of reformation have heavily affected his health.

Archbishop Dr. Robert Zollitsch to be Cardinal Lehmann's successor

We are Church acknowledged the election of the archbishop of Freiburg as cardinal Lehmann's successor as a good sign. Zollitsch for example argued for the further development of ecumenism, which is very important for the preparation of the second ecumenic Church Day 2010 in Munich. *We are Church* has addressed personal congratulations to the new elected chairman and is hoping for a constructive dialog as he has assured *We are Church* Germany in 2006 at the disposition of the Vatican secretariat.

Increasing polarization inside the German Bishops' Conference

The new chairman has earned a lot of encouragement from the people in the pews, but has also met opposition within the Bishops' Conference because of his differentiated but clear declaration about celibacy as "theologically not necessary". *We are Church* regrets the now appearing sharp polarization inside the bishops' conference and hopes, that the bishops and auxiliary bishops who voted for Zollitsch will express solidarity with him. The new chairman has at least the *Kirchenvolk's* support. The favourite Dr. Reinhard Marx, until now bishop in Treves (conflict with Prof. Gotthold Hasenhuettl at the ecumenic church day in 2003 because of eucharistic hospitality) and new archbishop of Munich and Freising since February 2, 2008, had not received the majority of the 70 German bishops and auxiliary bishops.

New Nuncio has been asked for „constructive dialogue“ in Germany

Archbishop Jean-Claude Périsset, new German Apostolic **Nuncio** since November 20, 2007 has answered the letter in which *We are Church* has asked him to hold a "constructive dialogue" as it had been promised to the *We are Church* in 2006 by the Apostolic Nuntiate at the Vatican State secretary's disposition. There is no fixed date for a dialog yet.

Problematic call of the bishop of Regensburg, Dr. Mueller, into the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

We are Church has judged the call of the dogmatist and bishop of Regensburg Dr. Mueller into the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as most problematically as long as his responsibility concerning the sexual abuse in his diocese has not been cleared up. The call, carried out by the pope at the end of 2007, is an affront against all efforts to keep a straight line in all cases of sexual abuse.

Further activities of *We are Church* Germany since spring 2007 (a selection)

- supporting action of the Dutch Dominicans, who addressed the problem of celibacy openly in their brochure "*Kirche und Amt*" ("Church and and the Ministry").
- Letter to the Bavarian prim ier Guenther Beckstein before he met Pope Benedic in October 2007
- supporting plea to the community's counselors, which have newly been elected in six German dioceses in November 2007
- Solemn vigil due to bishop Dr. Mueller's fifth anniversary on November 24, 2007 in Regensburg
- Munich based letter campaign "The new bishop should know what the community thinks!" on the occasion of the inauguration of the former bishop of Treves Dr. Reinhard Marx as new Archbishop of Munich and Freising
- Action due to the second anniversary of the Encyclical "Deus Caritas Est"
- Organization of lecture tour of Opus Dei expert Peter Hertel in order to present his new book „*Schleichende Uebernahme. Das Opus Dei unter Papst Benedikt XVI.*“ ("Secret Takeover. Opus Dei under Pope Benedict XVI")
- Keynote on „*Das II. Vatikanische Konzil und die Folgen: Was hat uns das Konzil heute zu sagen?*“ („What is the message of the Second Vatican Council today?“)
- numerous further activities of the diocesan and project teams

Important statements of *We are Church* Germany

- concerning the nomination of bishops for Limburg, Speyer as well as Munich and Freising
- concerning the "*Lehrmaeßige Note ueber einige Aspekte der Evangelisierung*" ("Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization") of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) of December 3, 2007, published in Rome on December 14, 2007
- concerning the second Encyclical "*Spe Salvi*" of Pope Benedict by Prof. Dr. Norbert Scholl
- *We are Church* annual balance 2007: "*Trotz Hoffnungs-Enzyklika kein Jahr der Hoffnung*" ("In spite of the 'Hope Encyclical' no year of hope")
- due to the centenary of the octave of prayer and the 40th anniversary of the week of prayer for unity of Christians in January 2008
- concerning the international congress of the "Popal Laymen's Council" from February 7-9, 2008 in Rome on the occasion of the 20.anniversary of the apostolic letter '*Mulieris Dignitatem*' from August 15, 1988

Permanent services offered by *We Are Church* Germany

- Six counseling offices for women thinking about abortion by Frauenwueürde e.V. (Dignity of Women) → www.frauenwuerde.de
- "Cypress-emergency-telephone", a helpline for children and teenagers abused by priests and members of religious orders.

International work of *We are Church* Germany

- Attendance at the **18th conference of the *European Network „Church on the Move* “** and at the **11th annual meeting of the *International movement We are Church***, May 1-4, 2008 in Strasbourg/France
- Participating in the **coordination team of the *international movement We are Church (IMWAC)***

Preview of the work of *We are Church* Germany in 2008

March 28-30, 2008	23th National Convention on the topic: Sexuality in Bielefeld. Furthermore: Lecture „Jesus of Nazareth – liberation through peace“ by Dr. Eugen Drewermann
March 30, 2008	Church service on the occasion of the “Worldwide Day of Prayer for the Ordination of Women ” in front of the cathedral of Paderborn
April 13, 2008	Appeal for lay sermons (“ KirchenVolksPredigt “)
Mai 24-25, 2008	Participating in the 97th German Catholic Convention („Katholikentag“) in

Osnabrück
August 2-5, 2008 **Days of spiritual encounter** at Rothenfels Castle („Burg Rothenfels”)
September 20, 2008 *We are Church* **Study Day on “Liturgy“**
October, 5-26, 2008 planned: critical **attendance of the Synod of Bishops in Rome**
November 7-9, 2008 **24th National Convention** in Wuerzburg

Portugal

We are Church Portugal,

Rapport depuis le 19 Octobre de 2007 jusqu'au 1^{er} mars 2008:

1. We are Church - Portugal held an open meeting on March 1, 2008, to discuss the Dutch Dominican document, on ministry. Pedro Freitas translated it into Portuguese and we published it as a booklet and will now put in on sale. It is also on the site. The meeting was held at the Dominican Convent where we held the open day of the European Conference in 2007 and will also close with the Eucharist where the same choir will be present.

2. We prepared a letter to be sent in March or April 2008, addressed to the chair of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference, responding to the Lineamenta prepared for the October Synod 'The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church' in line with the ideas contained in the Dutch document. It was discussed at the March 1 meeting.

3. We wrote a letter to the chair of the Episcopal Conference asking whom they had appointed to go to the Rome Conference on the 20th anniversary of 'The Dignity of Women' and got no answer.

We also wrote to the Vatican asking the same question and got no answer either.

4. Maria João Sande Lemos and Pedro Freitas are planning to take part in both the corpore meeting of IMWAC as well as in the yearly conference of Church on the Move in Strasbourg.

5. We are organizing a round table, hopefully to be held in June 2008, asking leading political figures to take part, to discuss 'Religions and Human Rights.'

6. The media continue to be friendly to WAC - Portugal. The Portuguese bishops went on their ad limina visit to Benedict 16 in Nov 2007 and surprisingly in his speech the Pope asked them to align the Portuguese Church with Vatican II. The media gave all this much attention, claiming that the Pope had 'told off' the bishops. They answered that it was not so at all, that it was rather the lay people who were not doing enough. Ana Vicente was asked to comment on a well-known radio station.

7. We are in touch with IMWAC Council and with the European Network, where Maria João is part of the board and have been responding to consultations from both.

Spain



1st REDES CRISTIANAS CONFERENCE

The 1st Redes Cristianas Conference took place in Madrid, on 10th & 11th November 2007, in the Mathematics Faculty of the Complutense University instead of in the “San Agustín” school where it was initially scheduled due to a specific ban by the Archbishopric of Madrid. The conference brought together some 700 people, mainly delegates from more than 150 Catholic Christian organizations integrated in Redes Cristianas representing all the Regional Autonomies of the Spanish State.

Assembled under the banner “Let’s Globalise Human Dignity”, the conference participants represented the most critical sector of Spanish Catholicism, which has been systematically harassed by the hierarchy; they are seeking to create an “alternative purposeful voice in the Church” in the face of today’s crisis ecclesial faith and institutionality and, from the perspective of the Gospels and Vatican II, to enter into the difficulties of the Post-Modern Society where Faith must find its place.

This first conference had three parts: A lengthy process of preparation, the intensive development and the programming for the immediate future.

1. The Process of Preparation took exactly one year. 18 Madrid-based organizations, responding to the impulse provided by the Coordination Committee of Redes Cristianas, took responsibility for the organization and management of the Conference.

The “structure of the Conference”: A festive and enjoyable atmosphere, of a nature which would be both celebratory and mystical, experience-providing and programmatic, more in the form of a process than an event, with the capacity for articulating the Assembly’s critical objectives with the openness required to face the public challenges of today’s world, with total relevance to subjects important to the general public.

Five working committees: Secretariat and Finances, Workshops, Celebrations, the Media and the organization of the Act of Citizenship.

During the whole process, Redes Cristianas’ website played an important role not only as a means of communication but also as a place where the 15 workshops which formed the nucleus of the Conference, were formalised. The workshops covered the following subjects: The Spanish State-Church Agreements, Democratisation and Human Rights in the Church, Interreligious Dialogue, Family Diversity, the Role of Women in the Church, Homosexuality and the Gospels, a Spirituality for Another Possible World, Immigration, the COPE (Spanish Bishops Radio), Non-Ecclesiastical Lay Society (Laïcité), Antiglobalization Movements and Christian Organizations, Sexuality and New Gender Relationships.

2. The intensive development called to mind a short poem by Pedro Casaldáliga: “It is late, but this is all the time we have at hand to shape the future”. Everything took place in these four phases: The event, the debate, the celebration and the act of citizenship. The **event** was truly creative and festive. To the music and words of a group of song composers, the different groups from all over Spain presented themselves. Then followed the **debate** in the workshops which took all morning. The Saturday afternoon ended with a Business Session which discussed administrative, organizational and

programmatic subjects. Sunday morning, 11th, started with a cheerful and participative **eucharistic celebration** and followed up with the proclamation of the manifesto of the Conference: "What the Spirit says today to the Church and the World". The final event came at the end of the morning with the **meeting to demand social rights** in Lavapies Square together with groups of immigrants. Between songs, dances and slogans, the Manifesto of Redes Cristianas "Human Dignity does not need Immigration Papers" was proclaimed and was accompanied by other manifestos of the immigrants.

3. Programming for the future. The Conference was very highly rated by the participants. The media drew special attention to the large number of participants and the nature of the manifesto. It runs to 3 pages and was designed to express in an imaginative and poetic way the new dynamic force behind Redes Cristianas: From prophetic denunciations to the announcement of the Good News.

The principal objective of the Conference was not so much to present a document consisting of conclusions as to encourage the participative process in which, based on participant initiatives, the elements of a programme can be developed which articulate a common praxis. The objective is not to create a movement but rather a network in which all the groups feel connected but do not lose their individual identities.

In this spirit, multiple proposals have developed which the new Coordination Committee, appointed during the Conference, is already trying to articulate in a programme, which should be feasible and practical, over the two year period until the next Conference. It should consist of a programme which is focused more on Justice, on a Non-Ecclesiastical Lay Society (Laïcité) and on the victims of Neoliberal Globalization than on the internal problems of a Church, which does not appear to be openly committed to its own renovation. A programme that opts for a future characterised by Hope.

REDES CRISTIANAS

Movimientos Sociales de Iglesia de Base de Madrid

Desde el Área de Movimientos Sociales de Iglesia de Base de Madrid, estamos colaborando con diversos movimientos y organizaciones comprometidos, todos ellos, en el trabajo por una sociedad más justa.

En estos momentos estamos trabajando dentro de:

- La "Plataforma por la defensa de una sanidad pública"
- La campaña "Quién debe a Quién?" (por la abolición de la deuda externa)
- Inmigración
- y otros

Lo más relevante últimamente, ha sido nuestra participación activa en el "Foro Social Mundial" que se ha celebrado del 25 al 27 de Enero del 2008.

Este año ha sido descentralizado, es decir, que cada país y cada ciudad, ha organizado el suyo propio, -coincidiendo todos en la misma fecha-, y teniendo en cuenta tanto los problemas locales, como también los estructurales y mundiales.

En base a esto, en Madrid, se han organizado 23 talleres con temas tan diversos como: "La mercantilización de la educación", "Otras formas de consumo responsable", "El cambio climático", "La incidencia de las transnacionales en los países del tercer mundo", etc...

Ha sido una experiencia muy rica de trabajo con otros colectivos que, desde distintas perspectivas, perseguimos un mismo fin.

La presencia de gran número de jóvenes, ha sido también motivo de esperanza para nosotros; esperanza de que ese otro mundo más justo y solidario, con el que soñamos, se llegue a hacer un día realidad.

United Kingdom

REPORT FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

Since the last EN annual conference in May 2007 in Lisbon, the five British member groups have continued their work largely independently of each other.

The *Living Word Trust* is a small foundation that discreetly offers administrative and financial services to renewalist Catholic initiatives; it recently organised a conference in London for the *North Atlantic Federation for a Renewed Catholic Priesthood* for example as well as been involved closely in the planning for the 2009 EN conference in London.

Catholics for a Changing Church continues to work for the adoption of the Spirit of Vatican II, despite the present unfavourable climate in the air over the Vatican. 2009 will mark CCC's 40th anniversary and a major event in London is planned to mark the occasion. It has an excellent website: www.ccc4vat2.co.uk

Its Executive Committee meets regularly every three months, and its newsletter *RENEW* appears regularly every quarter. Last March CCC hosted a meeting near London, where the internationally famous writer and psychiatrist Dr. Dominian was the main speaker. He addressed the audience on his life-long study of Christian marriage, drawing on his long and distinguished career in the treatment of relationship problems. *Catholics for a Changing Church* is also continuously adding to its list of inexpensive booklets on both topical and perennial subjects of interest to Catholics both in the UK and internationally. We now have some forty in print on topics such as ministry, contraception, Islam, the environment, papacy, homosexuality etc.

Women, Word, Spirit is a network for all women interested in ministry, theology, liturgy and spirituality. It used to be called *Catholic Women's Network*. It has a range of publications, including a quarterly journal (NETWORK), and has groups and occasional events for women. A website is being developed at www.womenwordspirit.org.

Myra Poole reports that Catholic Women's Ordination is now in its fifteenth year. It is, in many ways, the most difficult issue in the reform movement agenda. It is the issue that always goes to the bottom of the 'pile' even in general petitions. For example the ordination of married men is still generally considered before that of women instead of intrinsically linking the two.

CWO has 300 individual members covering nearly every part of the United Kingdom; membership is ecumenical and includes Roman Catholic as well as Anglican clergy. The main groups are in Edinburgh, Leeds, London and the South West, including Wales. A group has been formed recently in Liverpool and CWO is having its Annual Gathering there this October. Local groups devise their own meetings and programmes for the year and a representative from these groups attends the National Co-ordinating Group, known as NatCog. The London group, as a part of their activities, has indefatigably witnessed for fifteen years, every first Wednesday of the month, on the Piazza of Westminster cathedral. They also hold similar vigils at the Holy Week Chrism Mass. Pat Brown from Leeds is the co-ordinator, treasurer and membership secretary and CWO now has a re-vamped website: www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk.

The annual gathering of CWO was in October 2007 and the speaker was Robert Kaggwa MAfr, the senior RC chaplain at Roehampton University in London. He spoke on young people today and advised a greater use of 'Youtube' and 'face book' as one of the main ways of being in contact with them. CWO has also sent in its collective thoughts on *Mulieres Dignitatem* in preparation for the

Congress on Women in February. All now await the outcome of this Congress that was kept very hush, hush!

CWO still has its written Newsletter and email-tree but is now experimenting with an occasional electronic newsletter as well. The archives of the first ten years of this organisation have all been placed in the Women's Library in London. It is hoped that they will soon be catalogued and available for all who are interested.

CWO is a part of *Women's Ordination Worldwide*, where all the continents of the world, except South America, have representation or some other link with this organisation. The Steering Committee meeting of *WOW* is being held in London this year and the present co-ordinator is Jennifer Stark of the Leeds group. The British representative is Dorothea McEwan. A 3rd International Conference on *Women's Ordination Worldwide* is due to be held in California in 2010. A further part of the work of the April Steering Committee meeting will be the possibility of introducing the Australian petition for the Synod of Bishops in October 2008 into other countries.

St Joan's International Alliance [GB section] has contributed to the input of the *National Board of Catholic Women (England and Wales)* to the Congress in Rome, 'Woman and Man, the fulness of what is Human', to review the document, *Mulieris Dignitatem* issued in 1988.

We Are Church UK has been dormant for some time but will be sending representatives to Strasbourg in May 2008.

Simon Bryden-Brook (ed)

European Federation of Married Catholic Priests

A Report on the 2007 Meeting of the European Federation of Married Priests

On the first week-end of July, delegates of all the member groups of the European Federation of Married Priests (from France, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, Austria, and Germany) met in Brussels to discuss the status quo of the Federation, two years after its inception and after the World Congress at Wiesbaden. 16 people worked together for two days in a highly productive and brotherly and sisterly way. The meeting went on in French for the most part, but up to four other languages were also used.

On the basis of what delegates shared in the first session about the situation of their respective national groups, common issues were identified. The outcome of that was a list of four issues that will be important for the European Federation over the next few years :

1. All the groups should be visible enough in the public to be approachable for such people who have left the ministry, or are in the process of doing so, or are considering this. It is of utmost importance for us to be able to render services to these people. In view of this, the European Federation will establish its own web-site which will be set up, and usable, in five languages, viz. French, Spanish, English, Italian, and German. With a view to both improving internal communication and attracting new members, a special sub-network will be set up for younger priests (U 50) from all member countries who have left the ministry. The idea is for them to be able to meet and to share their experiences in a somewhat informal way.

2. Across the different member countries, there is vast variety of differing conditions re health assurance, rights to pension funds, conditions in joblessness etc. that transitioned priests must cope with. Seen that the European Union is planning to harmonise the differing national standards in all areas, we are hoping to collect all relevant data from our member countries and put them together so we can pass all this on the European Council as well as to the European Union (through the European Parliament). This shall be done through the good services of the international network "Church on the Move" which has been recognised as an INGO and can, therefore, do lobbying with the EU. It is our hope to be able to eventually obtain improvements in the living conditions of married priests throughout Europe.

3. Our contacts to other reform groups, particularly the existing networks, turned out to be another important issue. The European Federation cooperates with the European network "Church on the Move" and seeks similar relationships with other reform networks as well. It is felt that it is important to strengthen such networks because the collapse of the church structures in place seems unstoppable, and there must be safety nets for all of us to go to. Hence the idea that we should work away from a pyramid church towards a church of networks.

4. We urgently need a deepening of Christian spiritualities and a new wording of what our faith is about. That, too, shall be taken on, but not as a top priority. In this area, basic ideas like that of "we are church, all of us" or the question what it means to today to believe are at stake. All this will likely involve working with Basic Christian Communities - even if, in some of our countries, there are not many of them.

What this list shows very clearly is that the issue of fighting for the abolition of obligatory celibacy was not a topic at this meeting - contrary to the Wiesbaden congress two years ago where that issue had been upheld by certain people. Of course this issue will remain one for married priests, but this fight is generally regarded as pointless so that basically people are not willing to invest a lot of energy into it.

Another thing that became evident is that this federation sees itself as a movement of married priests and their wives and, thus, as one among many reform groups in the church. Accordingly, membership is open to national groups of married priests and their wives, but not to other reform groups, let alone individuals. This federation, therefore, is itself a network of national groups of married priests and their wives.