

Mission 2005 News



Η ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΕΑ

Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005

Mission2005News is issued every morning. Editors Alex Belopopsky and Jyrki Harkonen may be found in the Public Information Team Office (Main building, upstairs), tel +30 697 718 4378. Design: Espresso Studio. Creative director Dimitris Arvanitis. Art director Kyriakos Koutsogiannopoulos. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the World Council of Churches or of CWME.

Saturday 14 May

Today in Aghios Andreas

Plenary on Reconciliation

Today's plenary focuses on two narrative presentations about social and community conflicts and the complexities of reconciliation processes, followed by a theological address on the significance of reconciliation as a new paradigm for mission.



Important information

The conference programme concludes on Sunday evening with the ceremony at the Areopagus in central Athens. All participants should leave Aghios Andreas at the latest on Monday morning. Any travel questions? Contact the travel office and read Mission2005 News.

Closing plenary

In the closing plenary a "conference message" to the world will be adopted and sent, after discussion by the participants in home groups and in a message committee.

Sending ceremony

The plenary will be followed by concluding speeches and a short sending ceremony led by the CWME moderator Ruth Bottoms.

Church visits

Conference participants join the ALAC host churches in local parishes for prayer and fellowship on Sunday morning. See details on the back page.

For more info see www.mission2005.org

**Number
of the Day
32,326**

32,326 pages of the www.mission2005.org website were viewed yesterday.

Now and forever

"In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Luke 10:21-22)

"Confront us, O Christ, with the hidden prejudices and fears which deny and betray our prayers. Enable us to see the causes of strife. Remove from us all false sense of superiority. Teach us to grow in unity with all God's children."



Reconciliation is a powerful word at the heart of the conference theme. God, in Christ, has brought reconciliation to the world and to humanity, overcoming sin and alienation. The Holy Spirit empowers the church to participate in the reconciling of the world. In the words of St Paul, we are called to be "ambassadors of Christ".

In history, reconciliation has been understood as both a principle which guides Christian life and service, and as a standard which calls the church to unity and energizes ecumenical activity. Actions of reconciliation witness to a

Reconcile!

common commitment to live in obedience to the reconciling God and to experience the healing power of the Holy Spirit that is inherent in communion with God.

Recent discussion of social reconciliation has been influenced by the experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa. This process has required honesty and penitence from those who participated in brutality and injus-

tice. Victims may not find forgiveness fully possible, yet they may take interim steps towards "reconciliation", or the healing of community. Today's plenary presentations look at social and community conflicts and the complexities of reconciliation, with examples from the Pacific and the Middle East. A theological address on the significance of reconciliation as a new paradigm for mission will bring the thematic plenaries to an end.

Christianity's Southern trajectory

The "demographic centre of Christianity" continues to migrate southward. It now lies near Timbuktu in the Sahara desert, as the majority of the world's Christians is in the Southern hemisphere. Measuring the number of Christians throughout the world is notoriously difficult, but statisticians place the total in a range from just under 2 billion to 3 billion.

Ruth's Reflections

Different Style

In some of the media interviews I've been doing this week, journalists have asked about the "different style" of this conference to previous ones. I am pleased that they have realised that we have tried something different, mainly by not having section work on aspects of the theme. We have tried to make central the encounters of participants with one another and the bringing to a wider forum of the various issues in mission, healing and reconciliation from many contexts. On the other hand I have heard concerns that the lack of thematic sections may mean we are not grappling seriously enough with theological issues and the differences of understanding between us. Time will tell when the full conference report is put together and reviewed whether or not, despite the different style, important understandings have emerged that will help to shape the future mission and evangelism life of the ecumenical movement. But I dare to trust that the Holy Spirit of God has been moving among us and as we return as "living letters" to our contexts, insights will be shared, initiatives taken and the journey will continue.

Rev. Ruth Bottoms, CWME moderator



Profile

Anna Ljung and Alkiviadis Calivas

Rebuilding bridges

Worship lies at the centre of Christian identity. In an ecumenical context common

prayer can be both a source of joy and pain. For the first time in the history of the mission conferences, both common and confessional prayers have clearly distinct identities in Athens 2005.

The moderators of the Spiritual Life Committee, Father Alkiviadis Calivas (Orthodox, USA) and pastor Anna Ljung (Reformed, Sweden) have worked with the eight other members of the committee to prepare and guide Mission 2005's spiritual life.

"We have been carefully following the Framework for Common Prayer prepared by Orthodox and Protestant members of the WCC's Special Commission", say both Calivas and Ljung. "We sincerely hope that this new approach has helped participants to discover here in Aghios Andreas the richness and common roots of Christian prayer."

Also 'On Air' today

Two narrative presentations will introduce today aspects of social and community conflicts and the complexities of the reconciliation process. These presentations will be given by Iosua Pepine, a church minister and fisherman from Kiribati, and Anglican bishop Lunga ka Siboto, who has been an ecumenical accompanier in Israel and Palestine. A theological address by Robert Schreiter, a Roman Catholic priest and an expert on the impact of violence and trauma on victims of injustice, will conclude the conference programme.

Anna Ljung underlines that the Committee wanted to emphasize the existing variety of the different liturgical traditions. "Christian worship is also sharing and meeting between cultures. I hope that the participants have experienced that meeting within different church families is an opportunity where worship leads us to build bridges," Ljung underlines.

Father Alkiviadis stresses that the spiritual life of the conference is a two-way street. "For the Orthodox, it means that we open up to see how other churches have in their worship less clericalism and a strong participation of lay people. This is a very essential part of our Orthodox tradition as well, and we can rediscover it now within the ecumenical participation."

"From our side we can offer to other Christians a deep understanding of common worship as a divine mystery, which we invite all to discover with us," he says.

Rebuilding bridges? Or, rather, "finding already existing ones together!" they both laugh.

Faces and voices



Exhibitions

There are three art exhibitions on display: "The Other Race", presented by the Greek Evangelical Church, shows the athletic imagery of the New Testament placing it in the context of the athletic life of antiquity. Two other exhibits represent evening prayer through photography and woodcut prints from Korea.



No doubts Thomas!

As his wife keeps the practical life of the conference on the road, Thomas runs around, helping here and there, making sure all the details are in order. Famous for his broad smile, Thomas has no doubts about the success of the conference!

Chopachopacha...

For some, it is not common to attend a sermon outdoors and even less so for it to be accompanied by a loud whirring noise. Part of the liturgical music? Or extra security? Well, actually, just pilots testing their helicopter...at 10.00 every morning.



Dr Sara Bhattacharji
CWME Commissioner
India

To be able to attend this conference I had to take leave from work so as soon as I return home I will start again. I am the head of a department at a Christian Medical College Hospital and it is very busy. This conference was to me a form of healing and reconciliation so now it is time to attend to others.



Rev. Dr George Mathew Nalunnakkal
CWME vice-moderator
India

We will evaluate this wonderful conference at the meeting of the Commission next week. Then I am quite eager to get back to India and resume my pastoral duties in my local parish in Kerala, and to return to my work with mentally challenged children whom I miss dearly!



Dr Petros Vassiliadis
CWME Commissioner
Greece

I will not have any time to relax after this event for I will immediately start to work on my next project – the World Conference of Theological Institutions. I will also have to work on my teaching and academic work so all of June will go into that work.



Rev. Dr Jacques Matthey
Secretary of CWME,
Switzerland

After the conference there will still be a lot of work making reports and concluding the whole process. Then there are other things to attend to in the spiritual life but I think I will try to relax a bit before continuing my work, playing the piano, taking some photographs and perhaps even seeing my wife!

Sights and Sounds

Pacific tears

The Pacific delegation mourned the passing away of WCC staff member Rev. Dr Faitala Talapusi from Samoa on Thursday. He was a professor at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey in Switzerland.



World News

Slave trade key to leprosy spread

European colonialism and the slave trade probably played a key role in the spread of leprosy, research suggests. Previously, it had been thought leprosy originated in the Indian subcontinent and was then introduced to Europe by Greek soldiers returning from the Indian campaign of Alexander the Great.

Les musulmans de France sont à 50/50 en faveur du oui

Le débat sur la Constitution européenne ravive les clivages en France. Sur les quelque deux millions de musulmans ayant la nationalité française les positions seraient à 50-50, comme dans le reste de l'électorat français. Les français voteront par référendum le 29 mai sur ce traité.

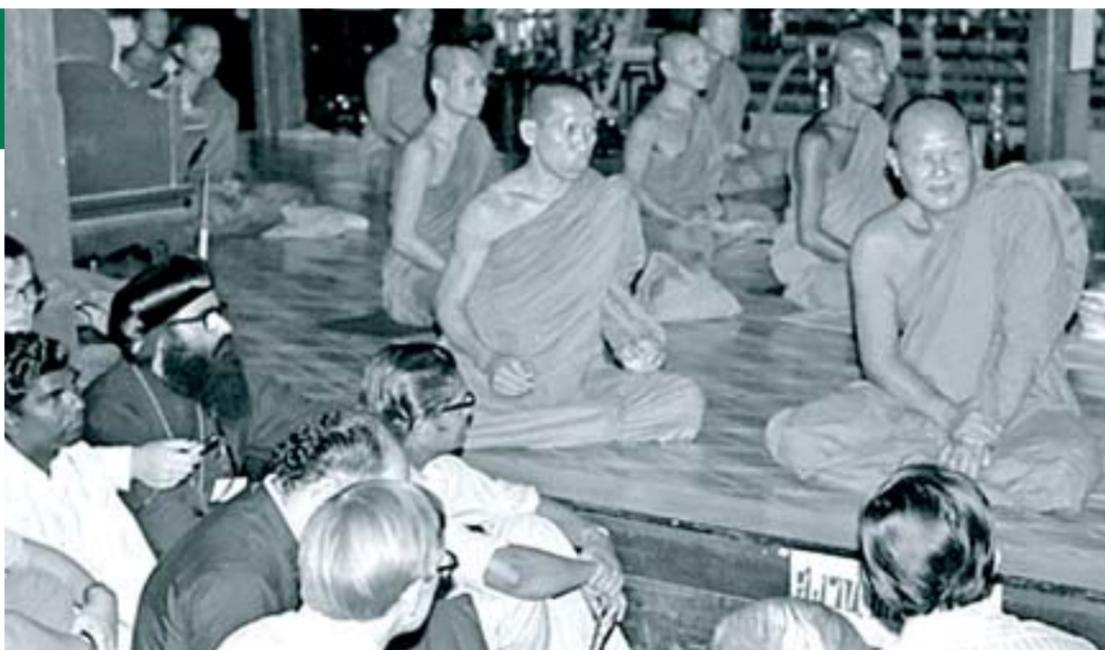
History of Mission Conferences

Bangkok 1972/1973

The conference of Bangkok became famous for its holistic approach to the theme "Salvation Today", encompassing its spiritual as well as socio-political aspects. The delegates struggled with situations of exploitation and injustice expressed also in relations between churches. In order to enable local churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific to set their own priorities in witness, a temporary moratorium on sending money and missionaries from the North was proposed.

Melbourne 1980

The tenth Mission Conference took place in Melbourne, Australia. Reflecting on the theme "Your kingdom come",



the conference insisted on the particular role of the poor and churches of the poor in God's mission. Influenced by Latin American liberation theology, the delegates highlighted the radical aspects of the kingdom message, and the serious challenge it threw to traditional

missiology and mission programmes. Many of Melbourne's insights are to be found in the document *Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation* adopted in 1982, which remains the fundamental text on mission for the WCC.

Bangkok acknowledged the need for contextual theologies and recognition of cultural identity as shaping the voice of those answering and following Christ.

Mission2005 in the international press

Ecumenical News International (www.eni.ch)

Religious diversity and tensions between faiths mean that Christians need to reconsider the way they relate to other believers. "We are living today in a situation of global migration, cutting people off from their religious roots," said Christine Lienemann, speaking at the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.

The Moscow Times Russia (www.themoscowtimes.com)

"The consequences of globalization, terrorism and the war on terror require that Christian churches rediscover their prophetic voice ... to raise their voice and be on the side of peace," the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, Archbishop Christodoulos, told the gathering of more than 700 Christian leaders, theologians and activists.

Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland Germany (www.ems-online.org)

Mit einem kleinen Boot wurde das Kreuz über die Ägäis an den Strand des Konferenzortes gebracht. Das Holz des Kreuzes stammt von Olivenbäumen, die dem neuen "Sicherheitszaun" in Israel weichen mussten.

Day's Glossary

Mission

The word took on a new dimension in the 16th century with its application to attempts by Christians from Western Europe to introduce peoples of Asia, the Americas and Africa to the Christian faith. The first mission conference in 1910 gave impetus to the development of missiology, which is closely related to the word mission.

Violence

Jesus became himself a victim of violence. The need for clearer understanding of the churches' responsibility in a violent world helped shape the early years of the ecumenical movement.

Info on Mission 2005 Local Organizers

The Armenian Orthodox Church

Christianity was preached in Armenia in the first century. In 301, Christianity was officially accepted by the Armenians as the state religion, thus making Armenians the first nation to formally adhere to Christianity. The Armenian Orthodox Church of Greece goes back to the 16th century and is under the jurisdiction of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, in Lebanon.

Sunday: The Evangelical Church of Greece

Practical details

Finance Office

Remember that Mission2005 Finance Office will close today at 15.00.

Baptists meet

Meeting of the Baptist participants today at 13.45 in the cafeteria.

Evangelical and Pentecostal debriefing

Participants of the Evangelical and Pentecostal groups are invited today to an informal debriefing at 13.15-14.15 in the Synaxis Tent 2.

Lutheran churches

A meeting of member churches of the Lutheran World Federation in the Plenary Tent today after the evening home group sessions.

Respect for nature

Please respect the natural surroundings of Aghios Andreas. Don't damage trees or green areas and the beach.

Publications

Guérir à tout prix? Un livre de Bernard Ugeux disponible à la Librairie de la Conférence.

Today's Synaxeis

Today is the last Synaxis day. All participants are warmly encouraged to contribute to the last gatherings, which take place from 14.30-16.00. Check the full list of sessions on the Synaxeis registration board. The Synaxis coordinator Tara Tautari and all the facilitators are grateful for the presentations and positive feedback from participants.

Μία μέρα πριν...



Sunday in Athens

All participants can join the Sunday worship services in parishes of the ALAC host churches in the Athens area. Please sign up before Saturday midday.

Services and lunch

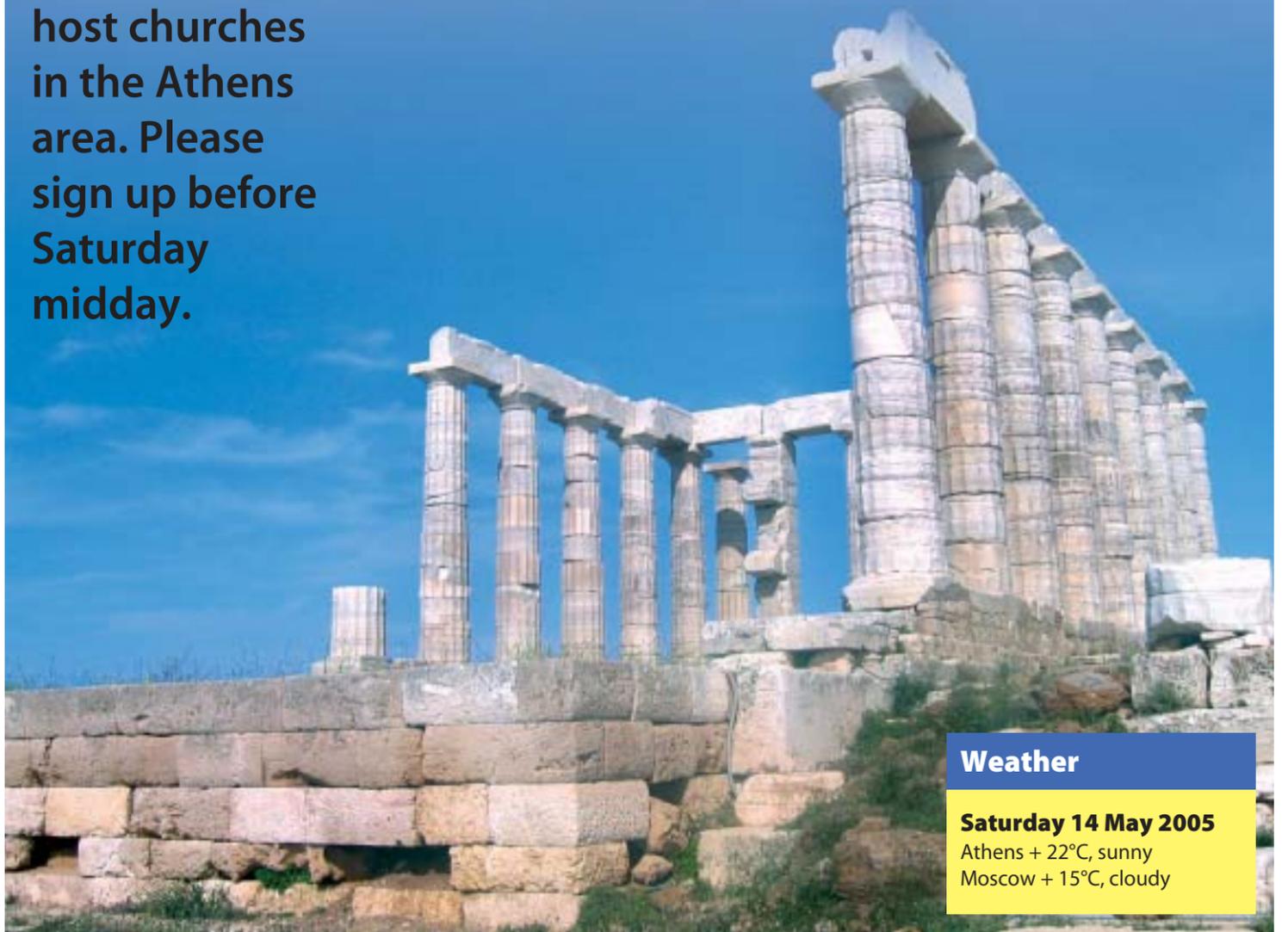
Please note the group number on the list you have signed up for. The buses will be clearly marked with the same parish group number. All buses will leave at 08.00. A packed lunch will be distributed at breakfast. After the worship services participants are invited for lunch in the parish. The afternoon may be spent visiting the centre of Athens.

Procession in Areopagos

At 18.30 all participants should meet at the entrance of Dionysios Areopagitis, a paved road leading up to the Areopagos. Together we will follow the procession "In the footsteps of St. Paul" to the sending worship, which will take place on the square in front of the Areopagos, where St Paul preached to the Athenians.

Gala and dinner

After the sending worship participants will find their buses at the entrance of Dionysios Aeropagitis. All participants are then invited to the third anniversary celebration and reception in central Athens by Solidarity, the official humanitarian organization of the Church of Greece, before returning to Aghios Andreas.



Weather

Saturday 14 May 2005

Athens + 22°C, sunny
Moscow + 15°C, cloudy