

Together towards life: mission and evangelism in changing landscape

An introduction to the new WCC mission statement

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This paper seeks to give a comprehensive introduction to the new WCC mission affirmation which is a significant development of ecumenical missiology in the 21st century.

Background

After the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Porto Alegre in 2006, the CWME decided to engage in a process of developing a new WCC affirmation on mission and evangelism, working toward the WCC's 10th assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2013. Since the integration of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and WCC in New Delhi, 1961, there has been only one official WCC position on mission and evangelism, which was approved by the central committee in 1982, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation (EA)*.

It was the ecumenical contribution and response to the missiological debate of the time, expressed in several important documents, such as the Lausanne Covenant (1874) and the encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). It was rightly considered a successful result of ecumenical conversations, involving missiologists and mission practitioners from various church and spiritual affiliations, including Roman Catholic, Orthodox and evangelical. More than many other documents of the WCC, the EA has a holistic, encompassing approach to mission, highlighting both the call to clear witness to Jesus Christ and the promised kingdom of God, as well as the mandate to live solidarity with those exploited and rejected by social and economic systems. It has become famous also for its double credibility criterion for Christian witness:¹

“There is no evangelism without solidarity; there is no Christian solidarity that does not involve sharing the knowledge of the kingdom which is God’s promise to the poor of the earth. There is here a double

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¹ Jacques Matthey, *You are the Light of the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches, 1980-2005*, WCC, Geneva, p. 1.