

Evangelism from the margins is focus of Johannesburg meeting



Participants of Johannesburg meeting, 6-12 May 2017, South Africa
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Grassroots practitioners, academics and evangelism project managers gathered 6-12 May in Johannesburg, South Africa, where they renewed their understanding and practice of evangelism from the margins.

Co-organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Council for World Mission (CWM), it was the second in a series of Explorations in Evangelism and focused on the theme Evangelism from the Margins. The first one, addressing Evangelism in the City, was held in Sydney, 2015.

As they shared personal stories, learned about each other's context and challenges, and visited local communities, the participants found that the work of evangelism focusing on marginalized communities has a more important role than ever in today's world.

The meeting allowed participants to embark on what at times was a harsh rediscovery of the role of evangelism in the midst of injustice, pain and suffering of all kinds, noted Kyriaki Avtzi, WCC programme executive for evangelism.

"Ending our time together with still many unanswered questions, we prayed that the prophetic voice of the church will echo the message of love and solidarity to all, for all," said Avtzi.

Difficult questions and troubling settings did not deter the group from exploring the new faces of evangelism, said Peter Cruchley, CWM mission secretary .

“They each challenged us to ask, from where does Jesus's Good News come? We began a very important conversation which could offer us a new horizon for understanding evangelism.”

A key question brought to the table was, how much responsibility do Christians have in sharing God’s love around them?

One participant, Rebecca Lalbiaksangi from the UK, answered: “Justice, equality, sharing resources and people, simply understanding each other, and the willingness to change if required are some important factors for God’s kingdom here on earth.”

Lalbiaksangi was joined by another participant, Rev. Abraham Nkhata from Zambia, in expressing gratitude for the opportunity to learn about a contextual way of doing evangelism from the margins.

“We want to be grateful for the ability to find blessing in adversity as one of the most valuable gifts,” reflected Nkhata.

Since the 2013 launch of the WCC mission statement, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, the concept of mission from the margins has received considerable attention from scholars and theologians, as well as agencies directly concerned with mission and evangelism, observed Metropolitan Dr Mor Geevarghese Coorilos, CWME moderator.

“However,” he added, “the concept of ‘evangelism from the margins’ hasn’t been adequately addressed so far. In this sense, this consultation is indeed a pioneering effort that CWME and CWM can be proud of.”

Learn more about the evangelism from the margins

<https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-471000874/evangelism-from-the-margins-experiences-of-the-ironic>

Read more about changing paradigms in evangelism

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/evangelism-in-europe-in-radically-changing-landscapes>

Read the mission statement *Together towards Life*

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes>