

Contact persons conference September 19th – 21st 2003 in St. Petersburg
Apostolic City – Interchurch centre

Participants:

Ruth van Gilse, Folkekirken Denmark, Axel Matyba, Evangelical Lutheran Church of North Elbia, Stephan Dryer Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamburg, Marika Zelca-Cerane Roman Catholic Church Latvia, Adam Ornatek Roman Catholic Church Poland, Leonti Morozkin Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Church in Estonia, Rauno Pietarinen Greek Orthodox Church in Finland, Jaan Leppik Estonian Orthodox Church, Madis Palli Estonian Orthodox Church, Alexander Vasyutin Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Church in Russia, Alexander and Irena Pastor, ELKROS, Alexander Asanov ELCIR, Eero Sepponen Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland, Artemi Skripkin Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, Ekaterina Krachmalova Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, Vladimir Fjodorov Apostolic City inter-church centre, St. Petersburg, Ragnar Svenserud and Kristina Sandgren Furberg Church of Sweden, Diocese of Visby.

Friday 19th September

10.00

Opening of the conference

Prayer and blessing

Welcoming speech by the Archbishop of the ELCROS Prof. Dr. Georg Kretschmar.

11.00

THEOBALT – Co-operation of the Churches and peoples in the Baltic Area.
Dean of the Diocese of Visby, Church of Sweden, Rev Ragnar Svenserud.

12.00

BIEN – Christian youth network in the Baltic area. Priest Rev Artemiy Skripkin.

13.30

Lunch and visit to the Kazan Russian Orthodox Cathedral, the Roman Catholic Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria and the Armenian Cathedral in St. Petersburg.

17.00

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria – history and modern time. Senior priest Rev Alexander Asanov.

17.30

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia – past and future. Head of the central office of the ELCROS Hans Schwan.

18.00

THEOBALT – presentation of the agenda for deliberations.

19.00

Organ concert of spiritual music in Church of St. Catherine, ELKROS.

20.00

Reception at the Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral St. Peter and St. Paul in the presence of Archbishop Georg Kretchmar (ELCROS) and Bishop Arri Kugappi (ELCIR).

Saturday 20th September

10.00

Meeting of the contact persons – first session
Prayer and blessing

1 Seminary on the environment – June 2004

Ragnar Svenserud informs the group about the Symposium on Sustainable development of the Environment initiated by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantiopol during the summer 2003 in the Baltic Sea. Theobalt was invited to take part in the symposium, Dean Svenserud was also active in the planning of the symposium.

Theobalt wants to carry on the intention of the symposium and at the same time combine it with Theobalts own aim of a study programme.

During the KEK general assembly in Trondheim a group of Theobalt people gathered to discuss the idea. There was a wish for the seminar to equip “resource persons” from the different churches who can later act within the field of environment in his or her church and context.

There is now a proposal of a seminary on the Environment of the Baltic Sea. It has been worked out by the Theobalt administration together with a Swedish “expert” in the field of Theology and environment, Stefan Edman. See attached memo.

It will be held during one week (five days) during the period 1 – 19 June 2004.

Comments: It is too much to have four different themes – there should be only one. The Baltic Sea water. The Theobalt conference of 1994 concentrated on the health and protection of the Baltic Sea – we should carry on this idea. A big problem is the secondary pollution which gathers on the coast line and eventually reaches the sea water.

Within the framework of Theobalt we should also feel free to act towards governments and organisations. Among many other things it is also the task of the Church to preach the sin of pollution. From the viewpoint of our different ethic and theological traditions there is a possibility to lift the issue.

We should not concentrate on the fields of science but on the field of theology – wonder and adoration is our approach.

There is a grave threat coming from the Russian oil tankers sailing along the Baltic Sea coast bordering on Finland, Estonia and Russia. We should pressurize the government and the oil company to raise the security level.

It is important that our own institutions act in a responsible way for sustainable development for the environment.

There is an ecumenical network for the environment called ECEN (Ecumenical Churches Environmental Network).

One aim for the seminar would be to strengthen the self-esteem of the people of the Church; theology is an important contribution to the general strife for sustainable development of the environment.

The group agreed upon the idea that the seminary should be held on an elementary level with a comprehensive perspective, aiming at inspiring and equipping the participants for future work.

(Suggestions of Resources: Sigfrid Bergman in Norway, Summer University in Ratzeburg)

Assignment for the contact persons finding the participants:

Invitation should be sent to the church leaders with a copy to the contact persons.

It will be the work of the contact persons to find the participants.

(For Russia; send also to the auxiliary bishop Seraphim)

The first invitation will be sent later this autumn.

Travel

The travelling should be done by boat for financial and environmental reasons.

2 Conference with CEC; Commission for Church and society, coinciding with the enlargement of the European Union (1st May 2004)

The role of the Churches in the new Baltic Society (old, new and non member countries) after the enlargement.

The suggestion to host the conference together comes from CEC. It seems possible to let this conference be Theobalt VI.

Comments:

The topic could be the environment; the seminar could be the conference.

It is important that the Russian Churches are involved but it will be a problem that Russia is on the outside of the Union. The central topic for the Churches in Russia today is tolerance and pluralism but maybe it is too practical a topic.

Christian heritage and the common future of the Churches in modern democratic society could be a theme.

Assignment for the contact persons, finding the participants:

Invitation should be sent to the church leaders with a copy to the contact persons.

It will be the work of the contact persons to find the participants.

(3-4 participants from every church)

There is a request from bien to be allowed to assist in finding the participants.

3 Balticness

This is a request from the European Council; a documentation of the cultural heritage of Europe.

The aim is to produce a documentation presenting cultural heritage from the point of view of sustainable tourism. Description of religious sites/locations (ie Church buildings, monasteries) in use today for the original purpose. See attached memo.

Elucidation: Around five ranked objects from each Church, we have 20 pages to fill. The main purpose is to raise the cultural awareness by gathering information from all cultural aspects of life in our area; cinema and theatre, landscape, libraries, education, religion etc. A fact also to be considered in the description is the historical context for the establishment of the building/site. Each area will be introduced separately.

Assignment for the contact persons: Last date for sending the information to Visby: 30th of September 2003.

4 Twinning between parishes; friendship and contacts on the local level between parishes within the Baltic Sea area.

In the Theobalt it could be both international and interconfessional. If it is not possible to have an interconfessional co-operation it could be between parishes within the same denomination.

Comments: There are often partnerships between cities in our area. One idea could be to connect between parishes in these cities. Eventually there could be a guideline for the framework of such a co-operation or twinning

Assignment for the contact persons: Collect and send experiences and ideas about twinning to the Theobalt administration in Visby.

5 Baltic Institute for Intercultural and Ecumenical Communication

A study programme for Theobalt

Views on the vocabulary: Studies, education, formation, communication. The idea is not to influence each other towards a change of basic elements in the Church traditions, like doctrine and confession. Enlightenment, information about each other's traditions and experience is what we are aiming at.

- Seminar on the environment in June 2004
See above
- The concept of the Folk high school in Fårösund
There is a Danish church group wanting to visit Gotland summer 2004. Ruth has been asked to give them a lecture on Theobalt. Can the group visit the FUU?
The school is not quite established yet but there are educational activities going on. The Church and Theobalt can use the building and the facilities. For Theobalt there is also a possibility to choose other locations for it's study purposes.
- Laymen's education
Marika Zelca-Cerane gives the background to her work with the Institute of Ignatian Spirituality in Riga. The courses are based on four different modules, each consisting of ten sessions using a certain methodology. The courses are open for people from different traditions and denominations. The

courses are running for a year – lectures during weekends and meetings in smaller groups are held in between.

Views on the information: Theological education and spiritual reflection for lay people is vital.

Assignment for Marika: to write a short paper describing the idea of the method for the homepage.

- Apostolic City of Nevsky Prospect (Rue de tolerance - a street of trust)
Father Vladimir presents his institution. An ecumenical institute for educational and research purposes on non-commercial basis. Among other things it functions as a network of Christian resource centres of different kinds – in one geographical place. Each one has a responsible person, a database, a website, possibilities for consultations, co-operation with in the specific field etc.
Can Theobalt be active as an associate partner in the WCC programme for Eastern and central European countries? Could Theobalt act as mediator for a Baltic Association for Theological Institutions?
Views on the idea: Theobalt could take the initiative in bringing people together by organizing meeting possibilities for the Theological Institutions for instance.
- Summer University in Ratzeburg. There is an initiative taken concerning the Environmental issues in our area. Axel will send a report on the course of summer 2003.
- Seamens' s mission. ICMA network (International Council of Maritime Associations).
The two networks should keep each other informed. Axel will send more information for the notes.
- The Dean Svenserud announces the plans for visits to the Churches within the Theobalt by Bishop Lennart of Visby.
Mission for the contact persons, to assist in planning the visits.

Note: It is expected of those persons replacing a regular contact person to report from the conference as soon as possible!