

Ecumenism after 2017: Further progress sought

Ecumenism in Germany has gained a new quality since the Reformation anniversary in 2017, stated the General Assembly of the Council of Churches in Germany (ACK) in its paper "Ecumenism after the year 2017", which was adopted at the spring meeting in Mainz. The year 2017 had strengthened unity and was seen to be an ecumenical opportunity. The General Assembly laid particular emphasis on further concrete progress, which should be experienced by the members of all churches. "Those married couples and families crossing the denominational boundaries of our member churches deserve special consideration", it was declared. In the coming years, the churches bound together in the ACK look forward to facing the ecumenical tasks jointly and with renewed courage. In particular, the General Assembly will address the question of what is meant by "visible unity of the Church" and how this can be achieved. The full text of the ACK statement can be found under www.oekumene-ack.de. A bilingual printed copy in German and English will also be issued shortly.

New Apostolic Church wants to join the ACK



The New Apostolic Church in Germany (NAK) has applied for guest membership in the ACK. This step was taken after a process of reflection and communication with the NAK lasting several years. The NAK is already a guest member in some local Christian Councils, and meanwhile in five regional ACKs. The General Assembly voted in favour of the NAK application. It is now up to the member churches of the ACK in Germany to decide on the application. In order to be admitted as a guest member, the NAK

requires a two-thirds majority of the member churches.

Prayer week celebrated in Augsburg

In their ecumenical vision, the churches must aim for visible unity. This was underlined by Bishop Karl-Heinz Wiesemann (Speyer), Chairman of the Council of Churches in Germany, during the central church service for the worldwide Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on January 21 in St. Anne's Church in Augsburg.



Bishop Karl-Heinz Wiesemann (left) held the church service in Augsburg with representatives from numerous member churches.

The service was prepared and celebrated together with the Bavarian ACK and the ACK Augsburg. This year's motto "Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power", taken from the biblical book of Exodus (15:1-21), was described by Bishop Wiesemann as an important inspiration for ecumenical cooperation. The texts for 2018 had been drafted by the Conference of Churches in the Caribbean.

The theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019, which comes from Indonesia, is: "Justice and only justice you shall pursue (Deuteronomy 16:20a)". At present, the texts are being translated from English. In July 2018, the order of service and all other materials in German can be downloaded at www.gebetswoche.de.

Material ready for the Care of Creation Day 2018



The order of service for the ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2018 can be downloaded from the Prayer Day's website, as well as the motif illustration for this year. The motto of the Day for the Care of Creation 2018 is "Your fruit comes from me". The worship service was prepared jointly by representatives of the ACK Germany, the ACK Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the association "Backstein – Geist und Garten" ("Spirit and garden") in Starkow, where the central celebration will be held on September 7, 2018. The Order of Service and further information material for this ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation can also be downloaded from the website or ordered from the ACK shop or the Ökumenische Centrale in Frankfurt.

Commitment to support persecuted and oppressed Christians



At their meeting in Mainz, the ACK delegates paid special attention to the situation of Christians in Syria. The lawyer Tarek Bashour (Gütersloh), who comes from Syria, has compiled a documentation of the places of worship which have been destroyed in the country. He presented this study and reported on the situation of Christians in Syria. The delegates made an appeal to pray for the persecuted and oppressed Christians and to make efforts in every possible way to create appropriate conditions so that Christians in the Middle East might remain in their home country. In the near future, the Ökumenische Centrale will publish a leaflet with suggestions for prayers as well as further information and material on the subject.

Journey to the Holy Land



The ACK plans a trip to the Holy Land from October 1 to 10, 2018. The journey is aimed at young adults (20-35 years old), who should come from as many ACK member churches as possible. The motto is "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace", and the itinerary includes biblical sites as well as institutions run by the member churches. Further topics are the social situation in the Holy Land and the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The trip will cost 350 euros per person. Ask for further information under marc.witzenbacher@ack-oec.de.

ACK at the Katholikentag 2018 in Münster

We issue a cordial invitation to visit the ACK stand on the "church mile" at the Katholikentag in Münster from 9 to 13 May 2018, where, as usual, the ACK will offer both information and opportunity for discussion. You are also most welcome to visit an event concerning the project "Do you know who I am?" on Friday, May 11, 2018, at 2:00 pm in the university lecture halls (H3). All further information under www.katholikentag.de.

Upcoming ACK Conferences

27-28 April 2018 "Shaping Society through Faith? – Chances and limits of church involvement in a secular and plural society" at the Erbacher Hof in Mainz

14 June 2018 "Theological Foundations of Interreligious Dialogue" in the Bonifatiushaus in Fulda.

Further information and dates under www.oekumene-ack.de

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