

## Drafting Team Report 1

The following report provides summary information from the first two discernment sessions, the one immediately following the Address of the President (dedicated to orientation and sharing) and the second discernment session, taking up the Report of the General Secretary and including the SPPG Report and Introductory Guide.

### **Address of the President:**

There was a general consensus that more time was wanted to discuss the address either in the plenary or in the discernment groups.

### **Sharing:**

A number of country specific concerns were raised during this time which have been compiled and sent along to the Message Team for consideration.

### **Report of the General Secretary:**

The General Secretary's report provided opportunity for the discernment groups to consider in detail the activities of the organization over the previous period. It is encouraging to see how much work has been done. It was noted with satisfaction the development of the Strategic Plan. The implementation and timetable now needs to be activated.

*Distribution, Format, Presentation:* All four discernment groups found the very late receipt of this report unsatisfactory and as a consequence failed to show the due respect to the executive committee members to engage fully. They expect this to be the last year that such a late distribution of the report occurs.

It was noted that it would be helpful that the format of the report be an "impact report" to create accountability with specific guidelines being evidence-based and also include future planning programmes. The timeframe of the report should be the year from one Executive Committee meeting to the next (June-May). It should also follow the Strategic Plan in structure, with the six dimensions being the primary categories.

Additionally, it would be helpful for the Executive Staff to share in the verbal reporting at the Executive Committee meeting as well as hearing from the General Secretary.

*Communication:* A query and option were raised on the relationship between the General Secretary and the Executive Committee. Because there is not much communication during the year from the General Secretary it can be hard to understand the work that is being done. A helpful option would be to receive a very short (2-3 sentences) email on a weekly basis about what the General Secretary is involved in that week.

*Travel:* The groups noted that they want to see intentional, strategic travel that creates impact. They understand that travel is essential but with this comes questions of sustainability. It would be useful to have greater coordination and strategic planning between the President, General Secretary and Executive Staff in future travels to help cut down on travel by not doubling up the regions or places that are visited. It was requested for a summary of travel destination and strategic impact to be included in the General Secretary report of travel taken and travel planned. The discernment groups stated that the regional councils should be actively engaged in official travel in their regions.

*Staff:* Within their duty of care the executive committee members raised a concern around issues related to staff duties and staff welfare. This must be addressed so that the staff are safe within the workplace. Paragraph 161 is an essential point for action to achieve this. The reference to the gender balance was met with approval and now needs to be achieved; words are not sufficient.

*Regions:* There were differing views around the relationship between WCRC headquarters and the regions. While some feel there is a gap between these two entities and want to see how global level issues can be translated into a regional level and how we as an organisation engage at a grassroots level.

Others had an opposite perspective for these members there is excitement around more engagement with the regional councils from both sides and that the WCRC is working really hard in showing congregations about the global body, and people are becoming more aware of an engaged WCRC. We have had a great push on communication and now it is our responsibility as an Executive Committee to help distribute that communication. That WCRC is dealing with the grassroots, and we are moving in the right direction for people to have ownership over the WCRC.

*Priorities:* Queries were raised regarding priorities around where we need to put our efforts in how we engage with the Communion. For example, we noted work within a country which we do not have a member church and we have other member churches that also need our support.

*Scheduling:* A question was raised around the timing of the Executive Committee meeting given that it is over some countries' Mother's Day or Parent's Day and this can be a very important day for some cultures and churches. The suggestion was made to move the meeting either a week earlier or a week later.

*Programs:* There was delight that the Global Institute of Theology (GIT) (point 68) is being reactivated; the potential for future impact is considerable. Also in lifting up the work that NIFEA has been doing over a very long time.

A question was raised: Has the WCRC responded to the WCC document on *Church towards becoming vision*?

### **What feedback do you have for the SPPG?**

The following comments will be sent to the SPPG for consideration:

We need to maximize our resources for the benefit of our members.

We need to show what is unique about the WCRC.

Appreciate that the WCRC is still holding to the commitments from the Reformed family: NIFEA, GIT, ordination of women.

They appreciate the dialogues we're having with other world communions.

We need to take seriously and act urgently with balancing the staff of the WCRC (gender).

Do more about making the information about WCRC available to our member churches.

Unanimous support for the whole structure of the Reference Groups reporting to SPPG and then SPPG reporting to Executive Committee. Two questions on Reference Groups: 1) Who is on them? and 2) Who constitutes them? There were some feelings that there was strong South African influence. Why isn't the Executive Committee more involved with the Reference Groups? Should at 2-3 Executive Committee members be on each Reference Group to create more engagement and connection?

There was a feeling there was little consideration given how to convey WCRC activity to non-Christians (outside of the immediate family).

Attention must be given to strengthening relationship between regions and global levels as well as between the regions. Maybe when regions report to the Executive Committee there could be a generalized format to use.

There should be grassroots initiatives picked up from the regions — rather than directing down from the global level.

Travels should be strategic and relational — and those traveling for the WCRC should be in contact with all the member churches in that particular area.

Might additional staff not be located in Hannover? Also regarding location, the offices are in Europe while most members are in the Global South. But even after leaving the ecumenical city of Geneva, pleased to see ecumenical activities continuing (JDDJ, dialogues).

How might the WCRC support those more interested in the spiritual side, such as church planting, growing, and worship?

The direction we are moving in does not separate theology from justice — instead we are holding them together. This is very positive.

We should have ecumenical dialogue first, and theological differences can be discussed later.

Interconnectedness of our goals is good.

### **What suggestions would you have to improve the introductory guide?**

The following items will be conveyed to the SPPG and Executive Secretary for Communications and Operations for consideration:

There was strong affirmation of the concept.

The Vision statement is in the document three different times — that space could be used for something else.

Do virtual as well as print distribution.

Pictures: explain the pictures better (captions).

A desire for more text — to fill in the spaces.

Affirmation of the concept; colorful; people pictures.

A question about the target audience: Who is this for? If it's for denominational leaders, it's excellent. If it's for local congregations, it's far far too big. There's too much text for local congregational consumption. Perhaps something in the size of the Annual Report would be better.

There should be a bigger emphasis on ecological justice.

We need to make it more accessible to people — what are we actually doing, show specific actions rather than just buzz words.

On the back page, include ways in which people in congregations can be involved — how to engage, an invitation and a response to this, participation possibilities.