

### 37. World Council of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.

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<b>Resolution</b>	37/1. The Conference receives the Report.

#### Summary of content and impact

<b>Subject and aims</b>	A report on the World Council of Churches (WCC) Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, 'Moving in the Spirit: called to transforming discipleship' To inform the Methodist Conference and enable the whole Church to benefit from the resources and outcomes from this historic Mission Conference
<b>Main points</b>	1. Introduction 2. Highlights 2.1 Mission from the Margins 2.2 Authentic Discipleship 3. Application and challenge
<b>Background context and relevant documents (with function)</b>	<p><b>1. History of the World Mission Conference</b> Held roughly every 10 years since Edinburgh 1910, ecumenical mission conferences have been significant in changing the way churches understand mission and how they work together. See 'Ecumenical Missiology: Changing landscapes and new conceptions in mission' (Regnum, 2016) for an in-depth history.</p> <p><b>2. Resources</b></p> <p><b>2.1 Pre-conference publications</b> 'Fostering a Spirituality that can Transform Mission' JE Corlett (2016) International Review of Mission 105:209-225 <a href="http://www.oikoumene.org/en/mission2018/resources">www.oikoumene.org/en/mission2018/resources</a> <a href="http://www.oikoumene.org/en/mission2018/geti-2018">www.oikoumene.org/en/mission2018/geti-2018</a></p> <p><b>2.2 Conference output</b> <a href="http://www.oikoumene.org/en/mission2018/documents-related-to-the-conference">www.oikoumene.org/en/mission2018/documents-related-to-the-conference</a> <a href="http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/the-arusha-call-to-discipleship">www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/the-arusha-call-to-discipleship</a></p> <p><b>2.3 Multi-media</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/WorldCouncilofChurches/videos/1842287422462882/">www.facebook.com/WorldCouncilofChurches/videos/1842287422462882/</a> <a href="https://oikoumene.photoshelter.com/galleries/C0000f3tcgl87MS4/Arusha-2018-Conference-on-World-Mission-and-Evangelism">https://oikoumene.photoshelter.com/galleries/C0000f3tcgl87MS4/Arusha-2018-Conference-on-World-Mission-and-Evangelism</a></p> <p><b>3. Delegates from the Methodist Church in Britain</b> Deacon Lorraine Brown, the Revds Hannah Bucke, Ashley Cooper, Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman and Mr Michael Pryke</p>

## 1. Introduction

Over one thousand Christians gathered in Arusha, Tanzania from 8-13 March 2018 for the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism. At times there was an overwhelming sense of participating in a foretaste of heaven – with people of every tribe and nation praising God together, eating together and sharing their stories. The Arusha Conference became the biggest global ecumenical gathering of missionary disciples since the historic World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, with 1,024 participants. It was a truly ecumenical conference – with an African rhythm – and significant participation from the ‘missing generation’. Participation of younger delegates was very actively enabled by the Stewards’ Programme and the pre-meeting of indigenous youth and Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI).

## 2. Highlights

### 2.1 Mission from the Margins

The theme of ‘Mission from the Margins’ has been growing in importance since the publication of ‘Together Towards Life’ (TTL), the WCC Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism. The conference heard the voices of those who are often marginalised – recognising the need of the ‘centre’ to be challenged by Christ who chooses to work on the margins of wealth, power and status. A young Fijian woman, Adi Mariana Waqa, gave the key-note message for the ‘Mission from the Margins’ plenary. She said: “we are here, we exist, see us, hear us, we are integral to Christ’s Church. We are poor, we are blind, we are captives, we are unfavoured, but we refuse to be invisible anymore, for we are Christ’s beloved, we have agency for we live and walk in the Spirit, and we too are bearers of Christ’s hope and we too are agents for transforming the world!”

### 2.2 Authentic Discipleship

Pre-conference documents were prepared by Commission Working Groups on Evangelism and Missional Formation. It was recognised that every Christian is called to be good news and to share good news – and that an emphasis on discipleship formation that is holistic automatically empowers evangelism. “To recover the integrity of evangelism in today’s diverse global village, it is necessary to disown the model of evangelism as conquest ... [promoting openness, partnership and dialogue] then we can redraw the boundary lines of religious differences, so that they become way markers to peace, not battle lines for violence.” (Report from Evangelism Working Group ‘Being Disciples Means Sharing Good News’ – available on the web).

The conference also discovered that there was a more natural convergence and unity of denominations when discussing discipleship (of all believers) as opposed to the intractable differences around patterns of ministry, ordination, sacraments, church structure, etc.

## 3. Application and challenge

- 3.1 What priority do we give to discipleship formation and spiritual growth in local congregations and in the training of ministers?
- 3.2 How do we understand ‘mission from the margins’? Would we be more effective in mission if we moved ourselves from the centre?
- 3.3 Can we move from patronage to true partnership in mission – and what would that look like? What could we learn from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania – that has grown from 0.5 million to 6.5 million members since the 1960s when it became ‘self-governing, self-sustaining and self-propagating’?

3.4 Stated objectives in Arusha included enabling the conference to be a living community of transforming discipleship – and to experience transformative spiritual empowerment. This was enabled by giving high priority to the spiritual life of the conference – allowing an openness and expectancy that God would move us in the Spirit. Those who had been sceptical in the planning process recognised and affirmed that the greater time given to worship was highly appreciated by delegates and strengthened the conference to face potentially divisive issues with grace.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**37/1. The Conference received the Report.**