



Movement of Christian Workers

REVIEW

Issue 51 September 2013

International Seminar and World Assembly of the World Movement of Christian Workers Haltern am See, Germany



104 Delegates representing 47 Movements along with 59 others including chaplains, translators and experts came together at Haltern am See between Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 24th July 2013 to attend the International Seminar and World Assembly of the World Movement of Christian Workers. Because of the late issuing of visas Columbia and Pakistan were not represented.



Mary Foy (from Gateshead) and Jim Dearlove (from Birmingham) were our MCW delegates. David McLoughlin (Birmingham) also attended to represent our Movement at the Spiritual Accompaniers' Meeting (see page 6). Our three representatives reflected on the uniqueness of the gathering. How many other

forums, within the Church or wider society, could bring together so many ordinary working class people from nations across the four continents to sit down together and be prepared to work together in solidarity? It was an opportunity for all delegates to become open to different realities, different ways of thinking and different cultures. These differences were not to be an obstacle but a resource for dialogue, reflection, debate and sharing. And that is how it was. The Seminar and General Assembly proved to be an exceptional place where exchanges of ideas and views were developed for the joint mission of the WMCW. The theme of the International Meeting was "Let's Build a Just, Fraternal and Sustainable Society". Over the four days delegates met in various forums, their respective Continents (Africa, America, Asia and Europe), regions (East Africa, West Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Indian Ocean Islands, Caribbean, South America, Europe) and in 10 working groups with simultaneous translations available. Visits to local projects were also arranged by the Germany KAB Movement.

The MCW's National Executive Committee thanks all those members and supporters for their good wishes, prayers and financial contributions to the International Solidarity Fund. This not only enabled Mary and Jim to take part in the International Meeting but also meant that other delegates from poorer Movements could also attend and experience this exceptional gathering of working people.

New International Council of the World Movement of Christian Workers Elected in Haltern am See, Germany, on 24th July 2013

General Secretary

Mariléa Damasio, MTC,
Brazil (America)



Photographs showing Assembly Delegates ready to vote and the counting & scrutiny group which included Mary Foy, MCW Delegate

Co-Presidents

Jean-Claude Tolbize, LOAC,
Rodrigues (Africa)



&

Charo Castelló, HOAC,
Spain (Europe)



International Chaplain

Guy Boudaud, ACO,
France (Europe)



International Council Members

Africa:

Hortense Dembele, MMTC, Mali

Asia:

Antony Manchanayaka, CWM,
Sri Lanka

&

Victoria Seo Sunhee, KA NO JANG,
Korea

America:

Danilda Sosa, MCT,
Dominican Republic

&

Juan Churates, MTC, Peru

Europe:

Otto Meier, KAB, Germany

Treasurer

Jean Michel Lanoizelez, ACO,
France (Europe)

Current General Secretary

Betina Beate

Mariléa will begin her mandate as General Secretary in late 2014 or early 2015. Betina will continue as General Secretary until Mariléa's term of office begins.

Jean-Michel will continue as Treasurer until July 2015 at the latest. The World Movement of Christian Workers is still seeking a candidate to stand for the position of treasurer.

Jean Claude Tolbize's candidature presentation to the World Assembly for the role of Co-President

"I am from Rodrigues and my Movement has been attached to the African Continent since 2009. I am married and the father of three children. I work as a security guard in a secondary college and I am also a small holding farmer, raising some cattle, goats and sheep to augment the family income.

I have been a member of the Movement of Catholic Action for some thirty years; I came from the Catholic Action for Children as an accompanier in Mauritius and then moving on to the YCW before the Catholic Workers Action League (LOAC). The LOAC is a Movement of Catholic Action but not an NGO. Our office is situated in the headquarters of the Workshop Centre on Rodrigues Island.

I accompany 15 groups on my island. In the years 2000-2005 I received some training with chaplains from the other Indian Ocean Islands in Madagascar given by our former International Chaplain Marcel Cluet.

Following this training my Bishop entrusted me with the responsibility to accompany some grass roots groups in which I am the only lay person in the Movement to carry out this work. I do this out of a great love for the advancement of the WMCW.

Given that in certain groups there is ageing membership my priority is the extension of the Movement; I have started with some friends who are former YCW members. Today of the 15 groups, 4 grass root groups are made up of younger people from the YCW.

I have participated in the regional seminars in Reunion Island, Benin in Uganda and I have animated a regional seminar with Jean Michel Lanoizelez (see photograph above) our International Treasurer in Mauritius as well as a meeting of the coordination of the Indian Ocean islands held in Rodrigues.

The theme chosen by the WMCW: Let's Build a Just, Fraternal and Sustainable

Society, is very prophetic; it is also the bedrock of our Movement. Why? I would



simply say that Christ calls us as members of the Movement to transform the world in which we live where the

Gospel values are not respected.

My Movement has already started carrying out an action concerning the equitable distribution of water on the island because we see that there is social injustice there.

If I am elected, I pledge in front of this assembly, that I shall work for the WMCW. My priority with the approval of the Council will be the extension of the Movement with the youth so as to ensure its future. Long live the MCW and may God bless all of us here present as well as all our members.

Thank you for your kind attention."

Jean Claude was duly elected as Co-President of the International Council of the World Movement of Christian Workers along with Charo Castelló.

Congratulations

The MCW offers sincere congratulations and our best wishes to all those elected at the World Assembly. Congratulations also to those elected onto the new

European Coordination including the MCW's Jim Dearlove

Photograph from left: Marc

Michiels (Coordinator ECWM), Jim Dearlove (MCW England), Josef Girtler (KVV South Tyrol, Italy), Emmanuel Valadao Vaz (LOC Portugal, ECWM), Petr Koutny (KAP Czechia), Celia Santiago (ACO Spain), Armin Hürner (KAB Switzerland), Otto Meier (KAB Germany). Not in the picture: German Gavin Pardos (HOAC Spain), Silvain Knittel (ACO France)



International Seminar of the World Movement of Christian Workers Report from group work & plenary sessions on the theme “Let’s build a just, fraternal and sustainable society”



See: The situation witnessed by delegates from every

continent was a reality of suffering for many workers’ families. Their humanity suffers because the most fundamental rights are not respected. The economic and financial crisis has caused: The loss of social rights that were previously won; an increase of unemployment and of precarious work; enslaved migrant workers; housemaids who are not recognized as workers; the receiving of poor wages and working too long every day as well as too many young people who cannot build a future as they are without working opportunities.

Millions of workers have no social security and/or adequate protection. For example the lack of medical care for immigrants in an illegal situation and the generation of workers that once retired have to live with miserable pensions. In addition there is an increasing privatisation of public services such as healthcare, education & legal assistance. We acknowledge that these situations are caused by:

•**An economic model which antagonizes social rights** and imposes the commercialisation of workers. It favours the domination of the financial economy over the productive economy. This model absorbs the resources and uses them to the profitability of a few without social and political control.

•**A policy with no sense of justice and fraternity.** We note a loss of power of civil society, a loss of participation for the decisions on the most fundamental issues of our social and family life. The dominant policy has promoted the desire for accumulation of wealth which threatens not only millions of workers but also the natural resources of our

planet. The political action oriented to provide welfare is disappearing and in its place dehumanisation and immorality are taking over.

•**A social culture against fraternity and solidarity** generated by the individualists and consumerist human relationships. It provokes fear and indifference to the events of life and to the suffering of people; it paralyses us and makes us believe that there are no alternatives. A culture that makes us perceive immorality as normal; that deeply weakens our sense of justice, of the common wealth and of the universal destiny of goods. It is a culture that deeply undermines the practical recognition of social rights.



Judge: Mk 10, 42-45 “Whoever wants to be first must be last and servant to all”.

The Gospels and

Social Doctrine of the Church offer clear criteria for living and working towards a fraternal and solidarity society. They claim that the practical recognition of social rights is essential for a society to function.

The dignity of the people and the need of being just with the poorest of our planet requires, especially today within this context of crisis, that the decisions; political and economic, are oriented towards a greater redistribution of resources to consolidate a just and sustainable human development.

The respect for the workers’ rights is the fundamental criterion for organising the economic life, because the economy must serve the needs of the people, especially the poorest. We ascertained that the neo-liberal capitalist system prevents the construction of a just, fraternal and sustainable society.

As Christians we want to make visible our fragility as a church to consistently respond to the needs of our poorer brothers and sisters in our communities. In fact we often become accomplices of an individualist and consumerist lifestyle. We need to be in a process of permanent conversation and engagement that proposes new ways of living with our co-workers, show them that there is another way to live; more solidarity; more just, more human and more fraternal.



Act:

As a Movement of Christian Workers we want to advance the practical

recognition of the workers' social rights. First of all defending and extending a new mentality in our families, in business, in social and political organisations, in trade unions, in our church communities to fight these individual, environmental and structural barriers that impede fraternity. We argue that:

- There are sufficient resources for all and therefore wealth must be redistributed fairly
- It is necessary to guarantee an adequate social protection for preventing people to be enslaved by a capitalist system that is immoral.
- Another political model is necessary and possible, focused on the defence of justice, on the common wealth and giving power to the people. We need an international political community to develop policies for a fair distribution of economic, social and cultural wealth.
- We must fight for the extension of social rights to the entire world population. We claim a Living Minimum Income allowing the subsistence of millions of people.
- We want an economic and political model that protects the environment for a planet where human life will still be possible.

Press Release issued by the MCW to mark the World Day for Decent Work

The 7th October is designated as the World Day for Decent Work. The MCW supports this day and endorses its significance because of the need for social justice and decent jobs at a global level.

The on-going global crisis which has resulted in high unemployment, accelerated the pressure on wages and working conditions and increased the inequalities gap further requires immediate and urgent action. According to the ILO more than 200 million children are forced to work as slaves and since 2008 about 50 million jobs have been lost. Over 870 million workers, a quarter of the workforce, around the world are in precarious employment and their income does not exceed the poverty threshold.

The unemployment rate in Europe is 11% and precarious jobs have reached 20%. Youth unemployment at 22.8% is alarming leaving young workers feeling as if they have no future. It is apparent that those who have less and are more vulnerable are carrying a disproportion and unequal burden to solve an economic problem that they did not create.

The achievement of decent work requires action at National, European and International levels. We, the MCW, want to appeal to faith communities and those of good will to become aware and commit to defend human dignity. We ask people to speak out in order to assert the right of all to decent work and a decent life. We want an economy which is at the service of the person in order to achieve decent work and dignified living conditions for all people and families.

The MCW joins those calling for a Europe with a strong social dimension and urgent policies to revive the economy and create jobs with a living income for everyone.

The Emerging Role of Spiritual Accompaniment in WMCW

During the General Assembly 15 priests, one religious sister and one layman met to discuss the service of spiritual accompaniment within the Movements.

The Movements represented varied in size, history and influence. From Asia, Bangladesh, Japan and Korea spoke about their



Movements being embedded in the national church with all those involved in spiritual accompaniment being priests. In the Americas there is a greater diversity. The Quebec Movement have a National Chaplain and lay chaplains are also trained within the Movement. In Cuba the only chaplain is a priest and as yet there are no structures to help in the formation of lay accompaniers. The movement in El Salvador is tiny and is served by a priest theologian. Sr. Lydia from Nicaragua spoke of the Movement's attempts to build an infrastructure from the ground up especially among groups of abused women. Spiritual formation takes place through the practice of the Review of Life. The Movement in Guatemala is much larger with priest chaplains who work among the industrial workers and farmers. The Movement in Brazil uses the Review of Life method. Their chaplains are members of the local teams paying their subs with everyone else. Some religious sisters and lay people help with spiritual accompaniment but a suitable way to organise training has not yet been found.



Africa was represented by priest chaplains from Uganda, Bukino Fasso and Madagascar. In Uganda Bishops appoint chaplains who help workers and employers recognise the dignity of work. Bishops also appoint chaplains in Bukino Fasso. The chaplain's role is above all one of mediation between the local Movement, the Bishops and the unions and they play an active role in trying to open up access to jobs. In

Madagascar chaplains are usually the parish priests. In Europe, Germany, Spain and Portugal each have a National Chaplain. Training

and formation with various foci and emphasis takes place for priests and lay spiritual accompaniers. The French's chaplains are ageing and have multiple roles, often serving a number of parishes. There has been a move to identify potential spiritual accompaniers and to help train them. Often the key lay leader is the accompanier and the tradition is to avoid chaplains substituting for these. The report from Britain referred to the origin of the MCW, with the help of experienced YCW chaplains, planning for the inevitability of being without priest chaplains. The assembly delegates were interested in the use of the MCW's inspirational sessions at past AGMs and National Conferences and our attempt to build up a "do it yourself" theology with an emphasis on the collective sustaining of the spiritual dimension of our apostolate through our Reviews of Life and occasional local celebrations, for example, International Workers' Day on May 1st or Christ the King Feast Day.

A commitment was made to work through language groups sharing relevant material. Neighbouring Movements will seek to meet, at least bi-annually, to share experience and resources.

These aims are perhaps modest but they keep centre stage the emphasis of our Movement as one of social transformation inspired by the Gospel and by active engaged leadership in the world of work.

Pictured above Sr. Lydia, Nicaragua and David McLoughlin, MCW England



Migration is an economic factor in the country of origin and in the host country by Luis Die Olmos. Summary of Presentation

Nobody should be constrained to leave his family, his entourage, his country. Nevertheless, every single day people are leaving Senegal by foot to march through the desert in order to arrive in Spain by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. According to Luis Die Olmos, researcher on migration and ally at the Catholic University in Valencia (Spain), the bare fact that they have no prospect whatsoever to build themselves an existence with a minimum of basics is the real cause of the ordeal of countless migrants.

For the EMCW in Haltern focusing on 'Migration and social rights in Europe', the sociologist exhorted us to develop more responsibility towards all migrants. 'Europe is in need of a strong migration', he said. Host countries have to accept full responsibility. 'Europe is the counterpart of the underdevelopment of Africa. Their poverty contrasts violently with our wealth. That's why we have a responsibility towards all those who are coming to live in Europe. We cannot just leave them in the hands of criminals or human trafficking organizations', says Luis Die Olmos.

Further on, the catholic sociologist points out that we are implicated in the realization of more human and righteous contacts with the migrants in the host countries. Too often, politics and society are treating migrants as mere 'manpower' who can be easily sent home when not needed anymore. In real terms: social exclusion and juridical discrimination are all too common. 'Migrants not only have fewer rights and smaller salaries, on top of all that they often are accused of committing specific crimes, crimes locals cannot commit.' If we want to build a long-lasting Europe, we need a vigorous migration. In order to preserve Europe from a fatal ageing

population process, it will not be sufficient to answer solely at the need of manpower. On the contrary, we have to stimulate the influx of entire families. 'A simple augmentation of the autochthon birth rate will not solve the demographic problem' according to the Spanish sociologist. Political measures concerning family support are showing minimal results. In the long run migration is the most permanent solution of the age pyramid problem.

Financial encouragements in order to stimulate a voluntary return to the homeland, as proposed by certain European governments in this era of depression, will most certainly weaken these countries on an economic level. Quite the contrary: migration can be a cultural, social and economic enrichment. According to Luis Die Olmos the Spanish example shows distinctively that the departure of a million migrants both influences and weakens the whole of the economic system. For example: there was a loss of 8000 workplaces in the public health department (physicians and nurses). However, Die Olmos foresees also social problems in the host countries. Poor working conditions, low fees and the precarious situation of the migrants will undoubtedly lead to deregulation and social dismantling for the locals. Our goal is to install a durable, legal and fraternal migration. With an emotional and constantly renewed engagement we will succeed to maintain both migration and democracy, says Luis Die Olmos. Our societies in Europe are not fraternal or just. I wonder if that is all we can say as Christians. If there is no other issue we can see, judge or act, then in my opinion (and I beg your pardon) there is no point in being Christian. A life lived as Christian makes transparent and witnesses God's unconditional love.

Thanks from Haiti

As many of our members and supporters know the previous International Seminar and World Assembly was held in Nantes, France during October 2009. It was in January 2010 that Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake. MCW members and supporters, like many other Movements affiliated to the World Movement of Christian Workers, gave generously. The Haitian Movement (ACO) had many members who died or remained missing, their office and archives were completely destroyed and the loss of infrastructure prevented ACO members meeting or even contacting each other for many, many months. The aim of the solidarity campaign was to re-build the Movement through a programme of education and training so that the reconstruction of Haiti could involve Haitian leaders themselves. This aim remains on-going. New premises have now been found, there are at least 4 active grass-root groups involved in local projects, an internet connection was established for the president and in July 2012 a new coordination team and coordinator was established.



Marie Brunide Deraly and Adelet Jean Gilles (left), the Haiti delegates, expressed their thanks and gratitude on behalf of the Haitian Movement to the various member Movements of the WMCW who gave help, support and showed solidarity in their time of absolute need.



MCW National Conference and AGM To be held on Saturday 16th November 2013



At MCW HQ, St Joseph's, off St Joseph's Grove, London NW4 4TY

The Theme of the Conference is:

“Let's build a Just, Fraternal and Sustainable Society”

Arrival from 10.30, AGM at 11:00 followed by a light lunch at 12 noon

The National Conference will begin at 13:00

Please do let Jo O'Brien know if you are attending so that we know the correct numbers for catering. Jo can be contacted at the HQ address above, emailed on mcworkers@aol.com or phoned on 0208 203 6290

The views expressed by contributors to MCW Review do not necessarily represent the views of the MCW
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