

A SHORT REPORT OF THE THESSALONIKI 2006 CONSULTATION ON THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND THE ROLE OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN IT

The World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) organized an international consultation on the theme “The mission of the Church and the role of theological education in it”. The consultation was held in Thessaloniki, Greece January 13-18, 2006, sponsored mainly by the German mission agency EMW and hosted by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Greek Orthodox diocese of Neapolis, Thessaloniki Greece. 30 scholars and missionaries participated in it: 7 members of the EC of WOCATI, plus 6 selected invitees from the wider WOCATI constituency, 2 from ETE, 1 from CWME, 1 from CWM, 3 from the local Churches (the hosting Bishop, the Chairman of the Synodical Commission on Inter-Christian Relations of the Church of Greece, and a representative of the Catholic Community), and around 10 representatives from the various local academic institutions (Theological Schools of Athens and Thessaloniki, the Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki, The Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education, and the Academy of Theological Studies of Volos), plus some young theologians.

The consultation’s primary aim was to promote the missional aspect of Theological Education, and to prepare 3 working papers for the 2008 WOCATI Assembly, and the wider network of the theological institutions. The consultation was structured in the following three levels: (a) 3 “Presentations” at the beginning of the consultation to provide insights for the drafting of the working papers; (b) 10 “Hearings and Reports”; and (c) 2 sessions in “Three groups groups”, with the task to draft the 3 working papers for the forthcoming WOCATI Assembly.

The 1st Presentation “*Challenges and Prospects of Theological Education and their mission to the Church*”, was presented by Dr. Faith Lohrbough (ATS), the 2nd Presentation on “*The Prophetic Role of Theological Education*”, presented by Dr. Hyacinth Boothe (CATS), and the 3rd Presentation on “*Mission and the Unity of the Church, and its implication on Theological Education*” by Dr. Nicolae Mosoiu (CWME of WCC).

The “Hearings and Reports” session included short presentations: (a) by the Rev. R. Hewitt representing CWM on “*What do mission organizations and agencies expect from Theological Education*”; (b) by Dr. Kathleen Williams (ANZATS) on “*What do the Western Churches expect from Theological Education*”; (c) Dr. Ivan Dimitrov from Eastern Europe on “*What do the Eastern Churches expect from Theological Education*”; (d) by Dr. E. Perselis (ETE) on “*The History of PTE/ETE*”; (e) by Dr. G. Larcher (Western Europe) “*On the prospects of the Old Theological Institutions in dealing with Church mission*”; (f) by Dr. Muriel (ETE and ATESEA) on “*Theological Education and religious plurality*”; (g) by Rev. Dr. Kourieh (ATIME) on “*The theological Education in the Middle East*”; (h) by Rev. Dr. Edison Kalengyo on “*The African Theological Associations*”; (j) by Dr. Hyacinth Boothe on “*The theological education in Central and South Americas*”; and (i) by Dr. M. Konstantinou, Dean of the Local Theological School on “*The Background of the Theological Education in Greece*”.

The importance of the event and the success of the whole process were marked by the pledge of the Bishop of Neapolis to publish the Proceedings of the Consultation. The EC of WOCATI decided to transfer the remaining fund, allocated to this consultation from the main sponsors (especially EMW, and to a lesser extent the Aristotle University and the Diocese of Neapolis) to publish all the WOCATI scholarly products since its inception.