The Global Ecumenical Theological Institute – a forum for theological debate and inter-generational dialogue, 25th October – 9th November 2013, Seoul & Busan, South Korea

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The programme envisioned for the formation of young theologians was planned and developed starting with the 25th of October until the 9th of November, in Seoul and in Busan, South Korea, as an integrated part of the project *The Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI)*.

The GETI project was the result of the initiative of the Ecumenical Theological Education Program (ETE) of the World Council of the Churches, in collaboration with the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, as well as with a network of Theological Faculties/Colleges and several other theological school associations from Asia, chiefly from South Korea. The curricula of the theological programme had at its core the theme *The Future of Ecumenism and the Transformation of World Christianity in the 21st Century*. This problem matter was discussed in the broader context of the theme *God of life, lead us to justice and peace*, which was the motto of the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of the Churches, which took place in Busan, between the 30th of October and the 9th of November 2013. In fact, during the development of the work of the supreme deliberative court of the World Council of the Churches, the participants to the GETI project were significantly involved in the plenary works of the Assembly, in the programmes of biblical study, and in the ecumenical conversations.

Over 170 young theologians, representing 80 of the Christian confessions from over 60 countries, from every continent participated to this programme. From among the participants only 9 were orthodox. On behalf of the Romanian Orthodox Church there were Fr. Assoc. Prof. Gabriel-Viorel Gârdan from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Cluj-Napoca, Lect. Dr. Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie, from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Bucharest, and PhD candidate Ioan-Alexandru Dăian, from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Sibiu.

GETI was conceived as an intense formation programme for the future leaders of the ecumenical movement, as well as a forum for theological debate and inter-generational dialogue. In order to get support for the achievement

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of these objectives, the representatives in charge of its organization selected from among the staff of the Institute and from among the main lecturers, leaders of the ecumenical and evangelical contemporary movement. Therefore, some of the personalities that had presentations within the programme were: Konrad Raiser, Kim Heung Soo, Seon-Won Park, Yim Sung-Bihn, Namsoon Kang, Kim Yong Bock, Chae Hea Won, Hunag Po Ho, Atola Longkumer, Walter Altmann, Michael Kinnamon, Henriette Hutarabat-Lebang, Rodney Petersen, He Qi, Gina A. Belofatto, Wonsuk Ma, Rosalee Ewell, Steve Bevans, Herman Shastri, Myung Hyuk Kim, Lenka-Bula Puleng, Andre Karamaga, Christine Housel, Manfred W. Kohl and Fulata Moyo. The above mentioned personalities have a great ecumenical experience and know very well the contemporary evangelical movement, as well as the changes that occur in the world of Christianity and the challenges in the Asian world, and their presentations had the following themes: *Meeting the other – introduction into Korean Culture and Church History; Christianity and religion in the Korean Context; Perspectives of Asia eco-theology; Peace and reunification in Korea; Doing theology with Asian resources; Doing Asian Women Theology; New contours of Ecumenism in the 21st century; Reconciliation as an ecumenical key mandate: is forgiveness possible?; Changing faces of Asian Christianity and the future of theological education; Christian witness and advocacy for human rights and justice in Korea; Mission and Evangelism in World Christianity; Dignity, justice and life-centered economy in the context of globalization; WSCF – the future of Christian Student Movements; Church/Mission/Money – principals of Christian Stewardship; 60 years of women in church and society.*

The general conclusions of these presentations were as follows: the circle representing the ecumenical movement needs to be extended; the ecumenical movement needs a new generation of leaders, and therefore it is imperiously necessary to include ecumenism into the theological school curricula; it is also necessary to maintain the equilibrium between global and local ecumenism; there is need to reinforce the relationships between the ecumenical organizations/structures.

The presentations were doubled by intense seminary activities developed in small groups. The professors that coordinated the seminars were: Dr. Uta Andree, Germany (Missionsacademy at the University of Hamburg, Germany), Dr. Tobias Brandner, China (Divinity School of Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR), Dr. Daniel Buda, Romania (WCC – Office for Orthodox Relations), Dr. Steve Bevans (CTU Chicago), Dr. Edmund Chia, China/Australia (Australian Catholic University, FABC, Australia); Dr. Amele Ekue, Togo/Switzerland (Dean, Bossey Ecumenical Institute of WCC); Dr. David Field, South Africa (United Meth-

odist Church, Methodist e-academy); Dr. Tharcisse Gatwa, Rwanda (Butare Theological Seminary/Christian Council of Churches Kigali, Rwanda); Dr. Marsha Snulligan-Haney, USA (Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia); Dr. Namsoon Kang, South Korea/USA (Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University); Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, USA (Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary); Dr. Kanan Kitani, Japan (Doshisha University/CATS/CCA-FMU Programme, Japan); Dr. Marjorie Lewis, Jamaica (President UTCWI, Jamaica); Dr. Wati Longchar, India (AFTE, SCEPTRE); Dr. Atola Longkumer, India (Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, and Bangalore India); Dr. Oh Hyeon-Sun, South Korea (Honam Theological University/PCK); Dr. Rodney Petersen, USA (Boston Theological Institute); Dr. Huang Po Ho, Taiwan (PTCA, Chang Jung Christian University, Taiwan); Dr. Benjamin Simon, Germany (Makumira University College/Tanzania, University of Education - Dpt. for Theology – Karlsruhe, Germany); Dr. Henry Wilson, India (FTESEA, Mangalore Theological Seminary, India); Dr. Woo Jin Seong, South Korea (Hanshin University, PROK).

The coordination of the academic activity at GETI was assured by Dr. Cliff Kirkpatrick, as dean, and Dr. Marjorie Lewis and Dr. H.S. Wilson, as vice-deans. Members of the staff were also Maria van Heemstra, Melisande Lorke, Sunkyo Park, Madison Munoz, Candice Eloby, Sung Kook Park, under the guidance of the ETE project director Dietrich Werner.

The unfolding of the activities in excellent conditions was in great part due to the infrastructure offered by the Presbyterian Universities of Seoul, Busan and Gwangju.

GETI also prepared a message addressed to the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in which, among other aspects, some important aspects were mentioned: the experience of the two weeks of dialogue brought forth the need for theological education with a dialogical and ecumenical orientation, and in this context the role of forums, such as GETI, play an important role in the formation process of the new ecumenical leaders. GETI represented a space open for discussions, where you did not have to give up your identity or change your opinion, but where you had the possibility to present yourself, make yourself better understood, and contribute to the development of ecumenical dialogue aiming for a visible unity of the Church.

At the same time, the participants found the following aspects important for future reflections: the mutations that occurred in the demographic structure of Christianity, for the geographical distribution of the Christians generated the need for a more profound analysis of the ecumenical implications of this process (the focus is more on the significant growth of the Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches); the ecumenical move-

ment must be active beyond the boundaries of institutional ecumenism by creating a space for dialogue and cooperation among different Christian confessions; there is a lack of connection between global, regional and national institutionalized ecumenism and ecumenism as experienced locally, and from such a perspective, the ecumenical theological approaches must be connected in totality with the practices and the life of the local communities; there are themes as the ones referring to sexuality, secularization, the tensions between ecumenists and evangelicals, the ecumenical sermons or the attitude towards people with disabilities, which necessitate more profound discussions.

The GETI participants appreciated the importance of the programme of theological formation and supported the necessity of continuance and of dialogue development, as well as ongoing collaboration between the ones that had the privilege to be part of the first GETI programme. Several major directions were taken into account: the enriched dialogue among the participants to the programme with the help of the electronic means of communication; the engagement into activities and ecumenical dialogues locally and regionally; the transmission of resources for the development of ecumenical education and the sharing of examples of good practice; the support for the organisation of a new GETI-type programme.

As a result of the participation to this programme we notice: the need to support the involvement of the young theologians into these type of programmes; the raising of awareness to the mutations that occur in the world of Christianity, where the centre geographically moved to the sudden hemisphere, and from a confessional point of view the Evangelical, the Pentecostal and the Charismatic churches experience significant growth and are getting closer to 30% in a 10 year interval; the manifestation of an increased preoccupation with the realities and provocations presupposed by the very participation to the ecumenical movement and to the inter-religious dialogue; the need to articulate the major problem matter regarding the ecumenical dialogue of a coherent and unitary orthodox discourse; the need to generalize in the curricula of the Faculties of Orthodox Theology of a course in ecumenism meant to guide the students into matters pertaining to ecumenism and meant to offer orthodox perspectives to the major theological documents resulted from the ecumenical dialogue or bilateral theological dialogues; the firm support for the moral values, especially the ones that concern family life.