



ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN

National Coordinators' Meeting

29 June – 3 July 2016, Larnaka (Cyprus)

"... Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5,24): How can justice, cultural diversity and sensitivity go hand in hand?"

REPORT

The Conference

The Conference brought together 60 women including national coordinators of the member organisations of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women (EFECW), the Coordinating Committee and member of the local/national organising Forum. The theme, this year was *"... Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5,24): How can justice, cultural diversity and sensitivity go hand in hand?"*. The reflection around this theme, which is the result of the strategic priorities set by the General



Assembly in 2014, will help both the European and the national organisations to develop an action plan in the area.

The Theme: *"... Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5,24): How can justice, cultural diversity and sensitivity go hand in hand?"*

This year's theme, aimed at inviting participants to continue a reflection, started 20 years ago, in the churches in Europe, within the 'Decade in Solidarity with Women'. It is in this context, that conference participants were encouraged and empowered to promote reflections and examples of implementation in their own countries and their communities.

Women of EFECW participated in the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Harare Festival of the Churches Decade in Solidarity with Women in 1998 and/or in various events during the Decade at local, national and international level. The Decade offered space for women to share their spirituality, their daily suffering and their talents. The Harare event marked the closing of a ten-year process of the WCC with the following vision:

To build a human community where the participation of each and every one is valued, where no one is excluded on the basis of race, sex, age, gender, religion or cultural practice, where diversity is celebrated as God's gift to the world.

In the light of the 20th Anniversary of the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998) the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women started a reflection process on the achievements in our churches. At the same time, it is necessary to also focus on the discriminatory structures and practices in churches and society today.

Special features

The venue has contributed in a special way to the Conference. On one hand the physical conditions (warm weather, sun, sea) contributed immensely to the participants' sense of well-being and on the other hand the local experience of ecumenism and authentic intercultural dialogue brought in mainly by our members in Cyprus was a living example of possible changes in other European countries, even structural and political ones.

Keynote Speaker

Theological input by Dr. Dr. Vivie Mavroska, Asst. Professor

The **Book of Amos** is a prophetic book of the Old Testament. [Amos](#) was active c. 750 BC during the reign of [Jeroboam II](#), (786–746 BC) making the Book of Amos the first biblical prophetic book written. He lived in the [kingdom of Judah](#), but he preached in the northern [kingdom of Israel](#). Since he was persuaded that Yahweh was a God of justice, his major themes were [social justice](#), God’s omnipotence and divine judgement.

In particular verse 24 is telling to Israelites what was wrong. People were not living in the right way, absolutely far away from the true way of God. They separated their worship with their private lives (that reminds me of today) and Amos was seeing nowhere the social justice that God wants. Amos used to preach that one basic social element is to love our neighbour and to be able to stand purified before our God.

The fundamental point for the rightness and the honesty in the community is the water. The notion of water is dominant in Amos- besides that water has a leading role in every ecclesiastical or theological frame. If I would ask you to have a brainstorming about water, I am sure that we would not have enough time until our break to finish our thoughts. Please allow me to make a connection of the text of Amos to the living water, Christ himself, the purification, the regeneration, the renewal, the resurrection.

Two weeks ago the Greeks, both in Greece and in Cyprus, celebrated the Pentecost and on that day in the Holy Liturgy of the Orthodox Church we here a passage from Johannes Gospel, Johannes, 7, 37-52. Christ starts with the hypothetic phrase *“If someone is thirsty”*. An assumption that is actually a precondition, since it is meant that people have to realise the feeling of the spiritual thirst. We are being fascinating by the everyday life; its problems, its luxurious things, everything, apart from our relation with God. It is a fact that our society suffers from neglectfulness towards the other nation, the other colour, the other social status, the other educational background, the other family environment, the other... the other.... And Christ leaves us to decide by ourselves how to act, to use the free will we have already from our creation. He respects our right and he waits for us to understand his words.

It is amazing the line starting from the very beginning of the creation, goes through the history of Israel, the prophets and all of the books of the Old Testament, via the incarnation of the Logos of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity and his history in the New Testament, the Apostles, the Saints and through all of us in our everyday life in every period. All these are actually the history of the mystery of the Holy Oikonomia, God’s plan for the creation. Logos of God, unfleshed in the Old Testament, having a human body and soul in the New Testament, he performs all the prophetic theophanies and all the miracles. The line is one, going from the creation *according to the image of God* to the *likeness of God*. The image of God is anyway, either we like it or not, in our face, in our whole nature, however, we need to reconsider our role and our reaction to this. Are we really in nowadays acting according to our nature, the image of God, if we think of the ecclesiastical history? Are we really the image of God, when we still talk about the place of women in the Church? Are we really the image of God, when we have thousands of refugees, being in hot spots in Greece and having the borders of the so-called European Union close to them? Are we, as women, the other? Are they, the refugees,

the other? The something else, that there is no need to take care of it, or to cooperate with? I suppose, we need nowadays another Amos to talk about social justice or the actual face of God.

Actually, Christianity puts in the centre the notion of the creation. All the creation is pure and good. In its route to the likeness of God there are lots of wounds. The created creation has to communicate with the uncreated Creator, in order to reach its goal. In every failure the wounds are being bigger and bigger. The language of the biblical books about paradise and hell is symbolic and iconic. St. Johannes of Damascus writes that paradise is the communion with God and hell is the non-communion with him. A basic presupposition for the participation in the paradise, to communicate with God, is to love God and to love the neighbour, meaning to be a member of the loving society of Christ. The lack of neighbourhood love is the lack of Christ's love. People think that God comes and becomes an avenger- but that is not true; the truth is that people have the free will to choose their way; so either the living water, which runs to our souls or the suffering of nihilism.

Justice is supposed to be a fundamental value of our Church, already from the Old Testament, even though that time the notion was a bit different than in the New Testament. When Amos was talking about social justice was talking about the social justice in the church. And now the question is what is Church? St. Maximus the Confessor gives an astonishing aspect: Church is the creation and creation is the Church!

When Logos of God created our world, visible and invisible, he actually created the Church! The people who are not yet baptised are Church to be. But every person, of every land, of every colour, and consequently, all our environment has the ontological right to be members of the Church and to participate in this. No-one has the right to expel no-one from the Church, since it is the whole of the creation. That is his cosmological interpretation of the church and this is the type of God, since it is made according to his image. He continues with an anthropological interpretation, which says that Church is all the human beings, so the church as the icon of people creates the conditions for the active role of every man and woman.

{...}

I continue from what I have stated at the end of the first part: Men and women have been created according to the image of God, within the Church, which is actually the creation. Christology, which is the base of the Ecclesiology, is the legacy of actions of the unfleshed and the fleshed Logos of God and the future life of each of us, as an eschatological spiritual experience.

Nevertheless, within the social frames (since the human beings are social beings) the Church has built her own characteristics as organised group of people on an organised authority.

However, any kind of authority is a form of "delicate" violence.... Aristotle and Plato combined the authority with the art of being able to lead the others. In the Christian philosophy there is not a close system of authority, but authority means the liturgical space of the charismatic society. Yet, during the ecclesiastical history we have lots of moments of abusing that society. The Christians, for example, were chased by the Jews and the Idolaters and then they chased the Jews and the Idolaters... (I quote from the Living letter of the 8th Assembly of the WCC from the women and men of the Decade Festival of the Churches in Solidarity with Women)

“Isolation, economic injustice, barriers to participation, racism, religious fundamentalism, ethnic genocide, sexual harassment, AIDS and violence against women and children” are some of the pitfalls of a failure society, even though this society is our Church. The fear of a failure society offers no Christian spirit between the church leaders or us.

I am not sure if the vision of the Decade in Solidarity for economic justice and the intolerance of poverty is still here. I am not sure if all women being involved in the church still or ever has had a real point.

We have to consider if we finally have found the water of justice, which Amos has described. The living letters of the WCC are a testimony of the things we would like to achieve or the things we are hoping to be basic ideas of our society, local, European, international.

The so-called living letters can remind us our vision or they can act as prophecies for the future. The living letters are small ecumenical teams visiting a country to listen, learn, share approaches and challenges in overcoming violence and in peace making, and to pray together for peace in the community and in the world. A team consists of 4 - 6 women and men from around the world who have witnessed violence in its various forms and are engaged in working for just peace. A Living Letters team will be successful when those visited can affirm "we are not alone!" - and when team members feel they have received much from those who they visited to encourage. The idea was based on 2 Corinthians 3,3 “You show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tables of human hearts!

They:

- demonstrate solidarity among churches and people who live in the context of and respond to
 - particularly painful experiences of violence,
- share insights and helpful approaches in overcoming violence,
- deepen ecumenical contacts among the churches, national councils of churches and related
 - organisations and networks,
- connect congregations, student and youth groups, theological and other church-related institutions in the search for an Ecumenical Declaration of Just Peace.

During the Decade "Churches in Solidarity with Women" 1988 - 1998, some 75 teams visited more than 650 communities. Several team visits have taken place each year from 2008 to 2010.

Let us here some parts of two of the living letters and then please take some time to reflect and discuss with yourself. Put your thoughts in order and reflect. Or if you like to share your experiences with the plenary please feel free to do it.

Evelyn Martin will read a Letter to the WCC 8th Assembly from the Decade Festival of the Churches with Solidarity with Women, in Harare.

Maria Lyraki will read a letter of the experience of the Ecumenical Decade by Despina M. Prassas.

Reflection questions for small groups

How can, as members of the Forum, to react nowadays in the present situation?

Is there any connection between the results of the Decade and our GA Message in Tinos (IXth EFECW General Assembly), in order to find the living water or in order us to be the living water for our society?

At the end let us pray all together to Christ to illuminate us to understand our place in the historical scenery and with him as an assistant to quench our thirst and to finally live all together!

Thank you very much for your attention!

Special Guest

FULATA MOYO, WCC programme executive

“A Just Community for Women and Men”

Presentation: “En-gendering unity: the building of a just Community of Women and Men in the Church in the multi-religious context” -20th anniversary since the end of the EDCSW, 1998-2018

Slide 1

Twila Carver’s and other women challenge men about their inclusion in the formation of WCC

- These were active members of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), and World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)
- They later became active members of the feminist movement and liberation theological movement.
- They build their movement around the power of: solidarity/networking, embracing feminine symbolism/imaging and perspectives.

Slide 2

The historical struggle of en-gendering unity-briefly

- Women were part of the process towards the birth of WCC
- At the Amsterdam assembly in 1948, Kathleen Bliss’ statement “we intend to stay together” to some of us, still stands as the most profound expressions of the ecumenical commitment.
- Twila Carver & survey in 1946: As a result of a report of the findings regarding women’s roles in the church that was presented at Amsterdam & the results of a commission put together

Slide 3

What is the mission of Women in Church and Society?

To ensure that the search for visible unity is done as a process of building a just community of women and men agenda

- Inclusive theological perspectives
- Equal and just participation of women and men
- Nurturing a just relationship where women and men can reach their highest potential in service to God, humanity and creation as a whole
- Is the ecumenical community a just community of women and men?

Slide 4-5

Quick overview of WCC history of WICAS cont.

- Amsterdam assembly instituted a commission to look at women in the church moderated by Ms Sarah Chakko (India), Kathleen Bliss as secretary
- Department for cooperation between women and men: January 1953

- First Director: Madeleine Barot, founder of CIMADE.
- 1954-WCC's started as a sub-unit on women and men later
- Reality of inequalities: sub-unit on women in church and society so as to include empowerment of women as its strategy
- Search for peace: 1956: birth of FLC
- Uppsala Assembly, 1968: in its extensive definitions of the apostolicity and catholicity of the Church, it prophetically argued that the search for unity of the church was actually inseparable from the search for justice (ending any form of discrimination);
- WICAS got momentum to contextualise Uppsala's definitions for their efforts for gender justice in building a community of women and men: June, 1974: Berlin consultation on "Sexism in the 70s"
- Nairobi Assembly, 1975: clear recommendation for a thorough study about how far the church was a real community of women and men.
- 1982: Birth of EFECW

Slide 6

Study carried out by WICAS and Faith and Order;

- That study led to the Sheffield consultation and report on "The Community of women and men in the church" in 1981 and 1983 respectively.
- Sheffield recommendations to the Vancouver Assembly in 1983 led to the declaration of 1988-1998 as the Decade of Churches in solidarity with women.
- Birth of the San Francisco Feminist Doctor of Ministry moderated by Prof Letty Russell

Slide 7

End of Decade: So many achievements as well as challenges including the following:

- Throughout the world, in most cases, the decade ended up being the "women's solidarity with women" as in most cases the brothers trivialised it.
- The reality of violence against women within the life of the church
- DOV: WICAS decided to focus on overcoming VAW: 2 processes and three strategies

Slide 8-10

5 strategies: Thematic focus: "Pilgrimage of gender justice and peace with no violence against women and men"

Process: gender advisory group that facilitate the holistic building of a community of women and men through:

- i. advocacy as awareness raising and gender training using the GTM (Co-produced with WCRC)
- ii. Linking advocacy as awareness raising and gender training and to advocacy for structural change through advocacy training of religious women and men working for

gender justice to be able hold governments and religious leaders accountable to influence policy making:

1. Joint advocacy training on CEDAW, UNSCR1325 and UPR
2. WCC gender justice policy
3. Participation in the EPAN
4. annual participation in the UN Commission on the Status of Women: **2016 theme:** “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development.” **Review theme:** “the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”
 - iv. Building a women’s network for mentorship, empowerment and accompaniment:
 - Ethic of care that responds to trafficked and sexually violated women and girls
 - Ending child, early and forced ‘marriage’ through education and accompaniment
 - Mentoring for women’s empowerment for leadership
 - Women’s Pilgrimage of gender justice and peace with no VAWG
 - Thematic: wandering, shifting tents and hospitality
 - v. Building a global network of activism against VAW through campaign and sharing online resources like:
 - Thursdays in Black campaign towards a world without rape and violence (started during the ecumenical decade of churches in solidarity with women 1988-98)
 - 2016: Ending child, early and forced ‘marriage’ through girls’ empowering education in sexuality and sexual and reproductive health
 - www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence
 - <http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/resources-dov/campaigns/40-days-to-end-violence-against-women.html>

slide 11

Challenges and opportunities:

- Power disparities that influence resourcing
- Related to the above, challenges of lack of integrated and holistic approaches: sources defining focus, methodologies and approaches
- Inaccessibility of information about ongoing processes
- WCC’s new approach to work with churches and ecumenical partners closely
- Failed patriarchal approaches to economy and climate justice: Women’s holistic approaches
- Existing women’s networks that are changing lives
- What are you doing and how can we work together?

FINAL MESSAGE

European Christian women acting in God's love

With a 10,000 year history, Cyprus, the island of Aphrodite, is a place of great natural beauty and geo-strategical importance. This is the island where Jesus' Apostles walked. The EFECW women were invited to walk in their footsteps.

Over fifty National Coordinators from 23 European countries, and a representative from the World Council of Churches 'Just Community of Women and Men', enjoyed the hospitality of their sisters in Cyprus who hosted the conference on the theme "How can justice, cultural diversity and sensitivity go hand in hand?" from 29 June to 3 July 2016 in Larnaca.

We were inspired by the message of the prophet Amos, "... Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5, 24), because we want righteousness and justice to flourish in our churches and in our societies through a continual and living communion with God, and cooperation and love between one other. This can be achieved using modern technology and ecumenical networking in addition to traditional ways. We strongly believe that in this way we will be empowered to take bold actions in our communities.

During 2014-2015, EFECW women carried out many projects on both national and international levels to meet the needs of societies struck by poverty, migration, injustice and war. These projects, implemented with cultural relevance, sensitivity and peace building efforts, addressed issues such as: how different religious groups learn to live together, pilgrimage, awareness raising around issues relating to sex-selective abortions, faith expressed through the arts, women producing their own food to sustain themselves, and improving community cohesion with Roma and other marginalized groups.

Moreover, as we reflected on 18 years since the end of the World Council of Churches Decade in Solidarity with Women, we discovered that the main recommendations are still very urgent. The economic situation and its impact on women, and the issue of women's participation in churches as well as in the business world, in politics and social life are still high on the agenda. Violence against women is as prevalent as before, and we need a renewed commitment to breaking the silence and challenging the systems, structures and cultural attitudes that sustain its existence.

The experience of the Pop Up Monastery (an EFECW 2015 inter-generational project initiated by young women) provided women with a space for individual spiritual growth in the search for their own identity, acknowledging their often busy and stressful lives. It set a precedent of good practice for empowering women for leadership, and providing opportunities for ecumenical and intercultural dialogue. It is essential that other women can gain similar experiences, and steps are being taken to establish the Pop Up Monastery as part of the wider ecumenical movement in Europe.

The strength of our Forum is to keep opening up to society. We want our voice to be heard like "living letters" as a sign of hope, reconciliation and mutual respect (2 Corinthians 3:3).

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1: *Women in church and society on the way to 20 years after the Decade*, organised by the EFECW working group “JustRight”

Objectives: Sharing background of theme, status quo, future perspectives and goals

Expected results:

- Getting a clear picture of the needs of the National Fora, in order to implement their specific goals, related to the themes/issues of the Decade
- Empowerment training

Facilitators: Gabi Kienesberger, Hannah Golda

A. Context:

From Solidarity to Accountability

“... Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5,24)

How can justice, cultural diversity and sensitivity go hand in hand?

The World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women 1988-1998 offered space for women to share their spirituality, their daily suffering and their talents. Now almost 20 years after the closing of the Decade (Harare Festival 1998) it is time for recommitment and rededication to the goals of the Decade – yet an unfinished agenda for the churches.

And it is in this light of the upcoming 20th Anniversary of the Decade (2018) that the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women is starting a reflection process on the achievements in our churches. But it is necessary to also focus on the discriminatory structures and practices in churches and society **today**.

Looking back

What were the aims and purposes of the Decade?

1. Empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country and their church.
2. Affirming – through shared leadership and decision making, theology and spirituality – the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities.
3. Giving visibility to women’s perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and integrity of creation.
4. Enabling the churches to free themselves from racism, sexism and classism; from teachings and practices that discriminate against women.
5. Encouraging the churches to take actions in solidarity with women.

What were the four main issues of the Decade and related calls to the Assembly?

1. Women and economic justice
2. Violence against women
3. Racism against women

4. Participation of the women in the life of the church

Here is a selection of the final Decade demands according to the four main issues:

Ad 1. Women and economic justice

... We urge our churches...

- *to declare poverty and all its dehumanizing consequences a scandal against God*
- *to unmask the economic forces of death and destruction*
- *to name the oppressive global economy, the liberalization of markets and the accompanying cut-backs in social and welfare services as enemies of God ...*

Ad 2. Violence against women

... We call to announce to the world, that violence against women is a sin.

... Let our initiatives include

- *exposing all sexual abuse, especially by those in positions of church leadership*
- *eliminating all biblical and theological justifications for the use of violence*
- *denouncing female genital mutilation, sex-tourism and trafficking of women and children.*

Ad 3. Racism against women

... We declare that fullness of life in Christ and Christ's prayer for unity require

- *that no race be valued over another*
- *that churches in the name of Christ challenge all acts of ethnic cleansing, caste atrocities, xenophobia and genocide*
- *that racism and ethnocentrism are against the will of God and have no place in God's household.*

Ad 4. Participation of the women in the life of the church

... We hold firmly to the vision of a human community where the participation of each and everyone is valued, where no one is excluded on the basis of race, sex, age, religion or cultural practice...

... We call upon our churches to initiate

- *training for women, men, girls and boys in how to live as just communities of women, men and children*
- *liturgies, gender and language policies that confirm and affirm all who participate*
- *policies that promote a balance of gender, age and race in leadership positions and roles, and honour people's cultural identities.*

From Harare 1998 to Busan 2013

Just Communities of Women and Men

Building just communities of women and men is a priority in all activities of the World Council of Churches as it sets out on a **Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace** in response to the call from the WCC 10th Assembly in 2013 in Busan.

The experiences, perspectives and participation of both women and men are equally needed for the transforming renewal of church and society. Just gender relations are essential as we respond to climate change, build an economy of life and promote just peace and human dignity.

Trainings to reflect, empower and develop

Ecumenical theological education and leadership training are keys in this process. This includes reflection on what justice and peace entails for women in dehumanizing situations – refugees, trafficked and sexually violated women.

WCC trainings empower religious women to use United Nations advocacy tools for women's rights and gender justice. Their voice is strengthened by networking between Christian women's organizations and those participating at the annual sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

A gender advisory group involving representatives from member churches has been set up to develop a gender justice policy for the WCC and to provide gender expertise to the general secretary.

But where are we now, almost twenty years after Harare?

Bringing back into our mind what church leaders committed themselves to during these global WCC Assemblies, also feelings of hope, trust and even enthusiasm come back.

Nevertheless, we have to be even more attentive to all our sisters who suffer hidden pain of isolation, economic injustice, restricted participation, racism, religious fundamentalism, ethnic genocide, sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS, violence against women and children, bombing of their homes, displacement, exploitation as refugees, exploitation as care workers.

It is in this context and strongly related to the message of the Forum's 9th General Assembly in Tinos in 2014 that the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women encourages its members to inquire reflections and examples of implementation of the Harare and the Busan results in their churches and countries. But, moreover, it is to encourage them to identify the present challenges and to develop jointly effective strategies to step forward on our pilgrimage of justice and peace, on mutual agreement of cultural diversity and sensitivity.

B. *Brainstorming* elements – themes/burning issues,

***Organizing* the brainstorming elements under the four main themes of the Decade**

Women and economic justice

- Awareness on problems
- Peace building re. refugees and migration
- Encourage women to be more active → inequality, violence at home ...
- Overcoming poverty – more opportunities
- Trafficking and domestic violence
- Theoretical thinking how to distribute goods

Violence against women

- Trafficking and domestic violence
- Sexist language
- Encourage women to be more active → inequality, violence at home ...
- Learn our history in Europe of last 500 years
- How to overcome stereotypes

Participation of the women in the life of the church

- Participation in decision making
- Visibility of women's work
- 50 percent women quota

Racism against women

- How to overcome stereotypes
- No trust in institutions → right wing & populism
- Racism against women in London
- Interfaith dialogue and learning, especially among women
- Communion – communication – community

General remarks

- Gender neutral “ads”
- Backlash in many areas (i.e. women's ordination in Latvia)
- Influence of churches is going down
- People seek protection in churches regularly
- Respect what is done and build on it

Reflection: Where do we see the biggest need? In the church, in society?

- *Violence against women:* Peace building → refugees and migration
- *Participation of the women in the life of the church:* Awareness on problems
- *Racism against women:* Interfaith dialogue and learning, esp. with women

Steps in 2017 – feedback from group discussion

Conference in Sweden

Conference of protestant and ecumenical women in Switzerland

Women's Synod on care in March in the Netherlands

Connecting two working groups of EFECW:

- Safe places for women, inclusive language, female circumcision, awareness raising in schools, female identity

Already had studies about violence against women, statistics, results, good practices

Women – refugees

Peace building and violence – female working group to decide actions, experts

Raise visibility of violence against women in the churches

Regional youth meeting in Ukraine – reconciliation process

Online platform:

- Refugees
- Intercultural and interreligious hearing
- Cultural sensitivity towards minorities

Council of Europe:

- 2014 Istanbul Convention – not yet ratified in all countries
- EFECW to raise awareness in churches, on a political level
- Strasbourg – parliamentary assembly through ANDANTE, the French forum

Workshop 2: *Young Women's Strategy*, organised by the Young Women's group

We asked the workshop participants:

What are the key issues/topics...

- *In your personal life*
- *In your immediate environment*
- *In your church*
- *In your society/country*

We then grouped their responses and came up with the following themes, and had two votes each for our preferred themes to focus on:

1. Church in society 1 (interaction with society, church as a positive voice)
2. Emigration – Immigration 3
3. Dialogue between generations 2
4. Women and identity 6 (reproductive rights, women's bodies)
5. Future of politics 0
6. Gender justice 3 (gender equality, sexual harassment)
7. Leadership 2
8. Spiritual Growth 5

We had three concrete ideas:

1. On the theme of **migration**, the forum is well placed to support women who are living and working in a country that is not their own. How can we use our networks to contact women who are in this situation and create new initiatives or projects?
2. The WCC concept of '**Living Letters**' could be applied – a group of young women could visit a forum/young women in another country both in solidarity but also as an exchange of learning and an opportunity to build links and networks. This would help strong national forums share their experience with those who are finding it more difficult to reach out to young women in their countries (see next page for information on Living Letters).
3. An event focused on young women at the start of their careers would cover the themes of women and identity, leadership and spiritual growth. It would enable women to develop skills of resilience. This could possibly follow the **TedX model** of delivering talks - designed to help communities, organisations and individuals to spark conversation and connection at the local level.

Plenary Discussion: **Pop Up Monastery (PUM) Follow Up**

Participants were invited on the first night to watch the movie [“Garden of Eve”](#)

Having watched the film and heard the report...

1. How do you think PUM contributes to the vision of the forum to provide space for ecumenical and spiritual encounter?
2. What possibilities do you see for PUM developing? *Regional / European*

Participants discussed the above questions in groups:

Group 1

Important to follow this path!

We propose:

1. Neighbourhood meeting connected with the offer of PUM
2. A spiritual journey/pilgrimage to different retreat places (catholic/protestant/orthodox)

Group 2

Spreading information about EFECW

Attracting new people

Group 3

Good way for involving younger women – looser timetable, hunger for spirituality

Well balanced mixture of spiritual life/retreat/social gathering/excursion

Understanding that everyone in the group was a spiritual leader – each women has this gift and the film shows this very well

Community where women could really open up – share their burdens – a nest that was holding them and they could feel secure, the importance of supportive community

Imola (a PUM participant) became a member of the Romanian forum after PUM – important to stay in touch with those who attended

Many events for Christians to attend – what does PUM offer that’s different?

If we don’t make it a tradition/part of the forum then it will lose its impact – should be a continuing project for existing forum members/non-forum members

Will the existing PUM team carry it on? No! It is important to identify new women who can develop their skills and leadership

Finance – women have to do their own fundraising/learn these skills. You learn to tell the story of what it is you are trying to do and achieve through writing funding applications

There is a need for support for women in forum countries to run events on issues relating to the forum (e.g. VAW) – who to invite, how to organise etc.

Group 4

Q1 - New forms of spirituality; practice

Strengthen the spirit of the forum

There was a lack of clarity what the purpose was (from young people to young people or for all generations?)

Variety of people, relationships improved

Silence was considered very positive

Spirituality can be expressed through actions

Not only speaking about, but living a vision

Pilgrimage – positive

Intergenerational experience – spoke to all of them

Show the film in the assemblies – distribution

Q2-

Greece – Armenia, maybe 2017. Greek participants might be in preparation group

Huissen – women's monastic week based on PUM schedule (pilgrimage, prayer rhythm, night vigil) – in summer August (5-9) 2016

France – PUM in French language? Language can be an obstacle for women to participate

Switzerland/France – neighbourhood meeting as PUM instead of meeting?

Ecumenical monastery in Northern Italy (BOSE near Ivrea)

Group 5

Q1

Embroidery was done the way it had been long ago

Contributed very well and encouraged people outside of Forum and all had a positive view

It allowed time for spirituality among us all

How did it compare with the pilgrimage – pilgrimage not as static as PUM (*possibly Egeria?*)

Started with prayer – most of the time was in silence so along with the presence of God

Time for prayer, singing and talking

Through invited guests from local papers passed the message of the forum to wider community

Have time to think and reflect on day's events

Time for silence very important

PUM can encourage Christians to experience monastery life of another faith – how the women meditate, pray, read their texts, music

Q2

Encourage further interfaith with Muslim and Islam to carefully unite with their women's groups

Group 6

Q1

A good way to invite new members to the forum

A way to express your spirituality and your faith

Active sisterhood

Fulfilled women, self-understanding, transformation

Time for the one and communion to meet with oneself, each other and God

Meeting with young and older women to share life together

It would be fun for Pop Up Monastery to keep on popping up – give more women the chance to experience it

The movie can be used to inspire and invite

It has to be repeated maybe every second year? But who could do it? The main part of the participating women needs to be involved from the beginning. It's a big job...every year is too much!

It doesn't necessarily have to be women from the forum, but from our movements

Spread the information to younger women

Is it possible to put the movie or parts of it on the web somewhere? Maybe on YouTube?

Share more parts from the daytime of PUM to give a better view of what to expect?

Q2

In Sweden the national forum is trying to do a short retreat within Sweden to try out a concept to share with and invite in the local contexts in Sweden.