

**Ich bin fremd
gewesen**

**und ihr habt mich
aufgenommen**

International Ecumenical Conference: „I was a stranger and you welcomed me“

Church and Migration

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Central findings and ideas for further work

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- **Where do we stand? – How do we as churches in our contexts experience the challenges of the globalised world that is characterised by migration and diversity?**
- **Where are we going? – What biblical images and ecumenical insights guide us as churches in view of the challenges of migration and diversity?**

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1. Migration is a global phenomenon.

Distinction between migration and flight, voluntary and forced migration:

Flight: most of the refugees are staying in their own or in neighbour countries. (Reasons of flight: violence, war, hunger, climate change, oppression)

Migration: problem of brain drain – *but there is a benefit, too.*

Immigration countries have economic and social benefit – *really? Not all of them.*

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2. Being a stranger is a common experience

- everybody has his/her own experience of being a stranger
- even in the own country, even in the own church
- church has to be a stranger in the world
- *Danger to romanticize strangeness. It's hard to experience strangeness. It bears conflicts. – vulnerability*
- *Societies need new impulses/people to develop*

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3. From heaven to earth

God left his glory and migrated to our sinful situation *in Jesus Christ.* (Phil.2,5-11)

People migrate to be safe. (Gen.29,16-30) – *Often they come into very dangerous situations. (Sinful world)*

God migrates to save us. – *First of all he shows his compassion and solidarity with the oppressed.*

That's the whole understanding of incarnation, the essence of faith.

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4. Fear – Hope

As Christians we are called to hope and to resist propaganda against strangers, Islamophobia etc. There are bad experiences of Christians in Muslim countries, but they should not be generalized. Most of the refugees coming to Europe are Christians. Religious freedom should be guaranteed. Oikoumene in the understanding of reconciled diversity must also mean: interreligious dialogue, transcultural learning.

It's a long way from fear to hope, a never ending process. Challenge of the church: tell stories, make people known to each other, open doors. That also brings joy, new perspectives, enrichness.

We should talk about the real concerns: there is no limitation of migration of capital. Migration of companies is the problem and destroys the livelihoods of people. Prophetic voice of the church is needed, based in the hope of resurrection.

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