



PROGRAMME NARRATIVE – WEA MC GLOBAL CONSULTATION IN PANAMA 2016

“The most important are not the vessels, but the cargo, all the goods and commodities that are shipped through the canal”, said the vice-president of the Panama Canal.

The application to the Global Consultation of the WEA Mission Commission is easy to make. In a polycentric world of mission, the many kinds of bearers of the Gospel are only important because of the message they carry and bring to other places. Going from East to West, from South to North, or just circulating in the same region, the multiple and diverse missional structures have all the same challenge: to bring hope to a chaotic and needy world with an integral Gospel in a relevant way for people of our days. “From everywhere to everywhere” may be a worn-out expression but it is more reality today than ever before. In the 21st century, Mission has many centres and goes from “all nations to all nations”.

Why Panama?

The Panama Canal has an amazing history and you will have the opportunity to know more about it when attending the consultation. The dream of uniting the two big seas, the Pacific and the Atlantic, came through in 1914 after many years of hard work, many “martyrs”, a lot of creative solutions and heavy investments. With larger ships, more traffic and demands of faster delivery, new locks will be ready in a couple of months. It is, of course, the picture of a dynamic world we live in. Almost impossible dreams can be dreamt and become reality. Historic, political, religious and cultural barriers to the message about Jesus Christ can be overcome, although it could require a lot of effort. The knowledge about the Kingdom needs to reach the outmost of the earth, regardless how we define it and “where” it is. At the same time new and different structures need to be created in order to respond to new realities around the globe.

The choice of Panama City as the venue for the 14th global consultation organised by Mission Commission is really appropriate and timely. It is 100 years since the Panama Conference and although the main focus was on evangelisation of the Latin American continent the themes discussed had a wider scope and influenced Evangelicals around the globe. However, the objective is not to remain in the past but to understand the current situation of polycentric mission and search for the new ways of working together in order to make Jesus and the Kingdom known to all people.

The dynamic Church in Latin America in general, and in Central America in particular, is an encouraging example of what mission is about today. The encounter of the waters making possible both gathering and scattering gives a consultation gives to Panama also a geographic significance.

The conference centre that will host us is the Westin Playa Bonita Hotel Panama that is located just outside Panama City. It is a nice hotel at the Pacific coast with excellent facilities and enough meeting rooms for the different gatherings in the programme. Although being of a higher standard than needed (and perhaps too luxurious for many of us), the fact that the conference centre offers security, all the rooms needed, the necessary equipment and a good deal for such a gathering, was the decisive reason for choosing the place. And we hope that those who come will enjoy the good food, the nice view of the ocean, the many pools and the various spots for fellowship and prayer, when not in the planned meetings of the dynamic programme.

The consultation is bi-lingual, English and Spanish, and we will provide translation into French and other major languages as needed.

The expected processes and outcomes for the consultation are the following:

- Gather the MC community. Almost 300 mission leaders from 85 countries are officially associated to the Mission Commission. The MC community is, however, much larger including hundreds of leaders that relate to the 25 different task forces and networks that are linked to the MC;
- Provide a safe space for fellowship and sharing, believing that it is a crucial need for many of us in leadership;
- Promote the interaction between the different networks related to the MC, exploring the enormous potential of working together sharing our different perspectives and resources;
- Reflect on Panama 1916 issues and the polycentric reality of mission today;
- Provide an opportunity for listening to voices of mission leaders and missional thinkers from a specific region, this time particularly from Latin America;
- Give a global perspective of mission, using Panama as a symbol for both unity and diversity, gathering and scattering, historical richness and relevant creativity in advancing the Kingdom;
- Launch two new books produced by MC task forces; and
- Listen to the Missional God through His word and through His people.

PROGRAMME FLOW (see the attached chart for an overview of the programme)

The main theme of the Consultation is *POLYCENTRIC MISSION – from all nations to all nations*. The general flow of the programme starts with a brief

historical review of Panama 1916 and the developments in mission both out of the Latin American continent and in a global perspective. Lessons from history will be applied to current realities and the polycentric mission will be described and analysed.

The fast changing world scenario will be acknowledge is several of the plenary sessions and roundtable discussions, focusing on collective contributions and partnership solutions. So taking the history as a trampoline into the present with focus on the future of mission, the consultation aims to help us move some steps ahead in an obedient, servant-minded and cooperative discipleship for the sake of God's Kingdom and the impact of the Gospel. Each evening an editorial team will be sharing some of the conclusions of the discussions of the day and at the end produce a document that will reflect the conversations of the week.

The MC Global Consultation in Panama starts with buffet dinner on Monday, October 3rd, 2016. Hopefully all will have arrived safely to Panama and to the conference centre by then.

The opening evening has a diverse programme with a cultural presentation by employees of the Panama Canal, greetings from representatives from WEA, the Evangelical Alliance of Panama and local authorities. The worship team will already be active under the leadership of Santiago Benavides (Colombia) and Josh Davis (USA). The theme of the consultation will be introduced by the Executive Director of the MC, followed by a Celebration of the Centenary of the **Panama 1916 Conference**, with a presentation of the event and its importance for today's mission. It is also a night for mingle and getting to know new people.

All mornings will initiate with a time of worship and a biblical reflection based in the book of Jonah, led by David Ruiz (Guatemala), Dr. Samuel Escobar (Peru/Spain), Dr. Anne-Marie Kool (Netherlands/Hungary) and Rev. John Amalraj (India), with time for personal and collective prayer.

Tuesday (Oct. 4th) morning is dedicated to the missiological topic, "Mission from the periphery" presented by Dr. Samuel Escobar and followed by group discussions around tables. After a refreshing coffee break, the consultation divides in thematic groups, aiming to create interaction between the different networks and task forces related to the MC. People from the diverse missional community will discuss specific themes but also try to find ways to collaborate in response to the issues that will be raised. The topics are:

1. Mission in Motion - how is mobilization of mission done today and what are the challenges for the future?
2. Spirituality and Mission - what can we learn from different cultures and traditions?
3. Training and equipping missionaries for the reality of mission.
4. Caring and supporting mission workers in a stormy world.
5. Arts for a better future – using arts in mission.
6. Contextualized communication of the Gospel.

7. State of the Gospel: Reflecting on the UPG concept, major religious blocks, underserved geographical regions, the potential of the global church for discipling the nations.
8. Innovated strategies in mission and sustainable mission models.
9. Mentorship & Leadership transition in mission.
10. Migration, Displaced and Diaspora - challenges and opportunities.

On Tuesday afternoon Dr. Valdir Steuernagel (Brazil) will lead us in a reflection around the theme “Missiological roadmaps for the church” and after coffee break we will spend time in regional groups. The evening will be dedicated to “Indigenous peoples in Latin America” with the participation of three leaders of Indigenous churches in Central and South America.

After the bible study on Wednesday morning, Dr. Samuel Pagan (Puerto Rico) will speak on the “Mission journey from 1916 to 2016”, followed by table group discussions. And after the coffee break, Dr. Mary Lederleitner (USA) will help us to understand the meaning of “Polycentric mission”.

During the afternoon of Wednesday we are all invited to visit the Panama Canal and to a city tour. The evening is dedicated to the younger leaders continuum network with a special programme led by Adriaan Adams (South Africa) for leaders in Latin America in general and Panama in particular. The speaker of the evening is Hélder Favarin (Brazil/Spain). All the participants at the consultation are invited also to this evening session.

Following the biblical reflection on Thursday morning, we will listen to Dr. Patrick Fung (Singapore) on the theme “Cooperation in a polycentric world”. During the coffee & tea break it is time to move to the Missional Fair that will give the participants the opportunity to share and to be acquainted with missional ministries, resources and books. In rooms around the plaza brief “Missio-talks” will also be presented. After lunch break there is time for the different Networks and Task Forces related to the MC to gather for business, seminars and fellowship. Before dinner, all the participants will meet again in their regional groups, reflecting on the relevance of the presented themes for their own region and applying any conclusions to their own reality. The first part of the evening of Tuesday will take us further in a projection towards the future with the presentation of Dr. Jehu Hanciles (Sierra Leone) on “Engaging the changing global landscape”. The second part of the evening will be dedicated to the transition ceremony, presenting the new Executive Director of the WEA Mission Commission.

Friday is the last day of the consultation and hopefully the climax of the week together. After worship and biblical reflection we will listen to Duncan Olumbe (Kenya) on the topic “The cost of unity in mission” and have time for reflection around the tables. After coffee break, Bishop Efraim Tendero (Philippines) will talk about “The challenge of unity: Christian witness in mutual servanthood”. In the concluding session we will meet around the tables, celebrating the Holy Communion.

In preparation for the Consultation, please pray that

- The Lord will affirm strong, trusting relational bonds as colleagues in global mission service and introduce new relationships;
- The Lord may speak to us through the reflection on the missiological themes;
- Most participants will be able to discover how God will provide, through their own networks, for their full participation and travel costs;
- God will lead some to offer funds for partial scholarships;
- The preparations for the consultation will work out in a satisfactory and effective manner; and
- The fruitfulness of the table groups and thematic meetings will be places for developing the relationships with each other and with the Spirit of God that will help all of us understand the central role of the Church in witnessing to Christ in our time.

On behalf of the Program Committee,

David Ruiz – program director

Bertil Ekström – executive director