

In this issue: *Representatives from Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Central and Eastern Europe were together in a retreat house close to Budapest, September 11th till 14th 2014. Their topic was reconciliation. A most important topic, also for this region of Europe. A report from Kees Slijkerman.*

EUROPEAN RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE

The meeting was organized by the European subcommittee of ICCRS and led by the committee members Laszlo Gorove (Hungary), Katerina Lachmanova (Czech republic), father Wojciech Nowacki (Poland) and Eva Sido (Hungary). In an opening speech ICCRS-president Michelle Moran said: 'I believe in the surprises of the Holy Spirit*. We are on the breakthrough of new things'. Surprises we have seen during this conference. We were changed from the inside and put on the way of acting prophetically as ministers of reconciliation.

Main speaker was father Peter Hocken (1932, Brighton, England), who lives in the east of Austria - close to Slovakia - where he receives groups of mainly young people who come for teaching.



In spite of his age, he is still travelling, mostly in Europe. He is involved in the areas of reconciliation, charismatic renewal and ecumenism.

No salvation and unity without reconciliation

A basic statement of father Peter Hocken was that *reconciliation, unity* and *salvation* are completely linked with each other and cannot without each other. So, reconciliation is not something extra for those who like it. It is central for all Christians. 'God reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation' (2 Cor. 5: 17- 20), he reconciled Jews and non-Jews (Eph. 2:16) and 'all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace' (Col. 1:19-20).

All divisions, caused by sin, are hindering the work of God and the coming of his Kingdom. Sins of the past are a block hindering

evangelization today and in the future. So, the sins of the past that have caused our divisions have to be confessed. Like Jesus really came in the flesh, identifying himself completely with the Jewish people and with all mankind, in order to redeem us, we have to identify ourselves with our nation, our people and our church. We are responsible for the heritage of our nation and our church, both the shame and the glory.

Powerful testimony

What does this mean in practice? This was illustrated by a powerful testimony from Slovakia. Pavol Strežo, who learned a lot from father Peter, discovered in his home town a Jewish woman who survived the Holocaust. 250 Jewish citizens of this town were deported and killed by in a nazi-destruction camp. Pavol simply asked her: 'did anybody ever say sorry to you for this?' She said 'no'. Pavol went to the mayor with this information and with his calling for reconciliation in his heart. The mayor, who was not a believer, was open to organize a meeting of reconciliation. This really took place and was a breakthrough in the relationship between Jews and non-Jews. After this meeting other sins of the past have been addressed and reconciled in this town, with a lot of prayer and with prophetic acts . Father Ján Buc from Slovakia, who is responsible for a Slovak Christian television station, told about reconciliation between churches on a national level during worship festivals with 6000 participants. The vision behind this reconciliation initiatives is to work for the kingdom of God and to create a whole new culture in Slovakia. It was very encouraging to

hear about the concrete changes in society as a fruit of reconciliation initiatives.



Pavol Strežo and fr. Ján Buc from Slovakia

From personal level to official confessions

Father Peter explained that normally reconciliation initiatives start on the personal level with prayer and being led by the Holy Spirit. On a second level are personal initiatives with others, like the examples given from Slovakia. These are not official, but can have a representative character. Finally you can have governmental and official confessions, like Pope John Paul II did on behalf of the whole Roman Catholic church. What the Lord asks each of us to do, depends on our own situation. One from Latvia told that, both in 1941 and 1949, about 40,000 people from Latvia were deported by Russia to a concentration camp, and very few of them survived. Did ever anybody mourn for the killing of each of this people? Did anybody pray for them?

Change of thinking, behavior and wounds



Eva Sido from Hungary

In the final session Eva shared what struck her during the conference. She grew up as a Hungarian in Romania (Transylvania). Her one grandfather was Jewish, the other grandfather was anti-Jewish. In Romania people sometimes

shouted: go home to Hungary. In Hungary she sometimes can hear: go home to Romania. She was involved in many reconciliation meetings in the past. She discovered that such an initiative can result only in a first step of 'okay, you are not so bad, after all'. But real 'reconciliation begins when the Holy Spirit changes me inside: my thinking, my behavior and my wounds. Jesus died in his body to make us his body.

Also the effects of communism on nations and on churches were addressed: defensive reactions, suspicion etc. Many still have the feeling: 'The prison is open, but is it safe to come out?'.



The participants from Croatia and Poland.

CCR and reconciliation

How can the Catholic charismatic renewal contribute? Father Peter: 'The experience of the Holy Spirit in the Renewal equips Christians to be agents of reconciliation.

1. Hearing the Lord: both as to what to confess, as to how to lead reconciliation initiatives, where to begin, how to proceed.
2. Sensing the leading of the Holy Spirit: what to say, when and how to say it.
3. The use of the charisms.
4. Spontaneity in articulation, in speaking, and in acting, especially spontaneous prayer and expressions of sorrow.
5. Use of everyone's gifts, the priesthood of all the baptized; makes possible new relationship between clergy & laity.
6. Involvement of the whole person: mind, emotions, spirit; tears, groaning, the prayer of lament.

Next meeting is open

It's a great privilege to meet so many dedicated people from different countries. The next European conference of ICCRS will be open to everybody who wants to participate: 1-4 October 2015 in Warsaw.

Kees Slijkerman,
secretary of the European subcommittee of ICCRS



Participants came from Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia and the European network of communities. Special guests came from Austria, European committee members from England, Germany and the Netherlands.

Further study:

The text of the PowerPoint presentations of father Peter will be on www.stucom.nl > document 0391uk.

Repenting for the sins of the past to heal the wounds of history - Mgr. dr. Peter Hocken

English: www.stucom.nl/document/0132uk.pdf

German: www.stucom.nl/document/0132de.pdf

Dutch: www.stucom.nl/document/0132.pdf

French: www.stucom.nl/document/0132fr.pdf

*Michelle referred to the book 'A new Pentecost?', one of the first books she ever read on charismatic renewal. Its written by Cardinal Suenens. The whole text of this book is on the web: www.stucom.nl/document/0237uk.pdf.

Pictures are made by Agnieszka Kilińska

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European web-site, including old ISSUES and some Spanish and Croatian translations of Eucril: www.iccrs.eu.