

Wibke Janssen

I am honored by the opportunity to share thoughts about discerning the vision and mission of WCRC in the view of former inputs. I am thankful for the stimulations I got. They work in my mind and heart causing trouble and widen my horizons. Being invited to this panel provides me with the courage to try to bring salt as flavor to the table.

Justice needs perseverance

“Justice is not, when everyone gets the same”, that was a firm conviction, my mother referred to in various situations of my childhood. I struggle with this sentence till this day. In the best situations her approach made sure that every person received what they needed, in other situations, in my eyes, it was just used by her to justify unjust distribution. We experience with this General Council that a constitution based on order principles can provide justice. We also heard that order and structures like a nation lead to injustice and that there is a promise in disorder and disruption. We benefit from the advantages of digital devices for the functioning of our conference, but we also know about the exploitation connected with mining the necessary components for their production and we got an impression concerning the risks of AI for our future. It is obvious how colonialism still infiltrates systems and structures and in “my world” not easy to tackle it. We got in contact with touching examples for the interconnectedness of climate disaster and poverty and violence, we learned more about intersectionality of discrimination. The Bible is helpful and demanding in the same time. It embraces different concepts of justice: restitution like Zachaeus, providing with daily needs as the winegrower, forgive as the father of the lost son ... What a mess. Striving for justice is complicated and exhausting, not to speak of the dangers this way may implicate. You truly need perseverance to walk a way of justice, to decide what is a just solution and to find out how to achieve it in a manner that does not endanger justice itself.

Perseverance provides a wide horizon

Perseverance is a shimmering term. Endurance, decisiveness, resilience, patience and impatience, willingness to act and to wait and far more are in the field. Hebrews, where the motto is coming from, is full of reflexes from the first testament. With perseverance we are invited to connect to the psalm prayers with their lamenting, never giving up the openness for God to turn the balance of power upside down. We are pointed to Hiob being resistant to the moral approach that his disaster is his own fault. We are linked to the prophets who do not accept a separation of spiritual life and social justice, who keep track, even if it is more than uncomfortable, who open their eyes and ears to God's visions, who share their fatigue and despair honestly. -

Perseverance for body and soul

I appreciate the input of the youth caucus, criticizing the working ethos they experience with the design of this assembly. I am familiar with similar critique coming from my adult children, watching their parents working "beyond", following duties unquestioned and sucking sense from occupation. Maybe perseverance needs a rhythm? I love, how we sing perseverance! How to dance perseverance? I am convinced that the work-life-balance that my generation practices has deep roots in European Calvinist theology and must be skillfully reflected to overcome the cultural pattern. This should be done in a joint international movement with special regards to for example indigenous and crip theology.

I am stunned by the diversity of persons being here in one place, my siblings by foundation of my creator and our believe in Jesus Christ. I am longing to come from negotiating to sharing, from bringing my ideas forward to let your ideas touch me. I share the desire of the youth caucus to have time to do so.

I ask myself how the richness to be found here may have an impact on the every day life of our churches within the next seven years, how connectedness may be lived throughout that time? All that facing limited financial and personnel resources. A prayer alert, sent around in case of disaster? A network-mentoring-program to get more women in leadership positions, involving mentors from the own and another church? I really don't

know, but my impression is: financial commitment is linked to an ongoing experience of belonging together.

The cloud of witnesses

I am stuck in the image of the cloud of witnesses. I see a cloud in the sky: a composition of millions of little drops of water, hold together by electricity. I imagine: We as a cloud of individuals with the potential to satisfy thirst, hold together by the Holy Spirit. We as a cloud that is defined, whose outlines are discernible, but so fluid and volatile that we can conquer barbed wires.

The cloud of witnesses could be imagined as a cloud of mosquitos, buzzing and annoying: ever and ever again speaking of observations of injustice, like Nivedita Menons 'nibbling injustice'. The cloud of witnesses could appear like a big heavy cloud, announcing lightning and thunder, to foreshadow loud and open protest that throws light on blatant dangers for the integrity of human beings and the whole ecological system. - And I have another, very special cloud on my mind: In Germany we experience with the autumn time, that we are in, a special phenomenon of bird clouds: ten thousands of one species fly and move together as a cloud in the sky, building a new form every some seconds. It truly is a miracle of creation that they do not collide during their fast wavy actions. The enormous clouds regularly stop people in their everyday actions, attracting their eyes to the sky. The power of the bird-cloud's flight is striking, the performance of togetherness is compelling. They communicate mobility, the opportunity of change, beauty. So: Let us be a perseverant cloud of witnesses, vivid, visible and vigorous, empowered and moved by Jesus Christ.

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