



Almost everyone at the metro on the excursion day

WSCF Europe
Consultation on the Eucharist
11-16 June 2010
Kiev, Ukraine



From 11-16 June 2010, approximately 30 participants from throughout Europe gathered in Puscha Vodysta, a suburb of Kiev, for the WSCF Lingua Franca Ecumenical Leadership Training “Consultation on the Eucharist”. A few participants met each

other on the marshrutkas (buses) on the way to the venue, and conversations on the Eucharist began even as they were venturing to the seminar.

The programme started with an ecumenical opening prayer. As everyone introduced themselves during the icebreakers, they tossed a ball of string to the next person, creating a web of connections which would grow stronger as the week continued. On cutouts of footprints, participants wrote on one foot what they brought with them to the seminar and on the other what they hoped to take away.



Some of the feet

Fueling Dialogue

Rachael Weber, the WSCF-E Lingua Franca Coordinator, led an “Introduction to Dialogue” session, which gave techniques for listening and practicing dialogue throughout the week. Participants divided into groups to practice the techniques with questions about the Eucharist. James Grant, a Pastoral Theology graduate student from Scotland, then gave an introductory lecture focusing on ecumenical and liturgical movements in the 20th century. He spoke of the “chicken and egg” dilemma, coined by theologian Susan White. Which must come first, theological agreement on the Eucharist or actively celebrating the Eucharist together? His lecture was followed by a time of group discussion.

Volodymir Malachyn, a Greek Catholic priest from Ukraine, led an interactive discussion session on “Globalisation and the Eucharist”, exploring how Eucharist traditions are affected by today's highly mobile and interconnected world. Topics examined included the sharing of the Eucharist in migrant church communities.

Victoria Koznian, a Reformed Pastor from Hungary, spoke on “National and Political Barriers to Unity”. As a case study, she explored the challenges faced by the Hungarian Reformed Church, which was divided when national borders were

redrawn. In small group discussions participants expanded the case study to examine similar situations and to discuss other borders that divide or unite church communities.

Nadezhda Savova, an Orthodox from Bulgaria, led a workshop on art, theology and community in the creation and baking of the bread. She travels around the world giving bread workshops in order to promote community, art and faith. Participants made bread together, also using traditional proshporos bread stamps. Later, all enjoyed breaking and eating the freshly baked rolls.



Preparing the dough

Mark Berry, a leader in the Safespace community in the UK, spoke about alternative communities of church that have been springing up all over the world. His presentation offered new ideas about community lifestyles and about the celebration of the Eucharist in community.



Dialogue or Debate

Experiencing the Eucharist

Though all could not partake of the bread and cup together, all shared in the images, sights, smells and experiences of different Eucharist services. Time for reflection and questions followed each of these services, helping everyone to reflect on the experience and to understand the theology, symbolism and faith behind the different elements.

On the first day, participants attended the Divine Liturgy at a small local Russian Orthodox church. On the second, everyone went into the centre of Kiev to attend an English Mass at a Roman Catholic church. The Protestant participants jointly organised a Communion service at the venue. Much dialogue was generated as a result of these services, and all felt the pains of separation. We could pray, sing, eat, discuss, learn, explore our faiths, and live together, yet we could not share the Eucharist together.

Following from these visits, the panel discussion further explored the meaning of the Eucharist in different denominations. The panelists were Andrei Dumitru and Andreea Toma, Orthodox from Romania; Joanne Lam, from the United Church of Canada but living in Switzerland; Katerina Babicova, a Catholic from Slovakia; and Phillip Sides, an Anglican from Ireland.



Reflection session after Catholic Mass



Tour of Kiev

their home countries. All of the evenings were filled with singing from the different nations and traditions present. Discussions and other games often continued into the night. After all activities and fellowship, late night ecumenical prayers closed each day. Then, only a few hours later for some, morning ecumenical prayers opened the new day.

Carrying On

In a closing exercise examining “Barriers to Unity” participants ranked themselves on a thermometer, expressing how their feelings, understandings and opinions had changed or stayed the same. Phillip Sides gave a short introduction to the peace and reconciliation process between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, explaining briefly how the barriers were (and continue to be) overcome. All divided into groups to further reflect on the week and on steps forward once back home.

John Delap, from Ireland, gave a reflective overview of the week together. Later, the participants organised the closing prayer, complete with candles, singing, and a reflection on the topic and the challenge of returning home. The programme closed with the final party and participants began leaving the next morning.



Listening

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Throughout the week, close bonds were formed through the programme and the practice of living in community together. All felt they learned more about the other traditions present. The dialogue on the Eucharist, truly, had just begun for everyone gathered in Kiev, and would continue on as all returned to their home communities.