

A Magic Window of Scottish Theology

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2010 was a year with several significant anniversaries: the Reformation, including Calvin and Knox and the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, which inspired much of the 20th century's ecumenical hope and energy. But 2010 was also a year of a modest Jubilee of Scottish Churches House, founded in 1960 by the Scottish churches as "a place that the churches hold in common, and from which they together develop their ministry and mission". And exactly this House became a place where people from all around the world came together in order to share their visions for the future.

Visions for the Future was the second International Theological Summer School at Scottish Churches House, held from 26 June to 9 July in the Scotland's smallest city - Dunblane. Organizers managed to welcome twenty-two participants from fourteen countries for the two week study visit which took them to Edinburgh and Glasgow, St. Andrews and New Lanark, Paisley and Iona; visiting places of social, ecclesiastical and theological interest as well as meeting people in context. All of this created a unique space where people from different cultural and confessional backgrounds could share their experience and study the complex social, religious and cultural life of Scotland.

This school was without doubt one of the most impressive events in my life in the last while; and this event was so versatile that I hardly can describe it in brief. But one word occurs to me – *Window*. *Window* is the best image I can find to describe what this school was personally for me. I should say, that it is indeed not a usual window but a magic one, because you can look out of it and see every time other places and people. This magic window gives also an incredibly wide perspective of what is happening outside, and can show even the future! What have I seen through this window? Mainly three dimensions: the world, the church and the future.

Window to the world

Through Scotland to the whole world! The hospitality of Scotland was a real gift for each participant. At the Theological Summer School we were people from all around the world who met each other in this country with a great history and culture, in order to reflect on the problems which are relevant to everyone. We not only met each other as individuals but also as representatives of different cultural and social backgrounds. Through communication with each other and presentations of our countries we were able to discover the world in its diversity. Together we were trying to investigate the interaction of Christians with other people within contemporary society and analyze the theological, social, political and economical conditions of contemporary intercultural transformation process.

Window to the Church

Russian religious philosopher and theologian, Father Pavel Florensky, said that icon was a window to the other, heavenly world. It represents reality which we cannot perceive in our usual life and which is revealed to us only in religious experience. But this reality can be indicated with the help of icons. Such a window to the essence of the Church was this school. I am firmly convinced that one of the most important things, which we have done together, was painting the icon. We were painting an icon of the One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church but not with help of paints, but with help of our communion, which we realized in the life and prayer during these weeks. We were an icon of the Church where

people from every corner of the globe and of all ages are one in Christ. So to say theology in paints without any paints.

Window to the future

I have distinctly seen through the magic window of the International Theological Summer School one very important vision: the future of the world and the church is the same future, on the same earth. It is our responsibility to shape how this future will look like. We should not separate one from another. We have to courageously recognize that the problems of the world (global warming, poverty, consumerism) are the problems of the Church. I hope that through this statement in the future the true essence of the Church will become more and more evident. Church is the light of the world, salt of earth, and leaven in dough. Thus, Church is connected with the world like Sun – concentrated fire – affords to shine and warm until the borders of the solar system.

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