



Press Release

Utrecht, 9th of April 2010

Multicoloured Witness – Intercultural Worship in the Polder

On Saturday the 22nd of May, on the eve of Pentecost, thousands of Christians will display the multicultural face of Christianity in the Netherlands during the annual conference of Stichting Opwekking in the Flevopolder. This colourful gathering will celebrate the centenary of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910, a conference that signalled the start of true cooperation in world mission. While at that time the church in Holland was virtually all white, migrant Christians will be at the centre of the stage during this celebration in Biddinghuizen.

Five large Christian organisations have cooperated to make this event happen: the Netherlands Mission Council, the Evangelical Missionary Alliance, the National Council of Churches, the Evangelical Alliance and SKIN (a network of migrant churches). Stichting Opwekking will be hosting the event. Some Roman Catholic organisations also share in the preparations. The theme of this event is: Multicoloured Witness.

In addition to a time of worship, visitors can come to an intercultural meeting point. In three tents, the variety of cultural expressions of today's church will be made visible, audible and tangible. Because true encounter often happens when people eat together, one of the tents is devoted to cooking. The second tent hosts an open podium, where Christians of all ages creatively show what it means to be a witness of Christ today. In the third tent, you will find an exhibition about Christian mission between 1910 to 2010.

This gathering will highlight the wealth of traditions present in Dutch Christianity. Worship music will be provided by a number of musicians as well as the SKIN choir. Ghanaian pastor Tom Marfo will be the main speaker. Tom has been in Christian ministry in Amsterdam for over ten years. He leads a Pentecostal church and fights modern forms of slavery, caring for young African women who fall victim to trafficking and forced prostitution.

This assembly will look back and, while acknowledging the mistakes that have been made in a century of Christian mission, will praise God for the surprising work of the Spirit in world Christianity. At the same, the future will be considered. Too often and too long Dutch Christians have worked in isolation. The five organizing parties long to see more unity in mission. They hope that this national manifestation of unity will be followed by many similar

local manifestations, both in urban and rural areas. In a society that is increasingly polarized, Christians need to set an example of unity by overcoming ethnic and cultural boundaries.

On this occasion, a book will be presented under the title *Gezicht geven aan de ander*. This book portrays lives of migrants in Holland.

On behalf of the steering committee,

Wout van Laar, Netherlands Mission Council
Adri Veldwijk, Evangelical Missionary Alliance

