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Feedback to intercultural Perspectives

Intercultural – inclusive – church was a key word of this conference. It was made clear:

1. Intercultural encounter is an enrichment to the church
2. Intercultural encounter is the best way to prevent and fight racism, populism and even poverty
3. Intercultural encounter takes seriously the AGENCY (another key word) of the other. (Mission from the object to the subject, see Schönemann)

Yet, questions were also raised regarding the understanding of interculturality

1. We need to broaden the understanding of interculturality intersectionally – to include other milieus of our societies, youth, queer...
2. From intercultural opening/learning to intercultural participation
Several statements included the opinion that intercultural learning/opening is not enough. It needs intercultural participation, participatory structures etc. Examples are:
 - employment of intercultural pastors (Uzuh)
 - young people in responsible positions
 - we need to take (Pentecostal) theologies from international churches and churches of the global South seriously and shape the theological (and other) curriculum in a way that includes them
3. Joint goals and projects
Intercultural communication and learning is a goal of its own, but it also calls for participation (Top2) as well as for joint projects. God's mission calls us to "walk side by side interculturally" to face also other challenges together – even less anthropocentric urgencies like caring for the environment, for the non-human world.
4. Is a certain intercultural training necessary, or do we need an openness to become vulnerable/accept our vulnerability?
Intercultural training is needed but it also includes the temptation/danger to create new experts with new *power of interpretation*. It can thereby further asymmetric relations and othering. Therefore, what is (also and maybe primarily) needed is the acceptance of our vulnerability (Claudia Währisch-Oblau). This attitude leads to less ego-centeredness, less self-centeredness (Kopmann: Christology of Vulnerability) and more "humility" – "humble mission".
- 5.
6. Intercultural Encounter and Koinonia/Unity (Pekridou)
 - Is intercultural encounter not still perpetuating the binary of we-they, because it still focusses on the other as other?
 - Does it not reduce the other to certain identity markers (in the listener group: African perspective...)?

- We should go from learning from and about the other to learning together, focusing on what we share: shared goals, shared story, working together in God's mission
7. Need for a definition of intercultural development (mentioned by Pekridou and I would certainly agree there is a void!)
- We need a definition of intercultural development. Questions that could guide it:
- What are criteria of a successful intercultural development?
 - What is the goal of intercultural development?
 - What are topics related to it: racism, justice, participation, gender,..?
 - Who is "in" and who is "out"? Who is visible and who is invisible?
8. Definition of intercultural development and the question: Who can be considered for this. I (and others) noticed that the whole spectrum of Orthodoxy and the Old Oriental churches was missing (whether the Russian-German Christians play a greater role in the EKvW - as is the case, for example, in the ELKB in Bavaria - I am not in a position to decide; if so, it is essential that they are also considered). These congregations greatly expand the spectrum of meanings of intercultural. Admittedly, one can say that they are sister denominations and not "Protestant diversity". But on the one hand also Pentecostal churches are sometimes understood as a "fourth denomination" and do not want to be appropriated in their theology. On the other hand, it can be seen, for example, in ancient Oriental communities in Germany, that intercultural openness must sometimes also mean respecting the culturally traditional sides as well as the " being happy among oneself".

By the way, still this summer the EKD will publish a handout on the relationship and ecumenical opening to Pentecostal churches with a focus on theological differences and the ecumenical common ground.