

**Eröffnung der Twin Consultation in Halle, Franckesche Stiftungen zu Halle,  
Mittwoch, 18. Mai 2016, 14 Uhr**

**Words of Greetings and Opening of the Conference, Rev. Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel**

Dear Professor Müller-Bahlke,  
Dear Professor Wachholz,  
Respected colleagues,  
Eminent church leaders,  
Dear sisters and brothers in Christ!

A warm welcome on behalf of Bread for the World to all of you who have followed the invitation to join the second part of the twin consultation “reformation – education – transformation” at the Francke Foundations in Halle.

Thank you, Professor Müller-Bahlke, for hosting the consultation - there could not be a more appropriate place for it! And thank you for your cooperation in preparing this conference. Thanks also to the Protestant Church in this region of Germany called Mitteldeutschland, for supporting us so well in organizing the consultation in Halle.

The twin consultation project on Reformation, Education and Transformation is at the heart of the theological and programmatic concerns Bread for the World wants to contribute to the preparation towards the Jubilee of the Reformation in 2017 and particularly to the thematic year on “Reformation and One World”.

Bread for the World is convinced that the Reformation movements both in European as well as in non-European histories have left their deep marks as liberative and transforming processes both on churches and society. A special feature of Protestant Reformation history is the strategic alliance between biblically founded Christian faith and critical education which took shape in the creation of schools, universities, and church related seminaries. The twin consultation process has highlighted education as a key contribution of Protestant churches towards the transformation of society.

We are also convinced that it essentially belongs to the Reformation heritage, in its emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and, thus, the laity in its unmediated relationship with God, that an impact was made in many societies with regard to strengthening civil society. The Reformation tradition also emphasized the churches’ role in social development and in politics, the responsibility and accountability of political power and the protection of the common good. Reformation tradition, despite its history that includes conservative political positions and proximity to power, has been instrumental in developing a culture of public and social responsibility which renounces any trend for privatization and inner withdrawal of the Christian faith from the world as well as any form of religious dictatorship and extremism.

These are two of the key convictions of the consultation process which have motivated us to plan these major ecumenical consultation process together with first of all the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW) plus key partners of German protestant churches in North, South, East and West in order to open a dialogue process among churches - many of them our partners - about the reading of the transformative impact of Reformation tradition on life, political witness and service in different contexts. We want to initiate and encourage a truly ecumenical and global dialogue

on the achievements, current challenges and new learnings about the relevance of Reformation principles for our contemporary collaboration as churches within one ecumenical family on education, diaconia and prophetic diaconia.

We are glad to have worked with a committed team for the preparation of both consultations – last year’s consultation in São Leopoldo in Brazil and this year’s consultation in Halle – in collaboration with the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW) and several other ecumenical partner organizations like the Lutheran World Foundation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches. We see this project as a part of or contribution to the WCC programme of an international Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Thanks to all of you – also to my colleagues from Bread for the World.

In São Leopoldo, during the first consultation, we experienced the richness of the pluralistic multitude of Reformation traditions in our midst. We came to a new awareness of the plurality and diversity the Reformation heritage has achieved by contextualizing the witness to the gospel so that it may transform societies and peoples around the globe. We discovered the transcultural expression of this heritage which we hold in common. And we experienced the extent to which the churches, organizations and teaching institutions from which we come are connected, joined by their cooperation in faith and action.

We also became aware that the Reformation traditions offer a helpful distinction in the relation of the political, economical and spiritual realms. Discerning the different dimensions has become even more decisive today when the interconnection of these realms may be perceived very differently in different cultures and theologies. The plurality of each and every spot on the globe implies that whatever we do or say is an intervention in a larger space in which many different agents act and where the church’s voice is one among many. We recognized how decisive it is to discern between situations where churches witness and act in a powerful or majority position and where they are in a minority position. It is necessary to further develop the churches’ role in public spheres and concepts of responsible citizenship.

Only five months later, we now want to continue what we have started in Sao Leopoldo. Around 100 guests coming from countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, North America and Europe have gathered here to deepen the discussion on how reformatory ideas work in different societal contexts and what role reformatory education programs have in transformation processes.

What are our main challenges?

- Without ignoring the fact that the meaning of transformation is and has to be different in different socio- economic and political contexts we might nonetheless find it helpful to jointly identify global challenges which need transformation processes on several levels and of different kinds at the same time.
- We should further develop ecological and creation issues, linking to climate issues and SDGs.
- We could strengthen the dimension of interdenominational sharing.

And there are more challenges that you will meet in a fruitful and mutually benefitting atmosphere during this consultation for which I wish you all God’s blessing.

Thank you.