

## **Evangelism Department: Concept for 2017 – 2020**

**In the next four years, the UEM Evangelism Department, in close cooperation with the Evangelism Departments of the members, will concentrate on the development of contextual training modules, teaching materials, and materials for lay people on contextual contemporary evangelism. This includes work on theologies of evangelism and interreligious dialogue.**

Why is this necessary? The following observations are shared by all UEM regions:

- Evangelism is often the domain of those who belong to ‘evangelical’, ‘charismatic’, or more conservative sections of a given church.
- Evangelism is predominantly taught and practiced using hegemonial metaphors – this is particularly visible in many interpretations of Matthew 28:18-20. Its success is measured in numbers of new believers.
- Inter-religious tension and violence are enhanced and sometimes even triggered by aggressive evangelism of charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Evangelism in our member churches can also be less than respectful of other religions.
- Growing tensions between Muslims and Christians worldwide trigger new debates on the relationship between evangelism and dialogue.
- Hegemonial evangelism theology and questionable practices lead to a rejection of evangelism by many Christians.
- Ecumenical mission and evangelism theology does not reach far beyond international meetings. The changes in the theology of evangelism over the last 50 – 70 years are not known on the ground in any of the three UEM regions.
- Conversely, what is actually happening in evangelism on the ground is rarely the subject of study and reflection in theological seminaries.
- Evangelism is very rarely taught in theological seminaries, usually only in Bible Schools. Those work in local languages and often have little access to newer theological developments, training and literature.
- Evangelism materials and training courses for lay Christians very often build on US-American evangelical theology of the 1950s (4 spiritual laws, Evangelism Explosion etc.). When churches in Asia and Africa apply for support for evangelism trainings, they tend to use resource persons and materials from such organizations whose theology needs to be questioned.
- Such evangelism practices and materials are often rejected by those with more contemporary theological training; but so far, few alternative materials or trainings have been developed in Asia and Africa. The situation is somewhat different in the German region.
- In all three regions, there are intensive evangelism activities by local Pentecostal and charismatic churches as well as by foreign missionaries, many of whom are not from the global North, but from Korea, Nigeria or Singapore. Some of these groups have a lot of money and use it to gain influence in local churches. UEM member churches often see these activities as threat and competition but have no real idea how to respond to this situation.

**Following these observations, a number of pertinent questions which will guide the work of the UEM Evangelism Department in the next four years can be identified:**

- How can a clear witness to Christ in evangelism and an attitude of respect for believers of other religions be cultivated at the same time?
- How can evangelism and interfaith cooperation go together? How can this be done in an environment of growing radicalisms?
- How can Biblical texts on evangelism beyond Matthew 28 be made fruitful for a theology and practice of evangelism?
- How can the changes in the theology of evangelism worldwide be communicated and made accessible for local churches, congregations and lay people?
- How can the challenges of Islam, secularization and Pentecostal movements be met?

- How can existing practices and developments on the ground be made fruitful for theology?
- How can local churches be assisted to further develop their own, contextual and appropriate ways of evangelism?
- How can believers be strengthened in their faith and challenged and empowered for evangelism and interfaith cooperation?
- How can a commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation become an integral part of evangelistic practice?
- What new expressions of church/congregational changes are needed for evangelistic outreach?
- What kind of training and education on evangelism is necessary on different levels: Theological education, evangelism schools, church leadership, congregations?
- How can the international network of UEM be made fruitful in dealing with these questions?

**As the UEM member churches have very different contexts and also different approaches and theologies when it comes to evangelism, any work on evangelism training and materials needs to be highly contextual. Therefore, the work of the Evangelism Department in Wuppertal will be supported by 18 “Evangelism Contact Persons” in the three UEM Regions who will work in close contact with the UEM Executive Secretary Evangelism. Their overall task is to develop training materials for contextual, contemporary evangelism for pastors, evangelists, and lay (particularly youth and women) in close cooperation with respective theological seminaries, Bible schools, Evangelism Training Schools.**

To fulfil this task, they will need to

- Visit churches, congregations, and training institutions to identify training needs with regards to evangelism in general, Gospel and popular culture, evangelism and dialogue, evangelism and congregational development;
- Conduct trainings on contextual, contemporary evangelism with pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders (particularly youth and women);
- Develop contextual, contemporary evangelism materials for grassroots use;
- Assist with regional and inter-regional exchanges on evangelism;
- Work in close cooperation with UEM Ex. Secretary Evangelism and the network of Evangelism Contact Persons to exchange ideas, materials, and assist each other in the tasks of the job; this includes participation in annual workshops (regional, sub-regional or international, organized by UEM Evangelism Dept.) and occasional exchange visits as organized by the department.

## “Evangelism Contact Persons”: Practical considerations

The Evangelism Contact Persons will be distributed in the regions as follows:

### Africa Region: 7 contact persons

Located in:	Responsible for:	Percentage of working time
Cameroon	EEC	20%
Kinshasa, DR Congo	all Congolese member churches with congregations in the city	10%
Equateur	CDCC, CADELU	20%
Eastern Congo and Rwanda	CBCA, EAR, EPR	20%
Coastal Tanzania	ECD, NED	20%
Northwestern Tanzania	KAD, NWD	20%
Botswana/Namibia/South Africa	ELCB, ELCRN, RCSA	20%

### Asia Region: 8 contact persons

Located in:	Responsible for:	Percentage of working time
North Sumatra	HKBP, GBKP, GKPS, GKPA, HKI, GKPI, GKPPD	30%
Nias	BNKP	10%
Mentawai	GKPM	12,5%
Java	GKJW, GKJTU, GPKB, all member church congregations in Jakarta	12,5%
Papua	GKI-TP	25%
Philippines	UCCP	10%
Sri Lanka	MC-SL	10%
Hong Kong	CRC	10%

### Germany Region: 3 contact persons

Located in:	Responsible for:	Percentage of working time
To be determined	To be determined	15%
To be determined	To be determined	15%
To be determined	To be determined	15%

A preparatory meeting with the heads of the Offices for Missionary Services/persons responsible for evangelism of the German member churches will determine where these people will be located and for which region they will be responsible.

**The Evangelism Contact Persons will be full-time church workers under the age of 40 years within a UEM member church who remain in their respective positions but will attend regular trainings and exchanges organized by UEM. For their work, they will receive a small honorarium from UEM. Gender balance will be ensured within the group.**

The contact persons can be pastors in a congregation, evangelists, Bible women, deacons/deaconesses, teachers in a Bible school or similar institution, youth workers or co-workers in an evangelism department. They need to be experienced in evangelism, creative in thinking and methods; they need sound theological understanding and good English language skills to be able to work in an international group. As this program depends on the quality of the people involved, we need people with good character and strong vision and the

willingness to try out new approaches. At the same time, they should be well-rooted within their own church.

**For a part of their working time, the Evangelism Contact Persons will work under the direction of the UEM Executive Secretary Evangelism, according to plans that will be made annually at sub-regional meetings of the contact persons.** Supervision is done through regular e-mail contact, and a short report every three months which will go to the UEM Evangelism Department and the respective UEM Regional Office. Every year, the contact persons of each sub-region (Africa: Anglophone Africa and Francophone Africa; Asia: Indonesia and Sri Lanka/Philippines/Hong Kong; Germany) will meet for approximately one week on invitation by the Evangelism Department for training, planning of their work, and exchange of experiences. For the meeting of each sub-region, at least one of the contact persons from another region will be invited to ensure the internationality of the exchanges.

The Evangelism Contact Persons are also expected to be involved in UEM joint programs as resource persons on evangelism.

How the working days for UEM are taken will be negotiated between the co-worker and his/her church in cooperation with the Ex. Secretary Evangelism.

For **recruitment**, job advertisements will be shared with all member churches which are asked to nominate suitable candidates in pairs, one man and one woman each. (In this way, gender balance can be guaranteed in the complete group of contact persons.) Decisions about appointment will be made by the UEM Evangelism Secretary in cooperation with the respective Area Secretary. **Appointments will be made by January 2017.**

To establish the group of contact persons, to enable contact among them and to give them a good introductory training, all chosen candidates will be invited to a **16-day training/workshop in Wuppertal in May 2017**. This training will include the following topics:

- Theology of evangelism;
- Introduction to the Open-to-go concept;
- Evangelism and congregational development;
- Identification of burning issues in evangelism on the ground;
- Methodological training on development of training materials and evangelistic materials to be used at the grassroots;
- Planning, strategies, evaluation.

In addition, the group will work together to develop work plans for each co-worker and for the UEM Evangelism work as a whole.

A **budget position** of 59.000 Euro annually has been added to the budget of the Evangelism Department for this program. Additional costs (trainings and workshops in the regions etc.) will be covered by the normal program budget of the Evangelism Department.

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Concept endorsed by GA Committee on Evangelism