



„Hunger – a global challenge“

At the IRCA-conference from 20th to 26th of September 2010 at Evangelische Landjugendakademie Altenkirchen, Westerwald, Germany, 50 participants met; grass root people (farmers, ministers, lay people) from rural areas from five continents. The theme of the conference “Hunger - a global challenge” was drawn from “The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development” (IAASTD) of the UN which brings a new and revolutionary approach to agriculture¹.

The facts are known: abundance and overweight on the one side, hunger and poverty on the other. Farms being given up, migration, discrimination, climate change, threat to biodiversity and problems with water follow.

The IRCA-worldwide community and solidarity strengthened our belief in networking. It encourages us to continue our journey as the people of God, though we know, that the road to the Promised Land leads us through the desert.

From the conference we bring back to our churches, communities, countries what we have learned:

From the IAASTD report:

- The first purpose of cultivating the land is food production, but it also includes social, cultural and ecological factors.
- If carefully recognized, these factors prevent forced migration and bring a good livelihood to humanity.
- Most attention has to be paid to the small and subsistence farmers and the work of women, who feed the world. This is one surprising result of international research.
- Food sovereignty needs to be valued as a human right. Each person and each people group have the right to gain their daily bread from their work².

Water was identified as a key issue for the future of creation and humanity:

- Water must be considered as common property, faith says: a gift. For Christians (and all other religions) it is a symbol of vital importance.
- It must not be the subject of commercial exploitation, but considered a common resource.
- A similar approach is needed for “the land”.

The presentation from the migration department of the World Council of Churches (WCC) brought out:

- Migration affects 250 million people in the world. Some of them are persecuted Christians.
- Migration plays a more important part in the Bible, and in the past and actual history of humanity than we usually recognize.
- Migration affects urban and rural areas and churches.
- Each human being has a need for “roots and relationships”. This is a challenge to rural communities and churches.

The poor and brain-drained rural areas need a voice. IRCA assumes the role of a voice for and to the voiceless.

¹ Summary report: www.agassessment.org/docs/10505_Multi.pdf

² A first step toward this direction: UNO-Resolution of 28/7/2010 recognizes the right of pure water as a human right.