

CTBI bid to host WCC General Assembly 2021

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolutions	55/1. The Council receives the report. 55/2. The Council agrees to support CTBI's bid to host the World Council of Churches General Assembly in 2021 OR 55/3. The Council declines to support CTBI's bid to host the World Council of Churches General Assembly in 2021

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To present the Council with CTBI's proposal to bid to host the WCC General Assembly in 2021.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTBI members agreed a bid to host the WCC General Assembly in 2021 should be considered. • A proposal for the bid including resource implications and expectations of involvement has been circulated to all CTBI members. • The Council is asked to consider the proposal.
Consultations	Strategy and Resources Committee; Chair of the Scotland Synod

Summary of Impact

Financial	Contribution to be made by CTBI members if bid successful
Personnel	Possibility of staff being requested to assist with delivery of event. Volunteers required in the locality.
External (eg ecumenical)	Opportunity for further engagement with national and global partners

CTBI bid to host the WCC General Assembly 2021

- 1 Members of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) have been contacted about the possibility of CTBI member churches hosting the next World Council of Churches (WCC) General Assembly in 2021. Since autumn 2015 there has been some discussion as to whether churches in the British Isles might submit a bid to host the 2021 Assembly. This paper presents the details in outline for the Council to consider. A brochure produced by CTBI containing further information about the bid is available electronically on request from Jane Bates (batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk).
- 2 The WCC Central Committee commissions its General Secretary to initiate the search for an adequate venue for the next WCC Assembly, which takes place every 7-8 years. The next Assembly is scheduled for 2021.
- 3 At the November 2016 CTBI meeting, it was agreed that CTBI would indicate interest in submitting a bid to the WCC, and commence work on a consultation document. This has now been circulated to member churches. The bid process is being overseen by CTBI Trustees and a small four nations committee is in the process of being set up to manage the bid.
- 4 The timeline of the bidding process is as follows:
 - 10 May 2017 – At the CTBI Annual General Meeting member churches and partner organisations will decide if they wish to continue developing the bid;
 - Early October 2017 – CTBI will hold a meeting to make a final decision about submitting a bid;
 - Summer 2018 - The final decision on the venue will be taken by the WCC Central Committee. It is believed that Churches in Germany are also likely to be making a bid.

Involvement of member churches

- 5 CTBI will act as the lead organisation, and it therefore follows that member churches will be involved. This would mean utilising the skills and resources that each member church is able to offer. Possibilities identified in CTBI's briefing document include offering the skills of some staff through secondment, and gathering skills in a more local context through volunteering. It might also mean some local fundraising to support local events that celebrate the Assembly. CTBI expect that members will be involved in every aspect of the Assembly preparations and programme. How this would be divided and allocated among members is at present not known.

Venue

- 6 Glasgow has emerged as the venue for the bid, not least because initial consultation with the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC) indicated that the detailed list of requirements from the WCC could be met, at a cost that, in CTBI's view, would be very reasonable in terms of expected budget for an event of this size within the British Isles. There has been enthusiasm from potential civic partners as well as indications of support from the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church for exploring this possibility. Staff from the Glasgow City Marketing Bureau (GCMB) and the SECC have assisted with thinking through the feasibility of making a bid.

Cost and resources

- 7 A briefing document has been circulated to member churches laying out various aspects of the proposed bid, including a draft budget. This document has been shared with two members of the Strategy and Resources Committee for scrutiny, and some fuller reflections will be offered

to the Council at the meeting when this paper is presented. The following information taken from the briefing paper is outlined for the Council:

- 8 Of the total costs, some will be met by WCC central funds and some by the hosts. The latter would include infrastructure costs (eg venue hire, interpretation equipment), and costs of transport within the host country. It is suggested that the total cost to the hosting churches of an event based in Glasgow to the WCC specification would be likely to be a maximum figure of £2.3million. CTBI hopes that the actual figure will be reduced and have suggested that the remaining sum could be covered through:
 - Direct financial support from CTBI;
 - Grants from government at various levels, beginning with Glasgow City Council;
 - Diversion of normally requested additional WCC contributions from member churches to defray Assembly costs to direct support of the Assembly in Glasgow;
 - Other fund-raising activities.
- 9 Host churches would be expected to bear the costs of 'church' based events, eg major services organised at cathedrals and arrangements for delegates to participate in worship and fellowship with local congregations.
- 10 In addition to the immediate financial costs, there would be some demands on staff time. Host churches would also need to form various working groups to accompany preparations and to liaise with local service providers. There is a specific request from the WCC for participants to be collected from and returned to the airport. In terms of supporting the Assembly on the ground with volunteer labour, the burden of course is likely to fall on the Scottish churches and particularly those in the Glasgow area.

Reflections from Methodism in Scotland

- 11 The superintendent of the Strathclyde circuit, the Revd Andrew M Baker, is very positive about the proposal.
- 12 The Chair of Scotland District, the Revd David Easton has also been consulted regarding the proposed bid, and has indicated that the Methodist Church in Scotland discussed this possibility at its recent District Ecumenical Forum. Although recognising that the District would only play a very small part if the Assembly came to Glasgow, the Forum was generally favourable. Glasgow would provide the Assembly with all that it requires eg conference centre, accommodation etc. The Forum also felt that it would be good for the Churches in Scotland, highlighting, in a part of our country sometimes known for its sectarianism, that the Churches can work together for a wider good. The financial implications for the Connexion and the other Churches in Britain were not discussed by the Forum.

Decision as to whether to support the proposed bid

- 13 The Council is asked to consider the proposal and indicate if it wishes to support CTBI's bid to host the WCC General Assembly in 2021.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

55/1. The Council receives the report.

55/2. The Council agrees to support CTBI's bid to host the World Council of Churches General Assembly in 2021.

OR

55/3. The Council declines to support CTBI's bid to host the World Council of Churches General Assembly in 2021.