

CELC Europe 2013 in Sofia
Minutes

Thursday - 6 June 2013

Morning session 09:30 - 13:00

Morning devotion by Luke Wolfgramm. He preached over the first verses in James chapter 1. His message was that we should consider it a pure joy when undergoing trials and temptations. God wants to show you that you can't escape trials and temptations, you need him! Consider it a pure joy, repeats our preacher.

The President of the Bulgarian Lutheran Church, Strahil Naydenov was introduced and welcomed us to Bulgaria.

We moved into the conference room and began the meeting. Changes in the program for Saturday. We moved out from the hostel Saturday after lunch and moved downtown in the afternoon. John Vogt explained how this will be arranged.

We introduced the different participants. We registered the voting delegates at the meeting. First paper is written by Arkady Sedelnikov. He was not able to attend the meeting. The paper is therefore read by Pastor Luke Wolfgramm. The topic of the paper is: *Lead us not into temptation: What does it mean to be tempted*. The author writes about three spiritual enemies that tempt us. They are the flesh, the sinful world, and the devil. These three all work hard to make us fall. The author shows how these temptations show themselves in the Russian society. He also shows us the answer to temptation - namely prayer! He writes that Christian prayer is by its nature both a defense and a weapon against temptation. He concludes his paper: "When facing temptation PRAY to God our dear Father. He will strengthen you."

We took a coffee break between 11:00-11:30

After the break we listened to the response to the first paper. The response was prepared by Todor Gančovski from Bulgaria. He says that we cannot be ignorant of the existence of temptation. We will never be free from temptation on this earth.

Discussion followed. It is said that while there is also time for prayer, when we are tempted it is faith that will overcome. It is said that the power comes from the Word of God; it rests in the Means of Grace. It was pointed out what it says in James 5:13. That we should flee to God and pray when we face temptation. Prayer is speaking to God. It goes hand in hand with the Word of God. We should be aware of not making prayer a Means of Grace. It is pointed out that Jesus approached temptation both with the Word of God (in the desert) and prayer (in the garden of Gethsemane).

We discussed the sentence on the fourth page which talks about the Russian norms expecting truly spiritual people living ascetic, almost monastic lifestyles. How people react to how pastors dress and act. As pastors we need to be aware of not giving offence. We need to be careful not to put up obstacles or barriers against other people. We should watch our lives carefully.

We summarized the question of prayer by saying that it is a paradox that God commands us to pray while saying that God's will is still set and he knows what will happen with us in the future. We should neither underestimate nor overestimate the importance of prayer.

The Conference sends a greeting to CELC president Dan Koelpin and thanks him for the hymn books.

Øyvind read a greeting from Armin Panning, former CELC President.

We continue with conference business. Øyvind read a proposition from LBK Norway which asks for triennial regional meetings. The proposition was discussed by the delegates and we will vote on Saturday.

We ended the morning session, sung the table prayer and went for lunch.

Afternoon session 14:00 - 16:30

The second article was written by Serhiy Romaniuk from Ukraine. He didn't get a visa and was unable to attend the meeting. His essay was read by Artur Villares. The topic of the second essay is: Temptation in view of Jacob 1:13.

Not an easy topic according to the responder (Seth Erlandsson). The author and reactor show how the New Testament uses the same word for both testing and temptation. God uses both trials and temptations for our good. Trials are for our good. We are really praying in the 6th petition: "Deliver us from the devil's way of tempting."

Discussion on the paper. The example of the book of Job is brought forth. The comfort of how God allows the temptation while setting a limit for how far the devil can go. God is in control, also when we undergo temptation. We need to be tested to grow stronger. We need problems to make us flee to the only helper. When everything is easy we easily get proud. The One we rely on is good enough, I am not, but He is! We talked about how we in the temptation have a hard time seeing the purpose of it. It is because our understanding is limited. Even though we don't understand why we are tempted or tested God knows, and that should be enough for us. We should rejoice with Paul and Silas as they did when they were in prison.

Øyvind made a presentation of LBK Norway. He talked about the work being done in Bergen, Avaldsnes, Stavanger and Esbjerg, Denmark.

Further conference business. Artur brings up the question of a news webpage for CELC in Europe. Martin Wilde says that this has been tried already, and that contributions to the page have not been great. Possibilities of connecting to the regular page, celc.info .

We end the afternoon session with the Lord's Prayer.

Friday - 7 June 2013

Morning session 09:30 - 13:00

Morning devotion by Petr Krakora. He preached over James 1:12-18.

We started the session in the conference room by reading the minutes. Small corrections and additions were made. It was then approved. Artur thanked Todor and the Bulgarians for their hospitality.

First paper presented by Pastor Ugis Sildegis from Latvia. Our enemy is the devil and his helpers. We are to be defensive guards of the Word of God.

Pastor Holger Weiss from Germany serves as first reactor to the paper. He extends his thanks to the author for a solid paper and highlights a few points. The author chose to write about the basic principle of temptation. He gives an example of how the word meditation is misused in today's society and how even church leaders in Latvia use it to teach people to look inwards into themselves.

Discussion over hermeneutical principles. We are standing under the Word, submitting to the Word. Meditation in the Biblical sense is bound to God's Word. There is confusion about what true spirituality is. We are tempted to let our worldly situation define how we interpret the Bible, and how we make choices in our lives. Modern enthusiasm tempts us to seek God outside the Means of Grace.

On the request by Evgeny Provotorov from Russia the conference prayed for everyone in the world experiencing catastrophes of any sort.

We end the morning session by singing a hymn. We sing the table prayer and go for lunch.

Afternoon session 14:00 - 16:30

We start by singing a hymn. Continue with conference business.

A proposal was made that we support and give our recommendation for Albania's application of membership in CELC. The conference agreed that we communicate our support for Albania to the leaders of CELC.

Fourth paper delivered by Jesper Hansen from SLT, Finland. His topic is: *God's rescue from temptation*. He gives a brief introduction to what temptation is. He also gives specific examples of what temptations they meet in Finland. Both the power and the tool against temptation is the Word of God, the unconditional gospel about Jesus Christ who came to save sinners. God establishes natural means for us to use, also so that we avoid temptation. One example is marriage as the right place for sexual life. God is still control when we are tempted; he sets the boundaries for them.

Artur Villares has the first response to the paper. A discussion over the word sinner took place. Artur makes the point that the specific sins we meet in our European society are signs of the end times. The Law doesn't give us the strength to overcome temptation, it only tell us the difference between right and wrong. Only the Gospel give us the strength to overcome. The final rescue from temptation is eternity.

Discussion ends and we continue with presentations of Sweden and Finland. We end the afternoon session.

Saturday - 8 June 2013

Morning session 09:30 - 13:00

Morning session starts with singing a hymn. Continue with conference business. The proposition from Norway for triennial regional meetings was voted down. We will continue with meetings at the same interval as now. Sweden invited for the next meeting in 2015. The suggested dates were June 5 - 7, 2015. Place and date was approved. Finland was suggested for 2016. The question of communication between the churches in Europe during the year was brought up. We continue with presentations of the national churches.

Thanks given to ELS and WELS for supporting some churches financially for the meeting.
Thanks to the host, the chairman and the secretary.
Special thanks to John and Sandy Vogt for organization.
Theme for next meeting 7th petition.
We close with devotion, end the meeting, and go for lunch.

Meeting ends

Europe Regional Conference of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC)
Sofia, Bulgaria
June 6–9, 2013

Country	Participants	Church	Participant's official capacity	Paper
Albania	Agron Mece	CELCA	Visitor	
Bulgaria	Pres. Strahil Naydenov Pastor Todor Ganchovsky Mrs Liudmila Popova Mrs Svetla Boeva Ivan Phillipov Emil Maximov Vadimir Gantchev <u>Seminary students:</u> Ivo Lazarov Iliyan Itsov Arthur Bojinov Dimitar Shishkov	BLC/WELS	Voting delegate Voting delegate Visitor Visitor Visitor Visitor Visitor Official guest Official guest Official guest Official guest	
Finland	Jesper Hansen David Åkerlund	SLT Finland St Johannes	Voting Delegate Official Guest	Paper
Czech Republic	Rev. Petr Krákora	CLC	Voting Delegate	
Germany	Pastor H. Weiß (Präsident of Seminary) Dr. G. Herrmann (mit Auto) Margot Herrmann Pastor M. Wilde Pastor I.R. G. Wilde <u>Seminary Students:</u> D. Edvardsen B. Stöhr J. Buelow T. Huebener	ELFK	Advisory delegate Voting Delegate Visitor Voting Delegate Advisory delegate Official Guest Official Guest Official Guest Official Guest	
Latvia	Rev. Ugis Sildegs	KLB Latvia	Voting Delegate	Paper
Norway	Jon Petter Norbø Rev. Øyvind Edvardsen	LBK Norway	Voting Delegate Voting Delegate	
Portugal	Rev. Artur Villares	ILP	Voting Delegate	
Russia	Rev. Luke Wolfgramm Evgeny Provotorov	CELC Russia	Voting Delegate Voting Delegate	Paper
Sweden	Dr. Seth Erlandsson Birgitta Erlandsson Rev. Ingvar Adriansson Ingrid Olsson Anna Karlsson	LBK Sweden	Voting Delegate Visitor Voting Delegate Visitor Visitor	
Ukraine	Rev. John Vogt Mrs. Sandra Vogt	ULC	Visitor Visitor	Paper
USA	Rev. Jonathan Balge	WELS	Official Guest	

E-mail and skype of the participants

1. Arthur Bojinov arthuhisch@gmail.com
2. Julius Buelow juliusbuelow22@gmail.com Skype: julius.abraham.buelow
3. Petr Krakora krakora@sml.cz Skype: krakora_petr
4. David Åkerlund david_akerlund@live.se
5. Iliyan Itsov iliyen.itsov@gmail.com Skype: jetlifem
6. Ivo Lazarov ivo.lr@abv.bg
7. Dimitar Shishkov temedek@gmail.com
8. Todor Ganchovsky todgan@abv.bg
9. Evgeny Provotorov eugprovotor12@gmail.com Skype: eugene4525
10. Luke Wolfgramm lukewolfgramm@gmail.com
11. Benjamin Stöhr 57benjo@gmail.com Skype: benjoh57
12. John Vogt johnfvogt@yahoo.com Skype: johnfvogt
13. Agron Mece agronv_mece@yahoo.com
14. Tobias Hübener tobias.huebener@yahoo.de
15. Dr. Gottfried Herrmann post@concordiabuch.de
16. Jon Petter Nordbø jonpetternordbo@gmail.com
17. David Edvardsen postkassen@eml.cc
18. Jonathan Balge balgejr@gmail.com
19. Martin Wilde pfarrer.mwilde@elfk.de
20. Holger Weiss pfarrer.hweiss@elfk.de
21. Ugis Sildegs sildegs@yahoo.com
22. Ivan Filipov ifillipov@gmail.com
22. Artur Villares artur.villares@gmail.com
23. Ingvar Adriansson biblicum@bredband.net
24. Seth Erlandsson seth.erlandsson@tele2.se
25. Jesper Hansen jesperkhansen@gmail.com
26. Ingrid Olsson ingridolsson20@gmail.com
27. Birgitta Erlandsson b-erlandsson@tele2.se
28. Anna Karlsson annaskuriosa@telia.com
29. Øyvind Edvardsen oyvinded@yahoo.com

