



That you may have hope. 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag

Munich, 12-16 May 2010



Together in the Heart of the World

„Nobody could have dreamt that it was going to be such a success. The first Ecumenical Kirchentag exceeded all expectations and revealed itself to be an impressive witness of Christian presence in Germany. During these five days the Churches were strengthened in their common life together; the paper theological disputes of the last few years were put to one side. For Christians this huge gathering was an impressive experience and a valuable self-affirmation which sustained them for a long time afterwards.”

Journalist Martin Gehlen on the 1st Ecumenical Kirchentag in the Berlin Tagesspiegel, 2 June 2003.

With the motto **“You shall be a blessing”** the German Protestant Kirchentag (DEKT) and the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) invited people to the first all-German Ecumenical Kirchentag at the end of May 2003. 200,000 participants came.

The Ecumenical Kirchentag in Berlin inspired many people. Yet there were questions which also remained unanswered, and these need to be addressed once more at the 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag in Munich, 12-16 May 2010. On the theme **“That you may have hope”** the 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag offers around 3,000 events over five days:

- Panel discussions and lectures on social, ethical and political themes
- Workshops on the question of just systems in a globalised world, the integrity of creation and human dignity
- Conversations on theology and spirituality
- 18 centres, for example for families, youth, inter-religious dialogue
- Worship, prayer and Bible studies
- All kinds of music concerts – rock, pop, jazz, classical or gospel – theatre and comedy, exhibitions and conversations
- The “Agora” in the exhibition halls – a marketplace for church and social groups
- Quiet meditations and grand-scale open air concerts



” *Nobody felt as if they were just a guest of the other confession. We were both guests and hosts at the same time.* “

quote from a participant at the Ecumenical Kirchentag in Berlin

The programme

The programme of the 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag is as varied as is religious and social life in Germany. It offers active groups and initiatives the chance to present their concerns and projects. By conducting social, political, ecological and theological debates on Christian responsibility, the Ecumenical Kirchentag strengthens civil society in Germany and impacts beyond the event itself. This is supported by the public figures who give this ecumenical meeting a face. In Berlin these included the Dalai Lama, Johannes Rau, Gerhard Schröder, Richard von Weizsäcker, Vandana Shiva, Romano Prodi and Rigoberta Menchú.



At the main event, ordinary people meet public figures in highly prominent positions. Top politicians, scientists, bishops and notable theologians, well-known business people and journalists hold Bible studies. At the same time community organisations, initiatives and relief organisations organise concerts and performances with both famous and unknown artists. In different places there is space for encounters and intensive conversations. This variety of events gives the Ecumenical Kirchentag its own special atmosphere and appeal.

Who comes to this great community event? The Ecumenical Kirchentag 2003 attracted a great many young visitors; almost half were under the age of 30. The participants travelled from all over, including about 5,000 international guests from 86 countries. Out of 200,000 participants, 60,000 were involved in the 1st Ecumenical Kirchentag as volunteers.

History and Aims

“Because what we have in common is stronger than what divides us, we understand the 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag to be a building site for ecumenism. We see ourselves as part of the worldwide ecumenical movement. Christian unity is God’s gift and our task.”

From the guidelines to the 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag, 2008

The Ecumenical Kirchentag 2003 was the first joint event held by the two Christian lay organisations in Germany, together with members of other confessions in the “Council of Christian Churches in Germany” (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen).

The executive committees of the DEKT and ZdK agreed on the tasks and aims of the Ecumenical Kirchentag 2003 in a position paper in 2000. They named the Bible and faith in the Triune God as a common foundation. The participants of the Ecumenical Kirchentag were to witness to their faith and be open to one another despite all their differences. At the same time Catholics and Protestants wanted to share their common responsibility for society and the world

and raise their common voice, in order to be clearly heard in the public sphere. The organisers of the Ecumenical Kirchentag in Berlin wanted to take new steps towards unity. This proved to be the greatest challenge. The hopes for closer community between the churches which were so impressively raised at the 1st Ecumenical Kirchentag remain unfulfilled – and they still stand.

Ecumenism means ...

the word oikumene originally means “the whole inhabited earth.” In a church context ecumenism stands for the efforts of different Christian churches since the 19th century to overcome divisions of faith and practice. The goal is the full and visible unity of the Church of Christ and ultimately the comprehensive and reconciled community of humanity.

Information – www.oekt.de

2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag Munich 2. Ökumenischer Kirchentag München e.V.

Head Office

Rundfunkplatz 4, 80335 München
Telephone 089 55 99 97-337
E-Mail info@oekt.de
Internet www.oekt.de

German Protestant Kirchentag Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag

Zentrales Büro Fulda

Magdeburger Str. 59, 36037 Fulda
Telephone 0661 / 969500
E-Mail fulda@kirchentag.de
Internet www.kirchentag.de

Central Committee of German Catholics Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken

Hochkreuzallee 246, 53175 Bonn
Telephone 0228 / 382970
E-Mail info@zdk.de
Internet www.zdk.de



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