



Track 2: Teaching in Truth

Mark 2: "TEACH" – To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

Working Groups 3 & 4

All Marks are about discipleship, but our mark is about TEACH. So we are discussing how teaching fits into discipleship.

What is an evangelical?

What opportunities do we see?

- How are we teaching? How do we help the future generation? We have the opportunity to go back to the basics. There is an opportunity for personal growth.
- *Example:* Student numbers going down in theological education... answer: change the system, make it mentor based, hybrid (teaching in ministry context), personal development-oriented...
- Reforming missions, or apply them to a new context, or closing them if necessary – this is something we are not good at
- Teach to *obey* the Word of God. Teaching has been oriented on the head too much, too much about information. But do we really understand – this is especially true for the younger generation, to see the relevance of the Word of God in daily life.
- Teach people *all* that Jesus as taught us. Some passages are overlooked – we teach too much about preferred passages in Scripture, and not everything. We need holistic disciples, integral discipleship.
- A lot of teaching is focussed on conversion, rather than building relationships and further, life-long discipleship.
- Migrants
 - A large part of the body of Christ in EUR, strongly committed to Scripture, who are used to live in a context where they are not used to look to the government to protect their religious rights
 - We can learn a lot from holistic mission and evangelism from them
 - How do we manage to include them, where are they, and who are they?
 - We as EUR can even be a blessing globally. *Example: Romanian church in Austria...*
 - Migrant churches add an important voice to the body of Christ – conservative options, open-minded viewpoints.
 - We need the willingness to change how we are running things on our side. *Example:* times when you meet, when they are bi-vocational and cannot meet during the day.

- Some migrant groups close themselves to be safeguarded from secular influences. We have the opportunity to give them a voice, to hear what is in their hearts. By doing so they will open up slowly.
- Opportunity: learn from liberation theology style: combining praxis with reflection. We may learn from them to be more holistic in our learning and teaching approaches.
- Young People
 - Things are messed up in our society these days, but younger people understand it a lot better, and we have an opportunity to invite them to the table.
 - It is not easy to be young these days. We may have the opportunity to create a safe space for young people to develop themselves, discover their faith and help them grow in becoming our teachers.
 - For young people, the opportunity is to grow through online learning opportunities.
 - Young people all over EUR are fairly fluent in (at least reading) English. But not all opportunities are available everywhere. We have the duty to make things like that available.

What (skills) do we need to move forward?

- Flexibility. Not doing things the way we have always done them.
- We need a new attitude towards learning/teaching, while remain committed to it.
- Involve Young People and Migrants into our leadership.
- We need to live without our structures. We need to learn to live more flexibly.
- We need to learn to be in discipleship ourselves, we need to be transparent about that to other Christians.

What are we great at in teaching?

- In EUR we have Scripture (translated) that we can use to teach and disciple.
- Unity in diversity, even in EUR. We are a broad network even in teaching. Rooted in life, on a local level.
- People from other parts of the world come here to study.
- Do we have uniqueness in teaching; if so, how?
 - Professionalisation on EUR level
 - We are grass-roots movements, well connected
 - Evangelicals are very relational
- We have a rich tradition, academically, theologically.
- We have in EUR a culture of learning. To be a life-long student is deeply ingrained in our society.
- In EUR we have alternative ways to teach. Our teaching is not dependent on seminaries and colleges. We have also developed alternative ways of teaching: collaborative learning, learning communities...
- How does the EEA understand itself in this area?
 - It's a work in progress.
 - EEA is an organisation, but dropping its structural heaviness, and orienting itself more to be a movement.

How do we see God at work in Europe? How does that fit in with what we seen in the area of TEACH?

- There used to be camps 'fighting', and that has decreased tremendously.
- We see the migrant communities and we're not fully engaging with them yet.
- A transition seems to be starting: people are not only going to church anymore to consume what the 'professionals' teach, but they are taking more responsibility for their own discipleship-process and for others, instead of expecting everything from church leadership
- A rise of small-groups in several areas of EUR, learning becoming more and more deep, informal, relational. People are not (seeing themselves as) teachers, but walking side-by-side with others.
- Formal theological education is more accessible for people, now that a lot of teaching is done online.
- A movement among the deaf-people and Roma-groups who develop their own training materials and opportunities.

There are a lot of challenges connected with these opportunities that we have to be aware of. Not everything is possible...

What strategic initiatives (i.e., projects, programmes, and processes) would support our aspirations?

- Make the EEA more colourful, to widen our thinking and teaching. Giving migrants a bigger platform.
- How open are seminaries to outside feedback? It would depend on leadership. Theologians tend to be pretty conservative 😞
- We need life-long learning, this starts at seminary. Professors can't be teaching the same things for 30 years with no change. To become countercultural in a prophetic, NT-sense of the word. We have the networks and opportunities to bring people together. And widen the perspectives.
- Have GA's for the next five years, having one mark each year, and bring in people from all around the globe.
- Prayer. We have to get to our knees to see a real change. It is too easy to tweak some of our strategies, but we have been doing that over and over again. We need to humble ourselves to let the Holy Spirit teach us, and show us where and how He is working already.
- Are there ways to get young people more on board with what we are doing? A youth consultation of some sort. In some countries this is already happening.
- In the former E-EUR there are growing churches, be it under persecution. They need resources. Or churches in the Baltics, who need to get around the same table, to find cooperation as evangelicals. We need to have a stronger E-EUR voice in the Alliance.
- Young People
 - We have to go by the official channels of NEA's... will that drip down to the churches and can we get them on board?
 - Lausanne has been able to set up a younger leaders gathering; less within traditional structures, but younger people are less interested in that anyway. There will be a conversation about this between EEA and Lausanne.

- IFES is a sleeping member of EEA. YfC also has not been very present in recent meetings. Even if no younger people, there are bodies representing them.
- GenSecs could bring along 20-25 year-old disciple-leaders to next GA. Plan for meetings with national youth leaders, when Jan and Connie are visiting countries (since they have no funds to bring along young leaders 😞)
- Media, digital work... it's about inspiring, teaching. This topic is bridging with the younger-age issue. But is media important for EEA-self-preservation, or is it strategic for the kingdom and discipling/teaching the next generation? It is not an easy task, but we have to figure out what role the EEA has to play here.
- What is the USP of the EEA? This is holistic discipleship. Still not on the horizon in many churches in EUR. The EEA could take a leading role in this, together with migrant-churches, together with the younger generation. Holistic discipleship... to follow Jesus in all areas of our life...

What are our dreams and prayers? What can we care deeply in our prayers? What can we be best at in our world as Good News People?

Reflecting on strengths and opportunities conversations: who are we, who should we become, and where should we go in the future? What is our most compelling aspiration?

- We care about discipleship.
- There is little knowledge about the Word of God left. There is a lot of biblical illiteracy. What kind of churches are we building with that? We also need a (better) cultural understanding. John Stott: double listening. And not just with our favourite passages, but the whole Word of God.
- Biblical studies for families. Fitting the cultural setting(s).
- EEA Network on Media.
- A new commitment to the basics of the Bible. Younger generations don't seem to know these foundations. Maybe the problem is not the word, but the church.
 - At the same time, there is a young generation of pastors, theologians, that are eager to take this on.
 - Are we still bound to a Christendom-mentality? There is an opportunity, however, for the church. We need to get out of our mourning about the lost, and see what is possible now.
 - We need an integral way of learning. Reading the Bible and the Newspaper. It is an integrated way that we need to teach the basics.
 - It is a challenge to hold the middle ground and not go into liberalism or fundamentalism.
- Reciprocity in teaching means we have to adopt the attitude of being a disciple, a student. Too often we are full of pride and arrogance, and not willing to learn. Dutch churches from Czech Christians, EUR churches from migrants, older Christians from younger generations.
- We can learn the more holistic approach from the church in the majority world.

How do we do this at a larger scale:

- Invite Migrant(churche)s to teach us how to do this.

- We have to break out of our bubbles of Evangelical Christianity.
- Can W-EUR countries learn more from E-EUR nations? Can they get more space in our gatherings to speak from their perspective?