



## Track 5: Integral Truth

**Mark 1: "TREASURE" – To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

*Working Group 8*

### Summary

#### **Strengths:**

- Prayer
- Theology and Bible teaching
- Network

#### **Opportunities:**

- Build bridges and fostering conversation - often through using media
- Bring hope in a fear driven discussion
- Pray for God's intervention

#### **Aspirations and dreams:**

- Clear theology (with a message of hope)
- Integrated and holistic discipleship
- We would be known in society as people who care about this and have good news and hope

#### **Results:**

- Examples of concrete campaigns: Plastic bottle caps and cleaning projects
- Make space for young people and dialogue about this
- Have more conversation about creation care to be united
- Share best practices and using influencers in media to share good stories

## Session 1

SOAR - a way of looking at the issue with a positive stance as we look ahead

### **Strengths - what are we great at as European Evangelical movement in creation care? What are our greatest strengths?**

- Practice of **praying** for healing and for Jesus' restoration is something we do - but it has not carried over to creation care. This is a possibility/opportunity which EA could use
  - In France - there is a prayer network for creation care with more than 200 people involved praying every day. They have testimonies of answered prayers.
- **Theology** (Biblical understanding and teaching) of creation care (though some divisions exist.). We are Bible based. We have a commitment to the idea of God being the creator, and that we want to honour Him as good stewards. (We must be aware of the difference with the secular ideas about creation care). We understand that creation is not something we worship but a gift of the Creator - planned by the Creator with good. Humanity has responsibility/**calling** to it. The state of the world and its damage shows us the state of sin.
  - Whereas the world is motivated by fear, we have a **motive** of love, faith, selflessness.
    - We also must acknowledge that there are challenges here as people do have different understandings when it comes to the Bible. It is complex.
- In Denmark there is a possibility to be a green church. One of the things to be a green church is to teach about this, having an offering for creation care, being careful about the products used and renewable energy.
- It is a possibility for us to have conversations with those outside of the church - at universities and politics, etc.
- There is still a lot to work for this. It often falls through the cracks as an issue in some countries (as there are so many issues). But it also seems to be growing in awareness. Often the churches reflect society but must also lead society. It is a **common problem** for all Europe. Everyone is talking about it and we need to have an answer. The Bible does direct us in this.
- There is a network for this in the Evangelical church.

### **Opportunities - what could be done? What are the possibilities? What are the top three opportunities?**

- Green churches: there are possibilities to join these kinds of networks.
- **Advocacy** - we have many opportunities to speak through media, articles, forums.... We need to express our opinion and give a Christian perspective. As people are afraid, we have the opportunity to share and speak for the voiceless. This is true on the universities and political scene as well.
- We know that God brings healing and restoring. We need more theological understanding about God's restoration in creation (and not just in our bodies). Where there is pain, brokenness and hopelessness, God's Spirit can reveal itself. Our prayers can move beyond praying for our own response to the situation but seeking God's restoration/healing and praying that He would reveal Himself in this. We are not the ones who restore but need God's restoration (we come alongside). We need more thought about this. We have an opportunity to grow in **prayer** and trust.

- Some people are **doing** things already in this area in our churches and we can share best practices.
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- It is something already being discussed. We don't have to convince people that it is important. But we can enter the conversation. We can use it to **build bridges**. We can bring hope in a fear driven discussion. In this way we don't stand at odds with the world. We can acknowledge the issue and share the good news.
- In Europe we see it but we also are privileged to be a bit removed from it (and there is still a lot of scepticism on the topic in our churches and we need to teach about this). There is a **growing sense of urgency** - especially among young people, which we can connect with.
- We have **hope**. The world desperately needs this.
- We need to grow in our unity (and seek) in
- We this as an alliance. We can both recognize the different voices but also see what binds us. Conversations is a great opportunity.

### **What do we need?**

- Shared resources of what we are already doing and best practices - Theological discussions and grow in our teaching about this.
- We need to have a better understanding in our churches of what really is the situation in the world. Teaching a holistic view of this (theological, political, socio-economic, justice....)
- We need to be honest about our challenges and differences. We have diversity in our understanding and this is a huge challenge. Maybe we need to challenge people in their thinking. It leads to an opportunity as we engage with/dialogue about this difference and we can seek what truly unites us.
- We should be known as people who care about creation as Evangelicals and examples. (At the moment we are not.)

We pray and there is suggested that we take a walk or rest.

## Session 2

We began with a summary of session 1.

**Aspirations: What are our dreams and prayers? What should we care about? Who should we become and where should we go in the future in relation to our strengths and opportunities? What initiatives should we support?**

- In Bulgaria they collect the bottle caps and use the proceeds for this for social campaigns. In similar ways we could have campaigns that are used in the alliance for raising awareness and supporting a cause. Creative and innovative campaigns that people can get behind.
- We need to help creation care be woven into the other aspirations. We need to help people see creation care is part of the good news, discipleship, caring for society, justice.

- Question: **is our discipleship holistic?** In western discipleship it tends to be very individualistic and only spiritual to the lack of social justice, creation care... So we would dream that discipleship becomes holistic and integrated.
  - We are strong when it comes to our view on sexual and family ethics but creation ethics has not been viewed as important. We dream for change in the ways that we disciple and teach in this area.
- We need to learn how we can unite in our understanding of creation care. What are the core beliefs that we are united upon in this area? **We need a clear theology.** A dream is that we would be united in our theology. We don't just want to change behaviour but help people know what we believe and why. We should build a theological understanding in this (deep thinking about this) and help people in our churches and in their professions to know how they participate in this as a response to what we believe!
    - It would be helpful also to have **practical projects** that people can do as well because these can also change their actions. We can share a bank of ideas and resources - what is working in the churches. These will inspire.
  - We need people/**examples** who are teaching us and leading us in this and people who are inspiring us in action and who are leading us in creation care.
  - We want society to know that Christianity has answers to the questions they are asking and that we have hope! We should be known for caring about this.
  - Maybe we need even to learn to dream in this area!
  - Lausanne has good resources and conversations going on.

## Session 3

**Results: What can we do? What are best practices? How do we know we are on the right track?  
How do we know we are making a difference? What resources are needed?**

- We need funds for this. We can encourage part of budgets to be allocated towards this. We can also find help/funds with this from EU and other programs.
- We could encourage cleaning projects. This helps with the image of the church in the community and teaches those who are involved. Young people love causes and there are many things we can do.
- We should gather together theologians (those who don't agree with one another) and give them space to share and dialogue with the hopes of reaching common beliefs and also what are the differences. We need theological conversations and the evangelical community to be more united in this area.
- Make space for this in our conferences and trainings. Encourage people to include this in their trainings, teachings, etc. of their discipleship and evangelism teachings. We need to help the churches think deeply and relevantly about this. People should feel that this is important and know why it is important/relevant.
- We need more resources and make them available and known. It would be helpful to have a resource bank with stories.
  - There are things on the website for evangelical alliance and inspiring videos but maybe people don't know about these.
  - The world evangelical alliance also has information and materials. We need to get this to our people.
- We need to share stories and testimonies so people can hear how it is integrated in their lives.

Communication is key. This needs to happen in both directions - from the national levels to the European level with stories of what is happening as well as from the European level to national level with helpful ideas, resources, teaching...

- We need to be praying about this. This is one of our strengths and the way God will bring about change in us. We need to include this in our prayer meetings.
- We need to include young people in this. We need to make space for them to share their ideas. We should give them influence and listen to them and their questions, concerns about this. Good communication and dialogue between generations needs to happen. We need to walk alongside of them in this and make it part of discipleship.
- We need to understand that this is a slow process.
  - o We can also encourage our youth to use their influence and media to go into roles and jobs that will help this message be known in the world and God's care of creation.
- We need to be able to also have an answer for those who are asking what will happen and what will God do (especially if things don't get better)? What is our true hope?