

# Don't waste - share!

**Message from the EFECW seminar “Creation and Ecology”,  
4-8 May 2011, St.Petersburg (Russian Federation)**

The Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women (EFECW) is an ecumenical body where women from 29 European countries come together, sharing experiences and ideas, develop new ways of thinking, aiming to establish a church of justice and of shared responsibility between women and men, young and old. The Forum brings together women from East and West, North and South, from Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant denominations, enabling them to gain confidence and raise their voice in the churches and in the world. Despite theological and cultural differences, there is a strong commitment to build bridges of mutual understanding between women in different parts of Europe.

At the General Assembly in 2010 in Loccum, Germany, the Forum decided to establish a working group on ecology. Consequently “Creation and Ecology” was chosen as theme for the EFECW seminar 2011 in St.Petersburg. Twenty-five women participated representing nine countries. The Biblical stories of the creation of the world, its interpretation throughout church history and its consequences for the relationships between God and creation, humankind and creation and man and women were discussed from different denominational perspectives and disciplines. The participants also exchanged information about projects in there countries.

The Hebrew word ‘bara’ in Gen 1:1 was textually and theologically analysed to mean “opening space” rather than “creating”. Caring for the creation is a clear task given to humankind by God. If we allow the destruction of our environment, we destruct our way to God and will never attend harmony within the whole of the creation. The world has been created by opening space for new developments, relations and thoughts. Considering this, creation is not a single action but a continuing act.

Every day we are called to open and leave space to continue the creation by changing our behaviour through practical, educational and political initiatives. It is a matter of mutual Christian responsibility to work together towards a creative relationship between earth and humankind. The “Theology of Enough” is an expression of this and stands in opposition to the anthropology of the consumption-oriented person (“persona consumans”).

Through examples of contemporary Swedish hymns, it became visible that even theologies that integrate symbols traditionally attributed to women (nature, chaos, darkness) often remain stuck in the androcentric tendency of prioritising the symbols attributed to man (culture, cosmos, light). Female attributes are considered as part of the evil where God is absent. How can the results of creation be good if chaos as a condition of every creational process is not considered as being good?

Therefore, *we commit ourselves and invite others:*

... to open and leave spaces for new ideas and developments;

... to think and act creatively: Wasting resources instead of sharing them is a major problem of our time;

... to change our daily behaviour to protect the environment: Making steps, big or small, and being honest in what we can really do, even if this means less comfort;

... to push for democracy and remind our governments and Churches of their responsibilities for the environment and support initiatives growing from civil society, taking into account different cultural and political contexts;

... to influence public opinion in favour of the responsible use of renewable energies and support the reduction and long-term abolition of nuclear energy;

... to value and give priority to local resources and products if possible and support local initiatives;

... to raise awareness by sharing best practices in education aiming to develop ecological consciousness.

*“Take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”  
(Ex 3:5)*