



Redesigning the Tree of Life: Synthetic Biology and the Future of Food

 THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ÉGLISES



World Council
of Churches

A participatory learning conference, informed by expert presentations, with time to build the relationships and shared learning that make future shared work possible.

Location

Friends House, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto

Purposes

Theological and Ethical Reflection, Learning, Organizing

This event is designed to provide an opportunity to share and ground our work in theological and ethical reflection; build relationships for future work; learn about the connections across synthetic biology, the future of food, and sustainable agriculture; and organize for advocacy and public engagement at, among others, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the Committee on World Food Security, and the Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Thursday, November 2

- 6:00 p.m. Welcome and opening prayer. Territorial acknowledgement
- 6:30 p.m. *Dinner (catered)*
- 7:00 p.m. Introductions and Getting to Know One another over food
- 7:30 p.m. Reflection panel. Theology, technology, ethics – why is this important for faith communities?
- 8:30 p.m. Outline/program for the next two days. Evening closing prayer

Friday, November 3

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome, prayer and reflection.
- 9:30 a.m. Synthetic Biology. Big picture of synthetic biology, lay of the land and setting the stage for breakout sessions.
- 10:00 a.m. 4 mini-‘programs’ plus questions, dialogue café style with facilitation, self-selected groups rotating once or twice.
- 11:30 a.m. *Tea / Coffee / Snack / Exercise Break*
- 12:00 p.m. Public policy perspective
- 1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 2:30 p.m. Story telling on synthetic biology and sustainable agriculture: Views from Canada, US, Mexico, and elsewhere: Stories about how synthetic biology is impacting farmers, communities – plus questions.
- 3:30 p.m. *Tea / Coffee / Snack / Exercise Break*
- 4:00 p.m. Large Group Dialogue
- 6:00 p.m. *Dinner (nearby restaurant)*
- 7:30 p.m. Public event with additional co-sponsors
- 9:00 p.m. Closing reflection

Saturday, November 4

- 9:00 a.m. Opening Reflection
- 9:30 a.m. What is being done – and what can we do
Advocacy on policy and regulatory framework for synthetic biology. Promoting ethical and theological reflections on synthetic biology. Bolstering local movements of communities of faith and social groups.
- 11:00 a.m. *Tea / Coffee / Snack / Exercise Break*
- 11:30 a.m. What can we/will we do together? Priorities – Actions - Time-Lines. How will we know when we are successful? Will we have a common, shared statement we will all want to agree on at this stage?
- 12:30 p.m. *Lunch*
- 1:30 p.m. Looking Ahead
Agree on 3 priorities – with actions – that we will focus on and work on – as individuals, communities/faith groups, nationally, and internationally. What are some time-lines for us?
- 3:00 p.m. Thanks and Gratitude. Closing reflection.
- 3:30 p.m. Adjourn

Participants

- 100 people: 30-40 Canada, 15-20 US, 5-10 Mexico, 5-10 Geneva-based organizations, 15-20 other countries; youth/young adults, possibly interfaith perspectives.
- Live streaming/video conferencing/recording of some sessions. Use of social media to amplify the learning.