



Introducing the

World Council of Churches



a pilgrimage
of justice
and peace



A Common Journey of Faith

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a global fellowship of churches expressing a common faith in Jesus Christ and seeking to fulfil their common calling to the glory of one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The WCC was officially formed in 1948 by representatives of 147 churches gathered at its first assembly in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Its tenth and most recent assembly was held in 2013 in Busan, Republic of Korea; it included 345 member churches representing more than 550 million people in 120 countries around the world.

The WCC is one of the broadest and most inclusive among many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, which seeks the visible unity of the church. The fellowship includes most of the world's Orthodox churches, the Old Catholic and Mar Thoma churches, as well as churches of such confessional traditions as the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed, many united and uniting churches, Mennonites, Friends, Congregationalists, Disciples and African Indigenous Churches.

The Roman Catholic Church has a formal working relationship with the WCC but is not a member. There are on-going relationships with evangelical and Pentecostal churches not already in membership.

Churches in the fellowship of the WCC pursue a vision of Christian unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship; promoting a common witness in mission and evangelism; encouraging ecumenical formation and reflection; engaging in



Christian service by meeting human need through cooperation with WCC partner agencies and regional ecumenical organizations; breaking down barriers between people; and championing justice and peace.

The 10th Assembly of the WCC called member churches to join a common pilgrimage of justice and peace as testimony to the enduring presence and witness of the church in the world. The delegates said, "The unity of the Church, the unity of the human community and the unity of the whole creation are interconnected. Christ who makes us one calls us to live in justice and peace and impels us to work together for justice and peace in God's world."

With the pilgrimage, the WCC has developed five strategic objectives that will guide its programmatic work until the 11th Assembly:

- Strengthening the fellowship
- Witnessing together
- Encouraging spirituality, reflection and formation
- Building trust and understanding
- Inspiring and innovative communication.

Its programme areas include:

- Unity, mission and ecumenical relations
- Public witness and *diakonia*
- Ecumenical formation

All WCC programmatic work takes into consideration relations with member churches and partners, youth engagement in the ecumenical movement, the just community of men and women, inter-religious dialogue and spiritual life.

The WCC fellowship of churches as well as Roman Catholics, evangelicals and Pentecostals, along with ecumenical partners, come together through their involvement in five working commissions of the WCC: The Commission on Faith & Order; the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism; the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs; the Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation and ECHOES Commission on Youth and the Ecumenical Movement. These commissions offer guidance and prophetic voice to the ecumenical movement. Without the involvement of these commissions, its member churches and ecumenical partners, WCC work would not be able to move forward.



pilgrimage of justice and peace



mission unity ecumenical relations

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

The message from the first WCC assembly at Amsterdam in 1948 was that the churches intended “to stay together.” Subsequent assemblies saw the churches working together on theological and faith and order issues, engaging in common mission and service, expressing their visible unity. The 10th Assembly declared that the pilgrimage of justice and peace is how “we intend to move together.” The pilgrimage represents a new way for the fellowship to respond to the steep challenges presented to the world church today. While WCC member churches are already deeply committed to seeking justice and peace, the pilgrimage offers a way in which they can move forward together, pursuing a common witness for justice and peace while experiencing renewal and transformation through working and being with one another. The goal is to honestly seek a response to God’s will for this world. All WCC member and non-member churches, ecumenical partners and peoples of other faiths and goodwill are invited to join the pilgrimage.

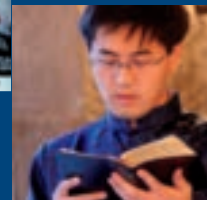
Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Relations

At the core of the WCC’s work is the pursuit of visible Christian unity in faith, in mission and in ecumenical relations. The WCC strives for a global fellowship of churches seeking a deeper understanding of one another, developing a wider dialogue and building communities rooted in justice and peace. The WCC is a unique space in which churches create fellowship, encourage spiritual renewal, overcome differences and learn from diversity. The WCC is heir to 100 years of engagement of the churches acting together in mission and evangelism. While mission has always meant a clear witness to the gospel, it increasingly is seen too as fostering respect for people’s dignity and solidarity with those who suffer from poverty, injustice, exclusion, sickness or violence. The Spirit of God leads all people to seek truth, justice and peace, and in doing so embodying the prayer of Jesus that “they may all be one.” As a privileged instrument of the global ecumenical movement, the WCC not only creates space for those within the fellowship but reaches out to those beyond its own communities, entering into dialogue and sharing with the Roman Catholic Church, evangelicals and Pentecostals and now also with those of other faiths through inter-religious dialogue.

“The ecumenical call is to continue to strive for unity, justice and peace ... This call is not disappearing, it is only getting stronger.” —OLAV FYKSE TVEIT



diakonia public witness ecumenical formation



Public Witness and *Diakonia*

As people of faith who are moving forward together, experiencing the renewal and transformation found in the pilgrimage of justice and peace, the WCC offers a prophetic voice in its public witness and *diakonia*, serving the world's needs for justice and peace. Public witness is the WCC and its member churches witnessing together for peace-building in priority countries: the Korean Peninsula, Syria, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. It is also accompanying churches in situations of conflict around the world, including the ongoing witness in the Middle East and in particular of the Ecumenical Accompaniers in Israel and Palestine. Christian service – *diakonia* – consists in living gospel values in solidarity with others. This common ministry is manifest in the call for a sustainable future, in turning back the impact of climate change, in an economy that offers life for all, in securing water justice, in the empowering of women and lifting up of youth. It may also be seen in advancing peace through social justice, capacity building for service, the healing ministry of the churches today and HIV and AIDS work.

Ecumenical Formation

The future of the ecumenical movement, and the witness of the church, rests in the on-going endeavour of ecumenical formation and the continual renewal of those involved in the movement. This is done primarily in two ways. The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey near Geneva, Switzerland, provides a space for reflection and study to students from around the world. Each student leaves prepared to return to his or her home communities and churches renewed and transformed through learning, encounter and personal exchanges at Bossey. By cooperating and working closely with churches, the institute is a foundational piece in the strengthening of the WCC fellowship and the ecumenical movement. Through ecumenical theological education, continuing education and formation in regions beyond Bossey, basic tools and skills are refined so that the churches may grow closer. Through Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), the WCC and its partners offer support and help create networks of ecumenical theological institutions around the world. The ETE activities create opportunities for developing ecumenically-oriented leadership within churches and make certain that church leaders have readily available basic theological education.



"Let us move together to rebuild, restore and reclaim a life-giving and life-empowering world where all live in dignity, peace and justice."

—AGNES ABUOM



REV. DR OLAV FYKSE TVEIT,
WCC GENERAL SECRETARY



DR AGNES ABUM,
MODERATOR OF WCC
CENTRAL COMMITTEE



As of 2013, the World Council of Churches has 345 member churches representing a wide diversity of church traditions in 120 countries throughout the world.

Of the 345 WCC member churches 26% are based in Africa, 22% in Europe, 22% in Asia, 9% in North America, 8% in Latin America, 5% in Pacific, 4% in Caribbean and 4% in Middle East.

The total membership represents more than 550 million people. Among these, Europe as a region and the Eastern Orthodox as a church tradition have the largest memberships of churches within the WCC.

By church tradition, 28% of the WCC member churches are from the Reformed tradition, 16% from the Lutheran tradition and 11% from the Methodist tradition.

To learn more about the WCC member churches go to: www.oikoumene.org/member-churches

NORTH AMERICA 30 churches

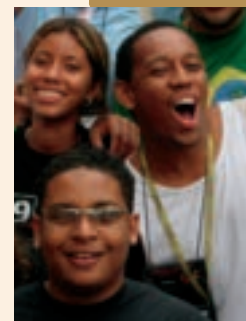
Anglican
Assyrian
Baptist
Brethren
Disciples
Friends
Independent
Lutheran
Methodist
Moravian
Non-denominational
Orthodox (Eastern)
Pentecostal
Presbyterian
Reformed
United and Uniting

CARIBBEAN 13 churches

Anglican
Baptist
Methodist
Moravian
Presbyterian
United and Uniting

LATIN AMERICA 27 churches

Anglican
Baptist
Disciples
Lutheran
Methodist
Moravian
Pentecostal
Presbyterian
United and Uniting



EUROPE 78 churches

Anglican
Baptist
Brethren
Evangelical
Hussite
Independent
Lutheran
Mennonite
Methodist
Moravian
Old Catholic
Orthodox (Eastern)
Orthodox (Oriental)
Presbyterian
Reformed
United and Uniting



ASIA 75 churches

Anglican
Baptist
Disciples
Evangelical
Independent
Lutheran
Mar Thoma
Methodist
Orthodox (Eastern)
Orthodox (Oriental)
Post-denominational
Presbyterian
Reformed
United and Uniting

PACIFIC 17 churches

Anglican
Congregational
Lutheran
Methodist
Presbyterian
Reformed
United and Uniting

MIDDLE EAST 13 churches

Anglican
Lutheran
Orthodox (Eastern)
Orthodox (Oriental)
Presbyterian
Reformed

AFRICA 92 churches

African-Instituted
Anglican
Baptist
Brethren
Disciples
Evangelical
Lutheran
Mennonite
Methodist
Moravian
Orthodox (Oriental)
Pentecostal
Presbyterian
Reformed
United and Uniting





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