



World Council of Churches

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Middle East Council of Churches

Geneva, 14 November 2023

Greetings on the Occasion of the 50th Jubilee of the Middle East Council of Churches

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, General Secretary, World Council of Churches

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" –Ps. 27:1

Dear friends in Christ,

I welcome this opportunity, on behalf of the full fellowship of Christian churches around the world, to congratulate you, the Presidents Council, the Secretary General, the Executive Committee and all the member churches, on this, the 50th jubilee of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). The council is `important to the whole fellowship by virtue of where it is, what it does, and what it stands for.

These troubled times only reinforce the remarkable fortitude and estimable work of the Council over these decades, as well as its crucial, continuing role in uniting Christians throughout the region to work for, pray for, live for a just peace, deeper understanding among Christians and with others, and the well-being of all who live in the Middle East.

In these last five decades, the Middle East Council of Churches has been a beacon of hope, unity, and resilience in a region often torn by conflict and division. Its journey, defined by a steadfast commitment to ecumenism, justice, and service, demonstrates the transformative power of faith and fellowship in overcoming challenges and fostering peace. All of us in the World Council of Churches have witnessed and accompanied this impactful journey since the MECC's establishment.

The MECC's unwavering dedication to promoting unity among its member churches and sister ecumenical organizations, through theological education and dialogue on doctrinal and traditional differences, has been particularly inspirational and enlightening..

Your unity has also been a force for tangible change, addressing humanitarian crises and advocating for peace and justice. For instance, during the Lebanese Civil War, the MECC played a crucial role in facilitating dialogue and providing aid, embodying a spirit of reconciliation amidst the strife. Similarly, in Iraq and Syria, amid the turmoil and devastation caused by war, the MECC's efforts in humanitarian aid and peace-building have been instrumental. That support has extended to refugees and displaced populations, contributing significantly to relief and long-term stability efforts.

The MECC's commitment to service is deeply rooted in its Christian faith and mission. It has been a source of hope and support for the younger generations, working extensively in education and healthcare, and serving refugees across the region. Your engagement in Palestine has been marked by solidarity with the Palestinian people, providing crucial assistance and advocating for peace and justice in the face of ongoing struggles especially through the DSPR (Department of Service to the Palestinian Refugees).

Of course, MECC's work is also precious to all of us in the larger fellowship because you offer an enduring Christian witness in the land where Jesus himself walked. You strive for interfaith engagement and understanding in the birthplace of Jesus and is the enduring home of the three major Abrahamic traditions. And together you stand up for peace, for the displaced, for creation, and for the children, always alert for the redemptive possibilities emerging across boundaries of churches, religions, peoples, and nations.

Your role will always be crucial as the challenges in the Middle East remain complex and multifaceted. The Council's unique position, with its rich history and the collective strength of its member churches, equips it to lead a response that is compassionate and collaborative.

It is with joy that we share your jubilee of memory and hope. MECC's journey of faith over the past 50 years has been characterized by courage, compassion, and collaboration. We salute you and the precious Christian traditions you conserve, nurture and proclaim through your ecumenical fellowship in Christ. As you look to the future, we pray for your continued vitality, strengthening the bonds of fellowship, deepening ecumenical engagements, championing justice, and serving those in need. May the Lord continue to bless your ministry and the faithful Christians whom you serve so well.

Best wishes and blessings!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pillay", written in a cursive style.

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches