



On the Pilgrimage

The World Council of Churches in 2014



World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a global fellowship of churches whose relationship with one another and activities together are an expression of their common faith in Jesus Christ and their common calling to the glory of the one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

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

Churches in the fellowship of the WCC pursue a vision of ecumenism seeking visible unity in one faith, and one eucharistic fellowship; promoting a common witness in work for mission and evangelism; engaging in Christian service by meeting human need through WCC partner agencies; breaking down barriers between people; and upholding justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The WCC was officially formed in 1948 by representatives of 147 churches gathered at its 1st Assembly in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

As of 31 December 2013 the WCC had a membership of 345 churches from more than 110 countries around the world.

From 30 October to 8 November 2013, the WCC held its 10th Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea. After each assembly the programmatic work shifts. Read more about the new programmatic work from 2014 onward.



Through faith we move forward in hope

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! Psalm 133:1

Since the Busan Assembly of the World Council of Churches in late 2013, we have been developing our work together within the context of the “pilgrimage of justice and peace.” We did not begin this journey but joined it in progress, nor is it ours alone. Still, it provides the WCC a focus and a framework for our vocation as a global fellowship, dedicated to the common life of the One Church in service to the whole of humanity.

The year 2014 involved extensive international and inter-religious work, indicative of WCC's breadth and its members' commitment. I was proud to represent the WCC before UNICEF and other far-reaching partners that impact millions of people's lives. The WCC also hosted diverse leaders — including representatives of the World Jewish Congress as well as Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt — in Geneva. Our discussions involving Syria with Lakhdar Brahimi, the joint representative for Syria, helped us raise one voice for peace and work for a negotiated solution among all parties to the conflict.

Working with the Orthodox Churches, the WCC was also able to raise a voice for peace during a visit to Russia, where we discussed the first steps to prepare an action plan for the Ukraine. Orthodox Churches also played an important role during our executive committee meeting in Cyprus, a role as both host and as pilgrims on a journey in a divided country. Throughout this report on the programmes and projects of the WCC in 2014, there is a consciousness of the collective pilgrimage to which we have committed ourselves. This is true not only in the relationships among member churches of the council, but also in our cooperation with other expressions of the Christian faith, world religions and international organizations.

In a meeting with Pope Francis in 2014, I had occasion to talk with him about our theme. “Pilgrimage” has been a recurring source of reflection in his ministry, and he seemed eager to embrace the concept of moving together in mission, struggling against poverty, injustice, violence and war.

Meanwhile, agencies of the United Nations and assorted non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been sounding out the WCC and other religious bodies, seeking greater understanding of the religious dimensions of world events as well as possible means of fostering dialogue, rather than confrontation, among peoples. This exploration of the potential for mobilization of common resources in building justice and peace is very much a “pilgrimage approach” to global affairs.

One message we share in conversations with international organizations is that the WCC is not a kind of NGO that makes certain points for purely political reasons. We take our stand for justice and peace because we believe that these are gifts that God has given us in Jesus Christ, and we are called to share these gifts with the whole world as an expression of our faith.

We believe that conditions in this world are ripe for change, and we continue the pilgrimage to which all are called in pursuit of that change.

When I visited my native Norway in the course of 2014, people in the churches there expressed a particular interest in campaigning for a strong response to climate change. Their focus was seized in particular by the upcoming 21st COP (Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) to be held in Paris late in 2015. Many churches are seeking a way to ensure a just and sustainable

agreement on the future of the planet – as a part of our stewardship of God’s creation. The WCC supports our member churches in this purpose, as this report makes clear. And the event in Paris is causing many Christians to join in planning a physical pilgrimage to bear witness at the conference itself.

Climate change, of course, is by no means the only pressing issue on the horizon. We are called to confront economic injustice, the lack of medical and social aid amid epidemics and chronic disease world-wide, regions marked by warfare and confrontation – and so much more.

In all this, the WCC lays its plans and carries out its strategy in ways that are flexible, inviting the creativity of our partners. We assure every effort to make connections as needs develop, and to use available resources wisely.

In our determination to work well with others in the service of God and humanity, we extend this invitation to all people of good will, and especially to you:

Join us in the pilgrimage of justice and peace!



*Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary, World Council of Churches*

“We need to be moved to move. The triune God, the God of life, brought us together as one humanity in the life given to us since our birth and in our daily experiences.”

– OLAV FYKSE TVEIT, WCC GENERAL SECRETARY



WCC Programmes

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 will 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 honestly to 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 and eucharistic fellowship, in mission and in service. The WCC is 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 to embody 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 churches, 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.



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 countries of special concern: 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, turning back the impact of climate change, in an economy that offers life for all, securing water rights, 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, rest in the ongoing endeavour of ecumenical formation and the continual renewal of those involved in the movement. This is done mainly 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 the University of Geneva and 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.



We Talk and Walk Together

Whether reacting to emerging crises, thoughtfully planning long-term commitments to action, or creating opportunities for important emerging discourse, the WCC is in the midst of a pilgrimage. The time following the WCC 10th Assembly has been one in which world events have called for a faith perspective and faith-based commitment. The WCC has convened its member churches, encouraging dialogue that has transformed stances into actions related to climate change, economic justice, violent conflict, and health and healing.

Now, more than ever, the WCC calls upon the churches to be together in mission. We believe that the world must change. When we stand together, as WCC member churches, we have influence in making that change.

Inspired by the theme of a “pilgrimage of justice and peace,” the following report does not look back as much as it looks forward, giving a glimpse into the ongoing pilgrimage of WCC member churches. We are, as a collective body, moving together. In the midst of our journey, let us consider the question together: how are we engaging our God-given gifts in transforming actions?

Central Committee's Plan Reflects Ever-Moving Pilgrimage

Inspired by the theme “pilgrimage of justice and peace,” the Central Committee formed a strategic plan to guide its direction from 2014 to 2017. The Central Committee focused on the renewal of churches' commitment towards Christian unity as well as solidarity with churches in conflict situations. Countries where churches' work for justice and peace is being prioritized include the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Nigeria, Syria and Israel and Palestine. Strategies were also developed on how to promote churches' work for the reunification of the Korean peninsula.

Climate change, ecological and economic justice, and sharing of resources among the churches also emerged as major engagements.



The journey is inward and outward

Pilgrimages planned for 2015 are generating excitement and new connections among church communities throughout the world. One example among many is from Canada. Inspired by the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace, the United Church of Canada is sharing ideas on how individuals, parishes and missions might explore the links between their faith and their concern for aboriginal rights and environmental protection by getting out into their communities, carrying Bibles and prayers with them.

“We want to engage people from their hearts, not just their heads – encourage them to see justice as a spiritual matter,” says the church’s representative to WCC’s Reference Group on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, Adele Halliday.

“It’s a process of looking inward in order to look outward,” explains Barbara Lloyd, a programme coordinator for social justice activities in parishes. “We need to remember the sacred areas of our home communities in order to understand how to engage with the world outside.”

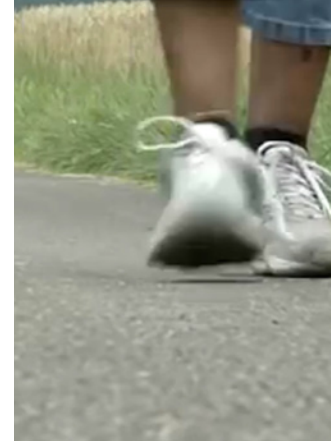
Suggestions for 2015 include exploration of the watershed area of the country’s largest city, Toronto, with pauses along the way for prayer and Bible reading; participation in a walk through the nation’s capital to mark the closing ceremony of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has received testimonies over the past three years of abuse in former church-run residential schools for aboriginal children; and a youth pilgrimage from the Pacific to the Atlantic – a distance of more than 7000 km.

The youth pilgrimage is the most ambitious of the initiatives. On 6 July, thirteen young people representing each church district will leave Vancouver on the country’s west coast to travel by plane, train, bus, and boat to Cornerbook on the east coast, arriving in time to join the church’s triennial national assembly in August.

As they travel, the young pilgrims will meet people involved in a street mission in Vancouver’s impoverished east-end; aboriginal people affected by tar sand exploitation in the country’s northern region; migrant farmers in the rich agricultural land along the border with the United States; and members of Latin American base communities in Montreal, the country’s largest French-speaking city. Adults are invited to join the youth by walking, riding or wheeling along when the pilgrims arrive in their communities. They can also follow postings on pilgrimage blogs and Facebook pages.

Spiritual reflection will be part of the pilgrimage, says children and youth programme executive Amy Crawford. In an attempt to engage in playful yet thoughtful exploration of the spiritual dimension of the trip, participants will be given a deck of Pilgrim Cards that encourage reflection on the experience of being on a pilgrimage of faith.

Planning for pilgrimage in 2016 focuses on migration. ■



“Pilgrimage, whether in my Indian/Asian or in any other cultural experience, is a conscious personal choice one makes. It begins with introspection, repentance, and renunciation of the past and all encumbrances in order to encounter something new – perhaps greater understanding of oneself in the presence of the divine – or to seek help, guidance, and the blessings of health and wellbeing.”

– DEENABANDHU MANCHALA, A THEOLOGIAN FROM INDIA, AND AREA EXECUTIVE FOR THE WIDER CHURCH MINISTRIES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, U.S.A.

WCC Central Committee Leaders Reflect on Diversity, Peace, and Ecumenism

At its first full meeting in July 2014, the new WCC Central Committee reviewed WCC programme planning for 2014-2017. “Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace” was the theme of the meeting.

Below, three Central Committee leaders reflect on their pilgrimages, both personal and within the WCC, in areas important to them and to the WCC membership.



Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator, Central Committee:

- **WCC’s ambiance changing, growing**

“[Within the WCC], the decision making process has shifted from an Anglo-Saxon parliamentary voting system that, in most cases, left those who did not win vanquished and feeling a sense of loss that left them very little space for creative participation; now, we have evolved into the consensus mode of discerning and decision making. There is an emerging sense of people listening to each other, seeking to decipher the opinions and views of others, as well as a sense of respect for the ‘other.’”

- **More women in WCC leadership roles**

“The WCC has not attained the agreed 50 percent representation of women in the decision making organs. More women are taking leading roles and actively participating both at the secretariat and central committee levels, but our journey of equal representation remains a goal. The changing profile of young men and women in the life and work of the WCC has increasingly become a concern for the future of the ecumenical movement. Measures are underway to engage young people.”

- **Evolving as a leader**

“I would affirm that my leadership role has evolved particularly in the area of peace and climate justice. My leadership as the WCC president for Africa was a very fruitful period when we engaged with national and regional ecumenical structures on issues of peace and sustainable development. In the recent past, my growth has been on interfaith relations and dialogue for peace. I come from an ecumenical family and my siblings belong to other denominations including Pentecostal churches. This childhood exposure to ecumenical relations at the family level formed my perspectives and tolerance.”

Dr Agnes Abuom is from the Anglican Church of Kenya.



Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima, vice-moderator, Central Committee:

- **Aspects of human peace**

“The Church Fathers quite often distinguish three aspects of human peace: peace with God, peace with one’s conscience and peace with one’s neighbour. And none of these aspects alone can be effective and significant, and every effort for peace is effective, no matter where it comes from.

“For an Orthodox believer, peace is the most important aspect of the Church’s experience of its spiritual and sacramental life, its service and *diakonia* to humanity, through prayer and all possible means.

“The desire for peace and the duty to serve the world are described in particular in the liturgy, where there is a hidden memory of Christ’s aims of reconciliation and where the whole content of the liturgical prayers is directed to helping people to be reconciled with God, to be in communion with God, the church and people, so that an unbreakable peace arises between heaven and earth: ‘In peace let us pray to the Lord, for the peace of God and for the whole world . . . let us pray to the Lord.’

“The struggle for peace brings people closer to each other and helps them to understand each other better, to perceive the problems of peace and humanity more deeply and to proclaim the good news with a new sense of responsibility.

Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Limouris) of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is a professor of Orthodox theology and canon law in various universities.



Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, vice-moderator, Central Committee:

- **Lifetime of ecumenism**

“My mother’s family was Baptist and my father’s family was Methodist, so ecumenism has been natural for me since birth. In my childhood, I had girlfriends who were Catholic and Greek Orthodox. That further developed my ecumenical understanding. Then when I was a young pastor in the early 1970’s, I was president of our local ecumenical organization for a year. It was the greater Vancouver, Wash., ecumenical association. The local Catholic priest invited me to join him leading worship in his parish on Good Friday. You must realize how significant this was...a Catholic priest inviting a Protestant clergywoman to share in leading worship in the 1970s! I have been a committed ecumenist ever since.”

- **Reaching consensus**

“The WCC Executive Committee, even with great diversity, is becoming true community – *koinonia*. It is more challenging for the central committee because it is so much larger and meets less frequently. Even so, people stayed at the table as we sought to reach consensus in our decision making. I believe that since we are on a pilgrimage of justice and peace, and we seek to be in accompaniment with Christians in conflicted places in the world, we will all realize how important it is to have a good process for decision making and to reach consensus whenever possible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson serves as president of the United Methodist Church’s General Commission on Christian Unity.

WCC in Midst of Landmark Work on Climate Change

While the Interfaith Summit on Climate Change in September 2014 in New York was a milestone of success for WCC's work related to protection of the earth, the event was but one stop on the continuing pilgrimage toward climate justice, said Dr Guillermo Kerber, WCC programme executive for care for creation and climate justice.

"The summit brought from all over the world thirty leaders from nine different faith traditions together as one, strengthening our unified call for international political leaders to respond effectively to the climate change challenge and renewed request for a fair, ambitious and binding treaty to come out in Paris," said Kerber, referring to the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which will be held in Paris in 2015.

Churches, faith communities and civil society are urging a legally binding instrument to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, including effective financing tools for adaptation of the most vulnerable communities and regions.



Pilgrimage to Paris

WCC member churches have come together in an unprecedented way to speak as one voice asking for climate justice for all.

Climate justice was the focal point of WCC's advocacy strategy at COP 20 of the UNFCCC, held in December 2014, broadening and deepening discussion and understanding about climate change and human rights. At an official side event at COP 20, in meetings with government delegations and through other activities with member churches, youth and the civil society at large, WCC continues to raise awareness on climate justice and support the work of other partners and networks.

WCC member churches as well as other faith groups have already started to prepare their own "Pilgrimage to Paris" in the coming year, whether that means literally traveling to Paris for COP21 or holding a symbolic walk to support the plea for climate justice for all.

Outreach Grows...

- A new online survey supported by the WCC aims to promote the study of issues such as the environment, climate change and food security as part of the training of future pastors, priests and other Christian leaders.
- Thirty-one participants from 20 countries participated in a seminar on "Green Churches – Ecology, Theology and Justice in Practice" in June 2014 at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland.

Student Reflects on Participation in Summit

Tariq Abdul-Akbar, along with other youth representatives, attended the Interfaith Summit on Climate Change. While studying at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Abdul-Akbar said he discovered new insight into why climate change is so intricately related to justice and peace.

"Climate change was always an issue that I was conscious of since elementary school, but studying at Bossey and coming in contact with people from all over the world at Bossey and at the Interfaith Summit on Climate Change enforced it as a moral obligation that my community and I should fulfill so that we don't contribute further to global warming or its ramifications," he said.

Abdul-Akbar, a 21-year-old Muslim from the United States, said the most meaningful aspect of the summit was seeing humanity come together across the customary boundaries of race and religion. "Things used to divide us, but now we begin to see where we went wrong as collective groups, and we come together in order to make a better world."

Arms Trade Treaty: “Change is possible in the world”

The landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force on Christmas Eve 2014, and it is a good example of what the churches can do when they put a stance into action, reflected Jonathan Frerichs, WCC programme executive for peace building and disarmament.



The ATT is an international law to regulate the global trade in armaments and ammunition. Along with civil society groups and governments in every region of the world, WCC member churches and partners in some 50 countries campaigned and lobbied for an ATT that will help save lives and protect communities at risk because lethal weapons have been traded with so few restrictions in the past.

“What happened is a good example of what churches can do together when we take up a relevant and achievable goal,” said Frerichs.

The ATT is just one stop on a continued pilgrimage toward peace and justice, he added. “With continued help from ecumenical campaigners who influenced what’s in the treaty, we will work to get more governments

to ratify the ATT,” he said. “Change is possible in the international system but it has to be supported by different sectors of society. Churches have a unique role to play and, if we want to be part of it, we have to work together.”

At least some WCC member churches will be working to ensure that the treaty is implemented properly. “If there are gross violations, the church will see the consequences,” said Frerichs. “How hard do we work to become ATT monitors?”

Though the answer will differ among WCC member churches and local communities, the WCC will continue to support its member churches and partners who are working to ensure a just ATT enforcement.

Humanitarian Disarmament

The ATT is part of the WCC’s larger agenda for humanitarian disarmament.

Churches of the WCC are actively participating in growing international scrutiny into the human impact of nuclear weapons. After examinations of the evidence presented at three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in 2013 and 2014, 44 states are calling for a ban on nuclear weapons and 156 states have declared that nuclear weapons must never be used again.

In December 2014 the government of Austria issued a specific, cooperative pledge to “fill the legal gap for the prohibition of nuclear weapons” and eliminate them.

The WCC is also involved in ongoing discussions concerning the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV, or drones) and the development of fully autonomous lethal weapons. At the Busan Assembly and in February 2014, the WCC called for a pre-emptive ban on “robotic weapons that will select and strike targets without human intervention” and said UAVs pose “serious threats to the right to life” and set “dangerous precedents in inter-state relations.” ■

“A pilgrimage for me, in its most basic sense, is moving collectively toward the realm of God. When I think about pilgrimage, I think about Jesus Christ being a mobile disciple in a mobile ministry.”

— DR ULYSSES BURLEY III, EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Vision Takes Shape for Interfaith Centre in Nigeria

Following a high-level international Christian-Muslim visit to Nigeria in 2012 co-organized by the WCC and the Royal Jordanian Aal Al-Bayt Institute, there grew the vision of establishing a centre to monitor incidents of religious violence. A grant from the Norwegian government has now allowed two consultants to conduct fieldwork in Nigeria to determine the feasibility of setting up this centre. Fieldwork was carried out in Abuja, Plateau, Kaduna and Lagos. Government officials, religious leaders, heads of organizations, professionals and academics participated in focus group meetings and interviews.

The centre's purpose will be to document, prevent and transform inter-religious conflicts across the country with a particular emphasis on the north and middle belt of Nigeria. One of its most important features will be that it will be jointly run by both local and international Christian and Muslim organizations, with both the WCC and its international Muslim partners continuing to play a role in its management.

Fieldwork Indicates Serious Need for Centre

Nigeria remains a country with one of the highest numbers and most severe incidents of inter-communal violence between Christian and Muslims. The consultants' findings indicate not only a pronounced need for the centre but overwhelming support for its existence as well.

Clare Amos, WCC programme executive for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, was among participants at a consultative forum jointly organized in September 2014 by the Christian Council of Nigeria and Jama'atu Nasril Islam.

Amos expressed hope that a grant from the Norwegian government, which covered the fieldwork during 2014, would also cover setting up the centre as well as its operations for two years. At this point, she added, "it is important that the process be owned by Nigerian people."

The preliminary work on the centre during 2014 is significant as the vision of the centre is a point of hope for so many people in Nigeria, said Amos. "My vision of the centre is that it serves as a place for Nigerian Christians and Muslims to work together for the good of the nation, while at the same time continuing to receive some measure of international support." ■



2014 WCC HIGHLIGHTS

Ecumenical panel promotes economic justice

The Ecumenical Panel on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture concluded its second meeting in Switzerland in January 2014, developing advocacy strategies for churches to ensure economic justice and the ecological wellbeing of communities.

Working in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the Council for World Mission, the WCC efforts are steered by economist Athena Peralta.

The panel of economic experts and theologians identified discrepancies within global economic and financial structures that generate adverse impacts on communities, urging churches to influence states and financial institutions in order to realize ethical and just systems.

Ethical decisions in financial sector crucial for climate justice

Olav Fykse Tveit, following a session on climate change at the World Economic Forum in January 2014, stressed the "significant role of financial policy-making by the states in addressing climate change."

The forum, with participants from across the world, focused on the theme "The Reshaping of the World: Consequences for Society, Politics and Business."

"Every society creates boundaries – barriers between itself and 'others' – and Jesus is telling us to cross those cultural, racial, religious, regional, and tribal boundaries to find our 'neighbors.' "

– JIM WALLIS, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF SOJOURNERS, WASHINGTON, DC

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme Serves Increasing Numbers

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is expanding to engage with increasing numbers of people in a pilgrimage toward just peace. In 2014, EAPPI opened a new placement in Jericho to cover the Jordan Valley. Israel maintains security and administrative control over the valley, except for the enclave around Jericho.

Some 47,000 Palestinians live in the territories part of the valley in about 20 permanent communities. Thousands more, largely Bedouins, live in temporary communities. The valley, important for tourism, is also known for its fertile land, natural resources and warm climate. The area has important water resources as well, holding almost half of the total water resources in the West Bank.

“The demolition of Palestinian property in this area has greatly increased,” said Jet den Hollander, EAPPI local programme coordinator. “In January 2014 alone, 90 percent of all demolitions took place in the Jordan Valley.”

Courageous Commitment to Humanitarian Protection

The success of the EAPPI programme rests upon the commitment and passion of the Ecumenical Accompaniers who, with a combination of courage and compassion, constantly stand up for human rights and international humanitarian law. Some 1,500 accompaniers have served on the ground in Palestine and Israel, with the number growing every year.

“We had a group of accompaniers coming early in August, when the Gaza War was still raging,” reflected Manuel Quintero-Perez, EAPPI international coordinator. “We were afraid we would not be able to provide as much security for them as we wanted. We sent a letter to them saying that, if they chose, they could withdraw. But everyone came despite the highest risk. It was an expression of the commitment of these Ecumenical Accompaniers and their willingness to be with people even at a time of so much risk.”

After accompaniers leave their posts in Palestine and Israel, they continue their pilgrimage of justice and peace by sharing eyewitness accounts with parliaments, ambassadors, and other government officials through a broad international network of churches and civil society.

“We have to walk together. We have to journey together in a common understanding. We have to help each other.”

— DR ABBA HAILE MARIAM MELESE,
ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHURCH
— AFRICA



Accompaniers help Children Feel Safe

With support from UNICEF, accompaniers have assisted more than 3,536 children and 269 teachers in 16 different locations during the past year as they walk to schools in Palestine and Israel.

Accompaniers regularly intervene in situations of bag searches and delayed openings, while their presence has proven to have a deterrent effect both on children throwing rocks and on the soldiers' response. Serious incidents rarely take place when accompaniers are present.

“When Israeli soldiers and settlers come into the school, students are afraid to come the next day. They express their fear in their artwork: drawing pictures of soldiers shooting guns. When EAPPI is here, soldiers and settlers don't come. We hope you continue to come here,” said Nabil, headmaster of Urif secondary school for boys. ■

'Please Help Us. Thank You.'

WCC Urges Churches to Stand for Peace, Justice

At the St Peter and Paul Assyrian Church of the East in Dohuk, Iraq, two women – one Christian and one Sunni Muslim – are sharing their thoughts on whether to permanently leave the city of Mosul or return in the wake of violence by militants of the self-proclaimed “Islamic State (IS).”

“We are scared to go back,” said one woman. “All of us here are so afraid. We don’t want to stay. We want to go anywhere in the world. All the people in here don’t want to stay in Iraq. Who wants to stay?” she asks, gesturing toward the crowd.

Another woman answers: “I don’t judge those who want to leave the country but – myself – I love my city. I only want security and safety to go back. I don’t judge others who want to leave. But I love my country and I want to stay. Our jobs, our lives, everything is in Mosul and I want to go back. Please help us. Thank you,” she said, breaking into tears.

The women were willing to give their testimony on video during the visit of a WCC delegation. The video coverage was then shared with members of the United Nations Security Council, Human Rights Council and others, said Peter Prove, director of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA).

“All religious groups other than those which ‘Islamic State’ claims to represent have been targeted by IS, including other Muslim groups, as well as Christians and Yazidis,” explained Carla Khijayan, WCC programme executive for migration and social justice. “The Yazidis have been treated with a special degree of brutality, in what is tantamount to a genocidal campaign.”

Concern over Swiss vote on restricting immigration

Following the Swiss referendum with majority votes backing restrictions on immigration from European Union countries, Dr Tveit joined with other ecumenical organizations and warned of “adverse effects” from this development on the WCC and other international organizations in Switzerland.

“We stand with our member churches here in Switzerland who have made it clear that Switzerland needs to continue being a place that welcomes the stranger,” he said.

Use of armed drones condemned by WCC

At its meeting in February 2014, the WCC Executive Committee condemned the use of drones or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, saying that they pose “serious threats to humanity” and the “right to life” while setting “dangerous precedents in inter-state relations.”



“In embarking on the journey of justice and peace, we become pilgrims toward God’s kingdom, living and accomplishing his will for the world.”

– FR IOAN SAUCA, A PRIEST OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, DIRECTOR OF THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE, BOSSEY, AND THE NEWLY APPOINTED ASSOCIATE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WCC FOR ECUMENICAL FORMATION

WCC general secretary shares with pope aspirations for unity and peace

In an audience with Pope Francis in the Vatican, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit stressed the significance of the ongoing quest for Christian unity. He also expressed appreciation for Pope Francis’s call to pray for peace in Syria, as well as his call for churches to remember the poor, encouraging Christians to work for economic justice.

Dialogue on HIV, sexual reproductive health and rights

An “inter-generational dialogue on faith, culture, HIV and sexual reproductive health and rights” was initiated in March in New York City by the World YWCA, in partnership with the WCC and other international organizations. The dialogue was organized as a side event at the United Nations 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Human rights violations in Equatorial Guinea highlighted in a WCC event

Despite being the third largest oil producing country in sub-Saharan Africa, Equatorial Guinea reels from a poor economy, a lack of good governance and of independent and functioning state institutions. These issues were the focus of presentations made by human rights defenders from Equatorial Guinea in a WCC sponsored side-event at the United Nations.

Ever-Growing Need for CCIA’s Strength

During 2014, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) became an increasingly visible and effective mechanism for engaging the capabilities of member churches in a shared ecumenical response to international affairs related to peace and justice.

“We intend to function as an effective instrument in engaging with real world issues in a timely manner,” said Prove.

During 2014, the WCC also witnessed what Prove called “an exponential growth” in intergovernmental organizations that are increasingly looking to engage with faith-based and other organizations.

The WCC has had longstanding relationships with the UN, the World Health Organization (WHO), and others. But 2014 brought strengthened relationships and new partnerships, said Prove. “We have seen increasing enthusiasm and interest in these intergovernmental relationships,” he said.



WCC Engages in Peace, Unification Efforts on Korean Peninsula

In 2014, the WCC followed up on its commitment made at the assembly in Busan to renew and reenergize the engagement for peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula.

In a first meeting since 2009 and since the 2013 appointment of a new leader for the Korea Christian Federation of North Korea, an international group of church leaders from 34 churches and related organizations from 15 countries, including North and South Korea, met near Geneva to seek ways to advance reconciliation and peace on the peninsula. “I believe that meeting helped renew relationships – personal and well as institutional – and identified key priorities,” said Prove.

Following that meeting, Prove and Rev. Dr Kim Dongsung, programme executive for Asia relations, led a WCC staff visit to North Korea in August. Prayers for peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula were held at the Bongsu Church in Pyongyang, with participation from a nineteen-member delegation organized by the National Council of Churches in Korea, comprised of representatives from WCC member churches and ecumenical organizations from South Korea, including women and youth delegates.

Seeking Long-Term Peace and Justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo

A workshop for strengthening democratic governance and the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of Congo was held in Kinshasa in December 2014 by the Church of Christ in Congo (ECC) and the Independent National Electoral Commission in partnership with the WCC and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). Participants in the workshop encouraged renewed and significant engagement from local churches in the nation.

“The ECC is leading the ecumenical effort with regard to the forthcoming election processes coming up this year and next,” explained Prove. WCC is supporting the ECC’s role with ecumenical accompaniment, civic education and, ultimately, monitoring.

“We are seeking longer-term peace and justice for a democratically elected government by supporting efforts by churches in those contexts,” said Semegnish Asfaw Grosjean, WCC programme executive for international affairs.

Intervening in Sudan and South Sudan

The Sudan Council of Churches is urging the international ecumenical community to intervene and help bring peace to Sudan.

In June 2014, the WCC and the AACC sponsored a consultation for regional ecumenical organizations and national councils of churches. The meetings were held in Nairobi, Kenya, said Dr Nigussu Legesse, the WCC programme executive who has worked most intensively with the churches in peace negotiations.

“We want this war to stop,” said Rev. Kori Elramla Kori Kuku, general secretary of the Sudan Council of Churches. “People are suffering, many already died. Most of our churches were destroyed and the bombings also affect the rural areas so that our people are not being able to farm.”

Over the summer of 2014, the situation of the Nuba Mountain region as well other communities in Sudan continued to deteriorate with increased attacks on civilians and the denial of basic human rights.

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, a former WCC general secretary, is the AACC’s ecumenical special envoy to Sudan and South Sudan. He has urged the international community to engage in fast and effective advocacy work.

“It is time to double our efforts in solidarity with the people in that region. Churches and ecumenical councils in Sudan and South Sudan are operating in a very hostile environment,” he said. “The ecumenical movement has a very important role to play, not only through statements, but also by visiting these communities.”



Human trafficking brings shame to humanity, UN Special Rapporteur tells an ecumenical consultation

In an ecumenical consultation held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, the United Nations special rapporteur on trafficking in persons, called human trafficking a criminal activity that is rapidly on the increase in the world. Ezeilo said that not a single country or entity has yet been able to stop this practice, and the magnitude of the problem is enormous.

WCC holds event on access to archives and human rights

People have the right of access to archives of public bodies, argued Trudy Huskamp Peterson, an archivist from the United States, in a May 2014 talk organized by the WCC Archives. She said public access to information is particularly relevant for archives documenting human rights violations.

New initiatives explore relationships between ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue

Addressing the urgency of witnessing to the gospel in current ecumenical and multi-religious situations, the WCC is developing materials to assist churches engaged in both ecumenical dialogue and inter-religious dialogue.

Ecumenical dialogue consists of conversations between different Christian churches while inter-religious dialogue is concerned with the conversations between different world religions.

WCC hosts discussion on sexual slavery during World War II

Sexual slavery, resistance and women’s demands for justice were the focus of an event featuring representatives of the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. Moderated by Prof Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, the WCC’s associate general secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia, the event was organized by the WCC programme on the Just Community of Women and Men.

“I am a woman and a pastor full of hope. Nothing that happened can clip our wings and stop us from dreaming. We should achieve lasting peace that will better our lives as people.”

– REV. GLORIA ULLOA ALVARADO, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF COLOMBIA – SOUTH AMERICA



WCC strongly condemns violence in and from Gaza

Attacks by the Israeli military on the civilian population in Gaza, as well as the firing of rockets by militants from Gaza to Israel, were strongly condemned by WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit.

Tveit said, "We...condemn...indiscriminate attacks by Israeli military on the civilian population in Gaza, as we...condemn the absurd and immoral firing of rockets by militants from Gaza to populated areas in Israel."

WCC expresses deep concern at Ebola outbreak in West Africa

WCC expressed a "deep and shared concern" to its member churches in West Africa over reports concerning "the Ebola crisis and its devastating impact on the lives of men, women and children living in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Nigeria."

WCC president for Asia meets with chief cabinet secretary of Japan

In August 2014, WCC president for Asia Rev. Dr Sang Chang, met in Tokyo with the chief cabinet secretary of Japan, Yoshihide Suga, to convey two statements by the WCC Central Committee related to nuclear dangers and to preserving the peace clause in Japan's constitution.

Responding to the Ebola Crisis

In September 2014, the WCC held a consultation in Geneva to escalate efforts to respond to the Ebola crisis in West Africa. Representatives from Christian aid organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies gathered to learn from each other and, in the process, affirmed a greater role for the churches and faith-based organizations in helping to stop the epidemic.

Dr Pierre Formenty, an epidemiologist and the coordinator of the World Health Organization's campaign against Ebola, addressed the WCC consultation. "This is a situation where everyone needs to work together: politicians, media, communities, faith organizations. We all have to do something. If one fails, everybody will fail," said Formenty.

In this situation, he said, "Faith organizations in Africa have a huge role to play."

Participants stressed that churches and other religious communities not only have a constant and influential reach to the grassroots populations to offer practical advice about hygiene and safe funeral practices but can also directly address the deeper cultural and religious roots of widespread stigma and discrimination that have accompanied the epidemic.

At an "Ebola 60 days follow-up" event held in November, UN leaders and the WCC agreed that the international community and faith leaders need to cooperate more on working to fight the scourge of the deadly Ebola virus.

Addressing the group, Dr David Nabarro, UN special envoy on Ebola, said, "The faith groups are absolutely key to the Ebola response because they have access to the communities."

Dr Susan Parry Gilpin Purcell, consultant to the WCC's health and healing programme, said there has been development of a strategy on how the church community can combat Ebola globally and there been many consultations with the WHO and other key actors.

Parry noted that the WCC represents more than church leadership and a worldwide Christian body.

"It also has this extensive network of health service delivery. They are contributing to a substantial proportion of national health care across Africa. Often they are the only points of health care in the more rural and remote areas of the various countries in which they are found." ■

Congregation in Zimbabwe Challenges Negative Stereotypes

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) in Mbare is transforming its collective thinking by engaging in HIV advocacy and sexual reproductive health rights education.



The Mbare ELCZ congregation is situated in one of the most populous suburbs of the capital, Harare. In Zimbabwean music, literature and popular imagination, Mbare represents the “ghetto.” It is seen as the scene of both crime and urban complexity.

Tabona Shoko, a professor and theologian at the department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy at the University of Zimbabwe, is a member of the church helping to lead the way toward dispelling these stereotypes. The congregation is promoting awareness of topical and challenging contemporary issues by hosting seminars and workshops that bring in external resource persons and facilitators. The aim of these sessions is to ensure that the congregation is fully conscious of its setting so that members may make meaningful and effective contributions to society.

Ezra Chitando, the Anglophone theology consultant working with Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiatives and Advocacy (EHAIA), a project of the WCC, was invited by Professor Shoko to facilitate contextual Bible study, a process which draws attention to issues of health, corruption and ethical reflections in the contemporary period. The participation of the congregation has been empowering. Divisions such as clergy-lay, male-female, young-old, able-disabled, and others were overcome as participants honestly and openly joined in discussion. Matters that are often “under the table” or “under the tongue” – such as sex and sexuality, incest, sexual abuse by the clergy, abuse of boy children by domestic helpers, multiple and concurrent partnerships and others – were discussed with candor. The role of boys and men in the family, church and society was also discussed in view of promoting transformative masculinities.

In addition to fostering discussions that empower participants, the congregation is building a library. EHAIA donated books that were received enthusiastically. The existence of a functioning and well-organized library is welcome. A young woman acts as a volunteer librarian, and she confirms that many members of the congregation utilize the services offered by the library. She indicated that they needed more resources related to sexual reproductive health and rights, sexual and gender-based violence and counseling.

Overall, the workshop and the library have served to confirm the importance of congregational engagement and advocacy in the community regarding contemporary cross-cutting issues. While well-planned workshops are critical, it is also possible for WCC staff to utilize all the available spaces and opportunities to ensure that the messages of HIV prevention, challenging oppressive masculinities and promoting gender justice reach as many people as possible. ■



1000 years of Christianity in Sweden celebrated

WCC representatives, the Swedish crown princess, church leaders and thousands of others took part in the celebration of one thousand years of Christianity in Sweden held in the Diocese of Skara. The diocese, which is one of the oldest in Sweden, was once a diocese of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the Protestant reformation it has been part of the Church of Sweden, which is Lutheran.

Churches ask Human Rights Council to support religious minority communities in Iraq

The WCC asked the United Nations Human Rights Council to mandate an urgent mission and joint report – including the special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief – drawing on the experiences of minority communities in northern Iraq victimized by the self-proclaimed “Islamic State.” The statement came after a WCC delegation’s visit to the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

North American participants lay groundwork for a 2015 consultation on evangelism

Evangelism in new contexts was the focus of a meeting last October in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, involving the WCC and the North American councils of churches. The meeting’s primary objective was to set the agenda for a larger consultation on evangelism in North America, scheduled before the end of 2015.

Churches to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities

Members of the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network, a WCC programme, met in the Netherlands to develop a new statement with the working title “Gift of Being: Called to Be a Church of All and for All.” The new document is founded on the premise that persons with disabilities experience marginalization both in societies and in church communities.

Christians, Hindus discern ways of working for peace

In South Asia, where conflicts are often fueled by religion, a WCC conference stressed the role of Christians and Hindus as eminent stakeholders in their common search for justice and peace – beyond majority and minority politics.

The conference was held in October 2014 in Nepal, organized by the WCC in collaboration with the India Peace Centre in Nagpur and the National Council of Churches in Nepal.

Dismay over attacks on churches in Nigeria

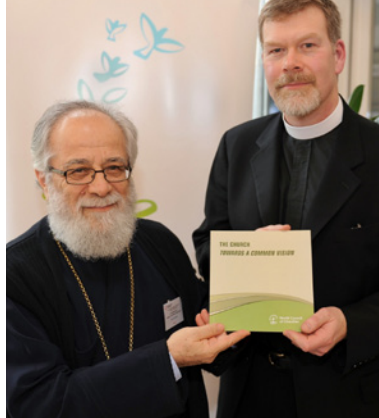
Attacks on the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria – a WCC member church – and the Kulp Bible College, among other churches in Nigeria, prompted an expression of profound dismay from the general secretary of the WCC, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit.

The attacks in the last week of October 2014 in Nigeria were linked to the militant group Boko Haram, according to media reports.

WCC-EAPPI volunteers encourage EU to address Palestine and Israel

Former volunteers for the WCC’s Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) have urged the European Union (EU) to take more effective actions against the illegal settlements, demolitions and forced displacement in the occupied territory controlled by the Israeli authorities.

Nine volunteers, who previously lived in Palestine and Israel as part of the WCC’s EAPPI programme, shared these concerns in meetings with EU officials.



Faith and Order Commission Becomes “Truly Global”

The Commission on Faith and Order has not only become more inclusive from a demographic perspective; the commission is also increasingly able to bridge its agenda with a wider one that relates to justice and peace, said WCC director of Faith and Order Rev. Canon Dr John Gibaut.

Preparing the slate of names for a new Faith and Order Commission was an important accomplishment of 2014, he explained. “For 40 positions, we had well over 100 nominations.” The result is a commission that has become truly global, comprised of extraordinary people and, he added, “unlike anything we’ve ever seen before.”

The commission has unprecedented representation by women and is also collectively younger than preceding commissions. Of significance is the election of Rev. Dr Susan Durber as moderator of the Commission on Faith and Order. Formerly principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, Durber is currently the theological adviser of Christian Aid. Her leadership will enable the Faith and Order commission to link its valuable and relevant agenda with the WCC’s wider pilgrimage of justice and peace, said WCC associate general secretary, Rev. Dr Hielke Wolters.

Churches Breathe Unique Life into Convergence Text

Over 2014, churches across the world have proven that a convergence text – in this case *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* – can change the way people relate to one another in countless ways.

Formally launched in 2013, the text saw remarkable growth in visibility in 2014, said Gibaut. By the end of 2014, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* had been translated into 17 languages, and more than 55 churches were engaged in a formal response of reacting to the text. “More and more, we are seeing churches engaged by the text,” said Gibaut. “This builds on the extremely good news of 2013.”

As the Commission on Faith and Order enters a new phase, and the convergence text on *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* continues to be discussed by the churches, it becomes clear that ecclesiology and the journey toward making visible the unity of the church are inextricably bound with a pilgrimage of justice and peace. ■

Moving Together as a Just Community of Women and Men

The WCC's Just Community of Women and Men project continues to promote inquiry and dialogue not only among WCC members but other religious groups and government leaders, as well as through the United Nations processes.

Gender advisory group. Representing WCC member churches, the group of 14 met for the first time to reflect on their mandate and craft the process toward developing procedures and policies to help the WCC in accomplishing gender justice in institutions, communities and societies. The work of the group is founded in the biblical premise that both men and women are created equal in the image of God. "As a group, we want to achieve an effective gender justice policy for the WCC which will also inspire its member churches in their own work for gender justice. Not only do we want to draft a policy but we want to come up with ways to implement and enact that policy as well," said Dr Ulysses Burley III, member of the WCC gender advisory group and the executive committee from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Training to help communities identify resources. Dr Fulata Lusungu Moyo, WCC programme executive for Women in Church and Society, recalled being in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, accompanying women who had survived the genocides. "Most were raped and now have children. Some are HIV-positive. Now, 19-20 years down the road, when everyone else thinks the genocide is over, these women are still dealing with it. They don't know what to tell their children."

In June 2014, women from churches across Africa gathered in Kenya to focus on the achievements, challenges and opportunities of women's ministry in African churches over the past 30 years, as well as their responses to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. While they celebrated the great achievements, they also bemoaned the still-existing gender gaps.

Developing a "Christian ethic of care." A declaration was issued in December 2014 by religious leaders calling for the eradication of slavery. The statement prompted an expression of appreciation from the WCC. The declaration, issued at the Vatican, brought together signatories from the Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox traditions of Christianity, with Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim leaders who signed a joint declaration of commitment against modern slavery. Concurrently, Moyo has been expanding awareness about how churches are responding to human trafficking. "Eighty percent of trafficked people are women and children," she said. "Seventy-nine percent of trafficked people are trafficked for sexual exploitation."

Thursdays in Black. This campaign for a world without rape and violence continues to expand. Participants are encouraged to wear black or wear a small button each Thursday. Through this simple gesture, they become part of a global movement urging an end to violence against women. "Almost all the WCC member churches in Sweden have taken it up as their own campaign," said Moyo. "They have produced and distributed more than 10,000 pins already within Sweden and sharing with their partners as well."

NoXcuses for Violence against Women campaign. The WCC invited its member churches to join the World YWCA campaign to say no to all kinds of excuses that justify violence against women and girls.

In collaboration with the WCC and the Lutheran World Federation, a selection of videos featuring religious leaders was uploaded on YouTube as part of the campaign. The videos feature diverse voices from the faith communities urging awareness on the issue of violence against women and girls around the world.



"In health and healing, and particularly in the HIV pandemic, where mothers living with HIV have the possibility of transmitting the virus to their baby upon birth (and through breastfeeding), I think of a pilgrimage as a journey from the 'womb to the tomb.' "

— REV. DR NYAMBURA NJORGE, A PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGIAN AND WCC PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

Young Asians Value Interfaith Encounter

Young Christian leaders from Asia shared their reflections as they participated in Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity (YATRA), a programme offered in June 2014 by the WCC in Cambodia. Facilitators of the programme came from Buddhist, Christian and Hindu faiths.

Addressing the theme “Together toward Justice and Peace: Walking the Talk in a Multi-Religious World,” the young people represented 15 countries.

YATRA is a new training course that will enable young Christian leaders from Asian churches to build just, harmonious and peaceful communities by equipping them for ministries of justice and peace from an inter-religious perspective. YATRA is a common term for pilgrimage in many Indo-Asian religions and languages.

“Christian witness in a multi-religious world should be like this cashew nut, strong like the shell of a cashew nut, giving life from within like a seed and as a fruit holding the promise of nourishing others.”

– SIMI THAMBI, 25, INDIA, MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR

More People Claim Multiple Religious Belonging

More people of faith are embracing a multiple identity, and the WCC is supporting inter-religious dialogue that explores that trend. In October 2014, the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai, organized a theological colloquium on the theme “Exploring Hybridity and Embracing Hospitality: Towards a Theology of Multiple Religious Belonging.”

The colloquium broadly explored how interreligious hybridity has been an ongoing part of Christian heritage as reflected in the formation of the Christian scriptures, Christian liturgical seasons, festivals and ritual practices as well as the contextual embodiments of Christianity. The event then moved on to focus on the changing contexts of multiple religious belonging today and their concomitant challenges.

Churches need to take up the issue of religious hybridity because it is increasingly becoming part of Christian identification for so many people within our churches across the globe, said Rev. Dr Peniel Rajkumar, WCC programme executive for interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

“In this colloquium, several people were quite assertive in affirming the need to understand this phenomenon of drinking deep from the spiritual wells of different religious traditions as not just a superficial or syncretistic religious phenomenon, but as a sincere search for a meaningful and mature religious belonging,” he said.

“I have learned that, rather than criticizing, blaming and attacking others, we must learn to understand other faiths and work together for the cause of justice and peace.”

– YOHAN KRISHNAKUMAR, 34, SRI LANKA, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KANDY



Finding Joy in God's Mission

WCC Mission Statement Well-Received

The WCC has received more than 150 church, organizational or individual responses to the mission statement “Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes.”

The most important agents of God's mission are local congregations, said Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, secretary of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME).

“They are the community of people. The whole image of Christianity – the call of Christian mission – relies on the local church,” he said. “Our question is how to stimulate or contribute toward the formation of the missional church or missional congregation.”

The WCC mission statement is also influencing students in theological schools and mission training centers. Faculty in more than 30 universities have already based some instruction around the mission statement.

In October 2014, the WCC held a consultation in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, where participants discussed creative ways of using the WCC statement in mission education. “These professors and lecturers discussed how to develop a common curriculum,” said Keum.

The WCC has also been communicating with the missionary training centers such as the Oxford Center for Mission Studies and the Overseas Ministries Study Center.

Mission with Peace and Humility

“What are the implications of this new mission statement for the missionaries?” asked Keum.

Though the perception may be that the number of missionaries worldwide is declining, that's not altogether true, he said. “Missionaries from the global south are increasing, for example.”

The key, he said, is to help missionaries gain a sense of ecumenical orientation as they expand their cross-cultural work. “We are aiming to develop a kind of training module of continuing education for the missionaries who work overseas or in a cross-cultural context.”

As a response to a tide of secularization in Europe, the WCC is working with member churches to develop a handbook on evangelism that explores fresh approaches to Christian witness in contemporary Europe.

WCC members in North America have also been organizing consultations to discuss how they can understand evangelism anew in light of rapidly changing cultural contexts.

As WCC members worldwide continue their missional pilgrimage, the CWME will support them with a focus on “mission from the margins” as opposed to “mission to the margins” or “mission at the margins” where the poor and the marginalized are treated as objects of charity.

Mission must be approached not as spiritual warfare but with peace and humility, reflected Keum. “We can bring new visions to churches of practicing mission in a hopeful and positive manner – in finding joy doing mission, the joy and the gift of participating in God's mission.”



WCC receives new interns from Malawi and Democratic Republic of Congo

Grateful for the opportunity of working for a global fellowship of the churches, two new WCC interns aspire to use their personal and professional experiences from Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the WCC's work on gender justice and health issues.

The WCC interns are Olga Tshiwewe, a Methodist from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Bethel Mhone, a Methodist from Malawi.

WCC leadership meets with president of Cyprus in a bid to find healing for divided island

WCC leaders and President Nicos Anastasiades of Cyprus discussed reunification of Cyprus and reconciliation among communities at a November 2014 meeting in the island's capital Nicosia.

Hosted by the Greek Orthodox Church, the WCC leadership met in Cyprus, where member churches are playing a significant role in a peace process aimed at reunification of the divided island.

“As humans, we are hopeless. We can’t do anything more. And we know this from history. We are expecting, now in our pilgrimage, peace from the God of peace, and justice from the God who gives justice and inspires justice.”

– THE VERY REV. DR JACK KHALIL, GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST



Who Do We Say That We Are? Significant Report Reflects on Answers

In an encounter between Jesus and a Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30, Matthew 15:21-30), the woman demands that Jesus pay attention to her and that he not limit his mission to the Jews. As the mother appeals to Jesus to heal her ill child, as told in the gospel of Mark, she also shares with Jesus her belief that God’s love and care extend beyond those of Jesus’ own people. Jesus, it seems, shows himself open for change – and such openness requires a great trust in God.

“We use this as an example of how even Jesus might learn as a religious outsider,” said Dr Clare Amos, WCC programme executive for interreligious dialogue and cooperation. “In some important ways our understanding of God is at stake for Christians when we engage with other people in our world of many faiths.”

The vital nature of interreligious dialogue and how it can affect our self-understanding as Christians is underscored in a report accepted by the Central Committee in July 2014 and now released by WCC. The report is entitled “*Who Do We Say That We Are? Christian Identity in a Multireligious World*” and acknowledges its own entry into a 21st century in which Christians need to engage appropriately with religious plurality. Drawing together work done in a number of meetings over the previous decade, the document defines key aspects of Christian conviction, then offers thoughts that lead to dialogue, deepening and discovery.

Peace-ing Together Jerusalem Offers Insight into City’s Identity

In a personal mosaic, *Peace-ing Together Jerusalem*, Clare Amos shares her perspectives on a city that has engaged her attention all her life. Amos first visited Jerusalem as a young adult in 1970. Since then, Amos shares, “it is a place that simply will not let me go.”

After sharing her timeline of visiting and living in Jerusalem, Amos opens a discussion of what she calls the “psalmodic (positive) and the prophetic (negative) theologies of Jerusalem.” The dialectic between the two is powerful, Amos believes, and creates some of the most exquisite – and most painful – parts of the Hebrew Bible. She goes on to discuss reasons for the Muslim love for Jerusalem, drawing on the work of Muslim scholar Dr Ghada Talhami. Finally, she returns to the book of Revelation and its vision of Jerusalem, acknowledging that one must travel through the gospels as well as the book of Acts to arrive at a place in which Jerusalem is linked to the pilgrimage of the nations.

In a concluding third chapter, Amos shares some practical implications of the theological and personal reflections she offers in the first two chapters.

Peace-ing Together Jerusalem was published in 2014 as part of the WCC’s Visions & Voices series.

Water Network Develops Theological Framework for Water Justice

What is our ecclesiological call to respond to the global water crisis? In what way is our response different from other actors on water justice issues?

To respond to these questions within a theological framework of water justice, the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) assembled 17 theologians from around the world at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey for a theological consultation on water justice in December 2014.

The consultation culminated a years-long process of theological reflection and has provided a theological framework to strengthen and justify the churches' engagement on water justice.

The 9th Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre in 2006, issued a statement called "Water for Life," which stated that "Water is a symbol of life, a gift of God which needs to be preserved and shared for the benefit of all creatures and the wider creation."

Israeli Attacks Worsened Water Systems in Gaza

Military strikes by Israel in 2014 crippled an already grim water distribution system in Gaza. Reports from media and international organizations confirmed targeted attacks on water distribution systems. Due to these attacks, a large number of people in Gaza were directly affected.

With more than 1.8 million people in an area of 360 square kilometres, the densely populated Gaza Strip depends entirely on a single aquifer to meet water needs. Due to excessive use of the aquifer, it has been contaminated and is irreversibly damaged.

"It will be rendered useless in about six years' time. Ninety-five percent of groundwater is unusable because of the intrusion of sea water. There is microbial contamination of over 80 percent of drinking water in Gaza," Dr Monther Shoblak of the Palestinian Water Authority told members of the International Reference Group of the EWN during a fact-finding visit to Gaza in 2014.

Seven Weeks for Water: Invitation to Join "Pilgrimage towards Water Justice"

During March 2014, the "Seven Weeks for Water" campaign invited churches, faith-based organizations and individuals around the world to join a "pilgrimage towards water justice." This theme was addressed by an online compilation of reflections shared every week during Lent, raising awareness about universal access to water and sanitation.

Seven Weeks for Water is a campaign launched by the WCC-based network, coordinated by Dinesh Suna. Since 2008, the campaign has attempted to create awareness on water issues around World Water Day on 22 March, which falls during the season of Lent on many churches' calendars.



Participants of EWN consultation celebrating the "gift of life" by extending a glass of clean drinking water. © WCC/Helen Putzman

"In many places around the world, we need to rediscover the church's connection to the poor, and it seems to me that's the urgency: the need of people."

– BISHOP MARK McDONALD, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA – NORTH AMERICA

WCC report invites theological reflections and action for “economy of life”

A WCC report called for an effective response in meeting the needs of communities faced with unprecedented financial and economic crises, the threat of climate change and widespread ecological devastation.

The document encourages churches, congregations, ecumenical organizations, theological faculties, seminaries and ecumenical partners to engage in intensive theological reflection and actions toward an “economy of life” – a concept promoting economic justice.

Asian churches to move beyond conflict, towards just peace, human security and dignity

Participants in a WCC consultation in Myanmar stressed the need to equip churches and ecumenical organizations to build peace, human security and human dignity in order to move beyond conflicts toward a world of peace. They reiterated the biblical concept of “shalom” as the basis of peace with justice.

Reference Group on Human Sexuality holds inaugural meeting

The new Reference Group on Human Sexuality held its first meeting at the Ecumenical Institute in November 2014. The group, created by the WCC Executive Committee at the suggestion of the 10th Assembly, will advise the general secretary on the development and content of the WCC’s work as it pertains to human sexuality. At the meeting, the group discussed matters of its purpose, scope, working procedures, and relation to the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

ACT/Paul Jeffrey

WCC, ACT Alliance Strengthen Collaboration

The WCC and the ACT Alliance have a strong ecumenical commitment to forge an even tighter strategic collaboration. The ACT Alliance is a group of specialized ministries formed by some 140 churches and affiliated organizations coordinating humanitarian and development projects worldwide.

“I feel that there is a strong will to move forward together and already a number of tangible initiatives where we work together,” said ACT director and chief operating officer Pauliina Parhiala.

At the 2nd General Assembly of the ACT Alliance in Punta Cana, the Dominican Republic, in 2014, the WCC shared its vision for the ecumenical movement. “The ACT Alliance sees itself as an integral part of implementing that vision,” said Parhiala. “In the assembly context we launched our global climate justice campaign, Act Now for Climate Justice, which is part of our journey in the pilgrimage.”

The climate justice campaign is part of the ACT Alliance’s global strategy framework, Full Life and Dignity for All, added Parhiala. “We see the WCC as a significant accompanier of the Alliance in that process.”

Prof Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, the WCC’s associate general secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia, was present in Punta Cana, among other WCC delegates. While speaking in a plenary session, Phiri stressed the need for enhancing links between the churches and specialized ministries.

“The work of the ACT Alliance is grounded in theological foundations based on the *diakonia* aspect of the church, implementing the vision of Christian service,” said Phiri.

Exploring Ways to Strengthen Relationships

At an international consultation in Malawi in September 2014, the WCC and ACT addressed challenges in cooperation between churches and church-based development organizations (also known as specialized ministries).

Organized by the WCC and the ACT Alliance, the consultation focused on relationships between churches and specialized ministries, or the programmatic or funding partners of the WCC working in the area of development, emergency relief and advocacy.

The event was hosted by the Malawi Council of Churches and the ACT Malawi Forum.

“The consultation in Malawi has offered a safe space for mutual questioning, challenging and learning among the ecumenical actors,” said Rev. Dr Kim Dongsung, the WCC programme executive for *diakonia* and ecumenical solidarity.

“Learning how to voice our differences, to appreciate they exist and to commit to working together in spite of such differences is a challenge that we must all face as members of the one ecumenical movement,” added Kim.



Ecumenical Institute in Bossey

Understanding Justice and Peace as Christian Pilgrims

As the World Council of Churches promotes the vision of a “pilgrimage of justice and peace,” four students from the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, share their understanding of justice and peace and how they embarked on a pilgrimage of their own.

Justice and peace embody the commitment to construct and create new possibilities for life, says Nestor Gomez Morales, who worships at a congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Denver, United States. It entails not only hope for all living creatures, he explains, but a promise to work for the dignity and human rights of those who are suffering.

Nestor, originally from Colombia, relates injustice to his fight for the dignity and rights of undocumented immigrants. Growing up in the violence of a narcotics trafficking city where civilians were routinely killed in cross-fire made him sensitive to suffering and oppression.

When he moved to the US, he responded to God’s call to support his own community, knowing that, in the words of German Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann, “where there is no justice, there can be no secure peace.”

Love of God

Yulia Kotlyar’s quest for justice and peace is a response to the love of God. The whole of creation is the work of God, with the Trinity symbolizing perfect harmony and union. Creation originally represented this harmony, but the fall brought about disharmony.

In the Russian Orthodox Church, overcoming sin, injustice and violence starts from baptism and remains throughout the life of the believer. The Divine Liturgy is the prayer for the whole world and blesses those in danger or need. “We celebrate the Divine Liturgy every day. This is not a part of my life, it is my life,” says Kotlyar.

For Christians, peace is an integral part of our mission, she says. Believers live with God and try to follow Christ in the way of justice and making peace.

Divine Justice

When Ramy Hanna thinks about peace and justice, it is divine justice that comes to his mind. “Justice is not the punishment, it is the process of letting issues return to another time: to the first position, to their just and original place.”

A member of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo, Hanna takes justice to mean the sense of returning to a right path, to be one again, regardless of doctrine or theological debate. “It is for us to know it must go back to the just way. Jesus says the whole world will know that these are my disciples, when they have loved each other.”

Justice and Peace Are Complementary

For divinity college graduate Temjennaro Pongen, justice and peace both complement and complete each other.

“If you want peace, you work for justice. Justice and peace can have restorative values and can be a source of renewal or revival if put together,” says Pongen of the Christian Baptist Church of North East India.

Inspired by the ideological vision of Martin Luther King, Jr, Pongen stressed that true peace was not merely the absence of tension but the presence of justice.



“Things used to divide us, but now we begin to see where we went wrong as collective groups, and we come together in order to make a better world.”

ABDUL AKBAR, UNITED STATES



ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
at CHÂTEAU DE BOSSEY

WCC Financial Overview 2014

FINANCIAL RESULTS (Swiss francs 000's)

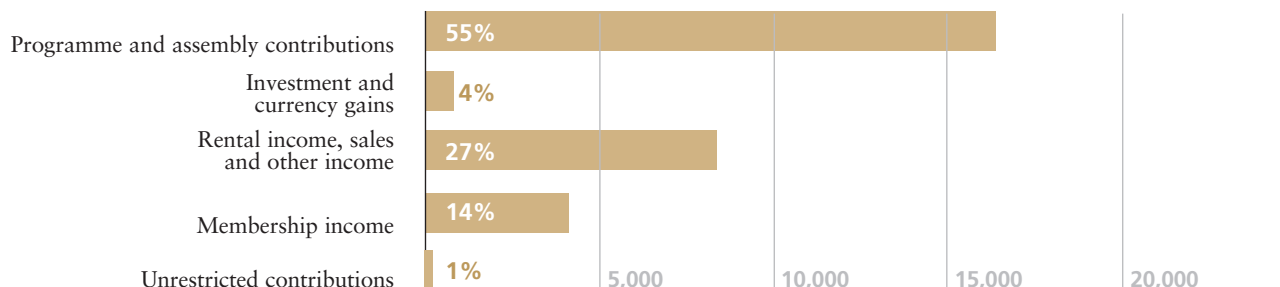
Preliminary unaudited results

The unaudited overall result for 2014 is an increase in funds and reserves of CHF 1.3 million, of which CHF 1.1 million concerns the endowment fund.

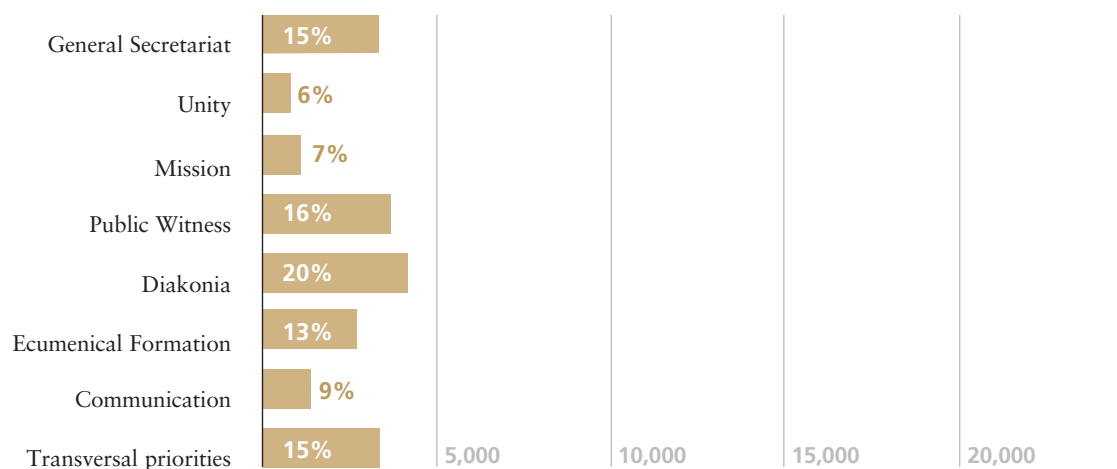
In 2013, programme contributions included CHF 2.1 million of assembly contributions. Total income is CHF 1.2 million lower than in 2013, at CHF 29.3 million, compared to CHF 31.3 million.

	Unrestricted and designated funds 2014	Restricted funds 2014	Total funds 2014	Total funds 2013
INCOME				
Membership and other unrestricted income	4,284	—	4,284	4,120
Programme contributions	—	16,060	16,060	18,983
Investment and currency gains/(losses)	18	1,086	1,104	637
Rental income, sales and other income	6,911	979	7,890	7,542
Unrestricted income distribution	(4,284)	4,284	—	—
Total income	6,929	22,409	29,338	31,282
EXPENDITURE				
Direct programme costs: grants	—	1,453	1,453	1,396
Operating and other programme costs	5,939	6,510	12,449	18,038
Salaries	5,271	9,042	14,311	15,023
Redistribution of costs; internal (sales)/charges	(3,820)	3,820	—	—
Total costs	7,390	20,823	28,213	34,457
Transfers between funds	37	(37)	—	—
Transfers (to)/from funds and current liabilities	168	(25)	143	1
Net increase/(decrease) in funds for the year	(256)	1,524	1,268	(3,174)

SOURCES OF INCOME 2014 (Swiss francs 000's)



EXPENDITURE BY PROGRAMME 2014 (Swiss francs 000's)



Transversal priorities in 2014 included relations with member churches, NCCs and REOs, Youth engagement in the ecumenical movement, Community of women and men, Inter-religious dialogue and co-operation, Spirituality and worship, and Advocacy.

WCC Income and Contributors 2014

INCOME TRENDS (Swiss francs 000's)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 preliminary
Membership and other unrestricted income	6,830	6,398	5,887	5,250	4,605	4,388	4,116	4,284
Programme contributions	24,548	23,582	21,422	20,742	16,802	17,214	16,862	15,922
International Ecumenical Peace Convocation	—	—	42	351	492	—	—	—
Global Christian Forum	351	100	130	166	174	17	—	—
Multilateral sharing	2,147	1,174	575	—	—	—	—	—
Assembly	115	104	97	76	145	1,021	2,107	138
ACT Development	767	848	913	—	—	—	—	—
Other income	6,270	3,537	7,196	5,882	6,447	7,409	8,164	8,994
Total	41,028	35,742	36,262	32,468	28,665	30,049	31,249	29,338

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS 2014

Main contributors

Note: The list includes all member churches, partner organizations and other bodies that contributed more than CHF 20,000 to the WCC in 2014.

African Methodist Episcopal Church
 American Baptist Churches in the USA
 Anglican Church of Canada
 Anonymous contributor
 Bread for the World
 Brot für Alle
 Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration
 Christian Aid
 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States
 Christian Council of Sweden
 Christofell Blinden Mission International
 Church of England
 Church of Norway
 Church of Scotland
 Church of Sweden
 Church World Service
 Council for World Mission
 DanChurchAid
 Eglise protestante unie de France
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
 Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland
 Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
 Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau
 Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland
 Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche des Kantons St Gallen
 Finn Church Aid
 Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
 Fondation pour l'aide au Protestantisme Réformé
 Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia
 Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz
 ICCO-Interchurch Org. for Development Cooperation
 INERELA+ (Robert Carr Networks Fund consortium)
 Karibu Foundation
 Kerk in Actie
 Methodist Church
 Nathan Söderblom Memorial Fund
 Norwegian Church Aid
 Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Presbyterian Church (USA)

Presbyterian Church in Canada
 Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
 Presbyterian Church of Korea
 Protestant Church in the Netherlands
 Reformierte Landeskirche Aargau
 Religious Society of Friends
 Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund
 Stichting Rotterdam
 The Episcopal Church in the USA
 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
 UNICEF
 United Church of Canada
 United Church of Christ
 United Methodist Church
 Uniting Church in Australia
 Uniting Church in Sweden
 Wallace Global Fund
 World Young Women's Christian Association
 (NORAD consortium)



Other contributors (less than CHF 20,000)

Member churches
 Specialized ministries
 Organizations
 Individuals
 Local congregations
 Local ecumenical bodies
 Local contributions

WCC Governing Bodies and Staff Leadership 2014

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Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Syrian Arab Republic)

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Ecumenical Patriarchate (Turkey)

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson
United Methodist Church (USA)

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
Church of Norway (Switzerland)



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Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

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Romanian Orthodox Church

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Protestant Church in the Netherlands

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Finance Director
Church of Scotland

Mr Mark Beach
Director of Communications, January-November
Mennonite Church (USA)

Ms Marianne Ejdersten
Director of Communications, December
Church of Sweden



"I understand pilgrimage as a walk together. And when we walk together we need to be patient with one another, tolerant with one another, understanding of one another, and supportive of one another."

– REV DR MICHELINE KAMBA KOSONGO,
EGLISE DU CHRIST AU CONGO-
COMMUNAUTE PRESBYTERIENNE DE
KINSHASA – AFRICA

THE WCC FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES



AFRICA

Africa Inland Church of South Sudan and Sudan
 African Christian Church and Schools [Kenya]
 African Church of the Holy Spirit [Kenya]
 African Israel Nineveh Church [Kenya]
 African Protestant Church [Cameroon]
 Anglican Church of Burundi
 Anglican Church of Kenya
 Anglican Church of Southern Africa [South Africa]
 Anglican Church of Tanzania [Tanzania]
 Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda [Rwanda]
 Association of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Burkina Faso
 Church of Christ - Harrist Mission (Harrist Church) [Ivory Coast]
 Church of Christ in Congo - Anglican Community of Congo [DRC]
 Church of Christ in Congo - Baptist Community of Congo [DRC]
 Church of Christ in Congo - Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo [DRC]
 Church of Christ in Congo - Evangelical Community of Congo [Republic of Congo]
 Church of Christ in Congo - Mennonite Community in Congo [DRC]
 Church of Christ in Congo - Presbyterian Community of Congo [DRC]

At the end of 2014 the World Council of Churches had 345 member churches representing 18 church families in more than 120 countries on six continents

Church of Christ in Congo - Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa [DRC]
 Church of Christ in Congo - Protestant Baptist Church in Africa/Episcopal Baptist Community in Africa [DRC]
 Church of Christ Light of the Holy Spirit [DRC]
 Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
 Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by his Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu [DRC]
 Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
 Church of the Brethren in Nigeria
 Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide [Nigeria]
 Church of the Province of Central Africa [Zambia]
 Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean [Madagascar]
 Church of Uganda
 Church of the Province of West Africa [Ghana]
 Council of African Instituted Churches [South Africa]

Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan
 Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church
 Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
 Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
 Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola
 Evangelical Church of Cameroon
 Evangelical Church of Congo [Republic of Congo]
 Evangelical Church of Gabon
 Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo [DRC]
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa [South Africa]
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
 Evangelical Pentecostal Mission of Angola
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana
 Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola
 Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Lesotho Evangelical Church
 Lutheran Church in Liberia
 Malagasy Lutheran Church [Madagascar]
 Methodist Church Ghana
 Methodist Church in Kenya
 Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
 Methodist Church Nigeria
 Methodist Church of Southern Africa [South Africa]
 Methodist Church of Togo
 Methodist Church Sierra Leone
 Moravian Church in South Africa
 Moravian Church in Tanzania
 Native Baptist Church of Cameroon
 Nigerian Baptist Convention
 Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
 Presbyterian Church in Rwanda
 Presbyterian Church of Africa [South Africa]
 Presbyterian Church of Cameroon
 Presbyterian Church of East Africa [Kenya]
 Presbyterian Church of Ghana
 Presbyterian Church of Liberia
 Presbyterian Church of Mozambique
 Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
 Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan
 Protestant Church of Algeria
 Protestant Methodist Church of Benin
 Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda
 Reformed Church in Zambia
 Reformed Church in Zimbabwe
 Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria
 Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea
 The African Church [Nigeria]
 Union of Baptist Churches in Cameroon
 United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
 United Church of Zambia

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa [South Africa]
 United Methodist Church of Ivory Coast
 Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa [South Africa]
 Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa [South Africa]

ASIA

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
 Anglican Church in Japan
 Anglican Church of Australia
 Anglican Church of Korea
 Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha
 Baptist Churches of New Zealand
 Batak Christian Community Church (GPKB) [Indonesia]
 Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention [India]
 China Christian Council
 Christian Church of Central Sulawesi (GKST) [Indonesia]
 Christian Church of Sumba (GKS) [Indonesia]
 Christian Churches New Zealand
 Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) [Indonesia]
 Christian Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud (GMIST) [Indonesia]
 Christian Protestant Angkola Church (GKPA) [Indonesia]
 Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI)
 Church of Bangladesh
 Church of Ceylon [Sri Lanka]
 Church of Christ in Thailand



Church of North India
 Church of Pakistan
 Church of South India
 Church of the Province of Myanmar
 Churches of Christ in Australia
 Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches
 East Java Christian Church (GKJW) [Indonesia]
 Episcopal Church in the Philippines
 Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH) [Indonesia]
 Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (GKITP) [Indonesia]
 Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines
 Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
 Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)
 Indonesian Christian Church (HKI)
 Javanese Christian Churches (GKJ) [Indonesia]
 Kalimantan Evangelical Church (GKE) [Indonesia]
 Karo Batak Protestant Church (GBKP) [Indonesia]
 Korean Christian Church in Japan
 Korean Methodist Church
 Lao Evangelical Church
 Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church [India]

Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar [India]
 Mara Evangelical Church [Myanmar]
 Methodist Church in India
 Methodist Church in Indonesia (GMI)
 Methodist Church in Malaysia
 Methodist Church in Singapore
 Methodist Church of New Zealand
 Methodist Church, Sri Lanka
 Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar
 Myanmar Baptist Convention
 Nias Christian Protestant Church (BNKP) [Indonesia]
 Orthodox Church in Japan
 Pasundan Christian Church (GKP) [Indonesia]
 Philippine Independent Church
 Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
 Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
 Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
 Presbyterian Church of Korea
 Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
 Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP) [Indonesia]
 Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) [Indonesia]
 Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI) [Indonesia]
 Protestant Church in the Moluccas (GPM) [Indonesia]
 Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) [Malaysia]
 Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi (GEPSULTRA) [Indonesia]
 Protestant Church in Timor Lorosa'e [East Timor]
 Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB)
 Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT) [Indonesia]
 Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches [India]
 Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS) [Indonesia]
 Toraja Church (GT) [Indonesia]
 United Church of Christ in Japan
 United Church of Christ in the Philippines
 United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India
 Uniting Church in Australia

CARIBBEAN

Baptist Convention of Haiti
 Church in the Province of the West Indies [Bahamas]
 Jamaica Baptist Union
 Methodist Church in Cuba
 Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas [Antigua and Barbuda]
 Methodist Church of Puerto Rico
 Moravian Church in Jamaica
 Moravian Church in Suriname
 Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province [Antigua and Barbuda]
 Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago
 Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba
 United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
 United Protestant Church [Netherlands Antilles]

EUROPE

Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
 Baptist Union of Denmark
 Baptist Union of Great Britain
 Baptist Union of Hungary
 Catholic Diocese of the Old-Catholics in Germany
 Church in Wales
 Church of England
 Church of Greece
 Church of Ireland
 Church of Norway
 Church of Scotland
 Church of Sweden
 Czechoslovak Hussite Church [Czech Republic]
 Ecumenical Patriarchate
 Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy
 Evangelical Church in Germany
 Evangelical Church in Central Germany
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe
 Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren [Czech Republic]
 Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria
 Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
 Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
 Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland

The total membership of WCC churches represents more than 550 million Christians around the world. Among these, Europe as a region and the Eastern Orthodox as a church family have the largest membership of churches within the WCC.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
 Evangelical Methodist Church in Italy
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
 Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania
 Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
 Greek Evangelical Church
 Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad [Germany]
 Lusitanian Church of Portugal
 Lutheran Church in Hungary
 Mennonite Church in Germany
 Mennonite Church in the Netherlands
 Methodist Church [United Kingdom]
 Methodist Church in Ireland
 Moravian Church in Western Europe [Germany]
 Old-Catholic Church in Austria
 Old-Catholic Church in the Netherlands

Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland
 Old-Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland
 Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania
 Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia
 Orthodox Church of Finland
 Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church
 Polish Catholic Church in Poland
 Presbyterian Church of Wales
 Protestant Church in the Netherlands
 Reformed Christian Church in Serbia
 Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia
 Reformed Church in Hungary
 Reformed Church in Romania
 Remonstrant Church [Netherlands]
 Romanian Orthodox Church
 Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
 Scottish Episcopal Church
 Serbian Orthodox Church
 Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic
 Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia
 Spanish Evangelical Church
 Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church
 Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine
 Union of Welsh Independents
 United Free Church of Scotland
 United Protestant Church of Belgium
 United Protestant Church of France
 United Reformed Church [United Kingdom]
 Uniting Church in Sweden (UCS)
 Waldensian Church [Italy]

LATIN AMERICA

Anglican Church of South America [Argentina]
 Association The Church of God [Argentina]
 Baptist Association of El Salvador
 Baptist Convention of Nicaragua
 Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Christian Biblical Church [Argentina]
 Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil
 Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ in Argentina
 Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil
 Evangelical Church of the River Plate [Argentina]
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
 Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia
 Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina
 Free Pentecostal Missions Church of Chile
 Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil
 Methodist Church in Brazil
 Methodist Church in Uruguay
 Methodist Church of Chile
 Methodist Church of Mexico
 Methodist Church of Peru
 Moravian Church in Nicaragua
 Pentecostal Church of Chile
 Pentecostal Mission Church [Chile]
 Presbyterian Church of Colombia

Salvadorean Lutheran Synod [El Salvador]
 United Evangelical Lutheran Church [Argentina]
 United Presbyterian Church of Brazil

MIDDLE EAST

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) [Lebanon]
 Church of Cyprus
 Coptic Orthodox Church [Egypt]
 Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East [Israel/Palestine]
 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and The Holy Land
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile



Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa [Egypt]
 Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East [Syrian Arab Republic]
 Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem [Israel/Palestine]
 National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
 Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
 Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East [Lebanon]

NORTH AMERICA

African Methodist Episcopal Church [USA]
 African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church [USA]
 American Baptist Churches in the USA
 Anglican Church of Canada
 Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada
 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States
 Christian Methodist Episcopal Church [USA]
 Church of the Brethren [USA]
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
 Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East [USA]
 Hungarian Reformed Church in America
 International Council of Community Churches [USA]
 International Evangelical Church [USA]
 Moravian Church in America
 National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.
 National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.
 Orthodox Church in America
 Polish National Catholic Church [USA]
 Presbyterian Church [USA]
 Presbyterian Church in Canada
 Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. [USA]
 Reformed Church in America
 Religious Society of Friends: Friends

General Conference [USA]
 Religious Society of Friends: Friends United Meeting [USA]
 The Episcopal Church [USA]
 United Church of Canada
 United Church of Christ [USA]
 United Methodist Church [USA]

PACIFIC

Church of Melanesia [Solomon Islands]
 Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa
 Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
 Congregational Christian Church of Niue
 Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu
 Cook Islands Christian Church
 Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
 Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga)
 Kiribati Protestant Church
 Ma'ohi Protestant Church [French Polynesia]
 Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma
 Methodist Church of Samoa
 Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
 United Church in Papua New Guinea
 United Church in the Solomon Islands
 United Church of Christ - Congregational in the Marshall Islands



To learn more about the WCC member churches visit:
oikoumene.org



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