



**Walking, working  
and praying together**



**World Council  
of Churches**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a global expression of the modern ecumenical movement. As a fellowship of 348 churches present in more than 110 countries, the WCC engages in a quest for common witness to the good news of Christ, service to all the world's people, inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, theological formation, and spiritual renewal.

Within the membership are most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed churches, as well as many charismatic, independent, united, and uniting churches.

While the preponderance of the founding churches in the mid-20th century were from Europe and North America, the majority today are found in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific. Well over 500 million people belong to WCC member churches.

The WCC's programmes share responsibility for strengthening the fellowship, spiritual life, youth engagement, inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, and building a just community of women and men.

At its 10th Assembly at Busan, Korea, in 2013, the WCC invited Christians and all people of good will to join a "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace" as a coordinated embodiment of the vision and spirits of Just Peace, working together to heal a world filled with conflict, injustice, and pain.

This annual review of the activity of the World Council of Churches records many of the initiatives undertaken by the council during 2016 and continuing into 2017.

It tells the story of a unique organization that provides a workspace in which all are invited to reflect, speak, act, pray, and labour together in hope, to challenge and support one another, to share and debate the most pressing concerns of our day.



## Pilgrimage in changing landscapes

The World Council of Churches Central Committee met in Trondheim, Norway, last June. During those long days and white nights, the participants one night celebrated St John the Baptist's day at the traditional bonfire. Another evening a huge rainbow appeared, reminding us of the covenant of God with all creation. The very landscape changed through new perspectives and colours.

In the meeting we discussed how the pilgrimage motif is motivating us as churches to venture into new landscapes together, to see how we can be part of changing realities through our shared focus on justice and peace. In all of this we were reminded of God's care and God's call to live together in unity, but also of the call to prophetic witness together for justice and peace. The landscapes around us reminded me of my childhood there. The cathedral welcomed us as pilgrims but also called us to go out in the world together. This is the world that God loves. This is the world where all our churches live as a fellowship, calling one another to unity and to common witness.

That is what it means to be church. Throughout the last year, in my conversations with leaders of our member churches and in my travels, I have been especially grateful to see how churches around the

world have learned to see themselves and their work in the larger framework of this Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. At its heart, this initiative, now in its fourth year, asks churches everywhere to consider their identity and their fellowship with each other as a *koinonia*, a communion with God and with each other, a shared commitment to living God's mission in our lives and work as Christians. We are pledged—as *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, that vital convergence document from the Commission on Faith and Order, states—to “continue the life giving mission of Christ in prophetic and compassionate ministry” for justice and peace. Now in its process of reception, in which comments and responses from the churches are being assessed, *The Church* has already pointed to ways in which the historic quest for unity finds new energy in our shared quest for God's reign of justice and peace.

Ecumenical work is not nostalgia nor superficial use of metaphors. It is the hard work we do in mutual accountability to one another. In these pages, you will find many examples of how that mandate is translated into concrete, creative initiatives by the churches and the WCC to further justice and peace. Our accountability is first and last to God, the creator, the saviour and the

life-giver. In our accountability to God we are called to accountability to one another. Most of all we are accountable to the vulnerable sisters and brothers, wherever they are, or for whatever reason they might be moving, migrating, fleeing their homes. During the last year we focused in our pilgrimage on the situation in the Middle East. In the landscapes we know from our Bible, we see how conflicts are breaking the land of living into pieces. Human beings are divided, even torn into pieces.

We are called to give account of our living hope given through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are called to show that another reality is possible, that even landscapes can change. Therefore, we continue our pilgrimage of justice and peace. And we pray that God will give us the strength and the wisdom to find our ways together.



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



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## The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in the Middle East

In areas of increased violence, conflict, and war, people are struggling for their lives and their future. Many are hostages of war or refugees seeking new homes or a sense of security. The WCC represents hope from the faith community in the face of grave conflicts and growing humanitarian crises.

In addition to cosponsoring, with three UN agencies, a January 2016 conference on the European refugee crisis, the WCC has also been opening doors for many regional and local dialogues that become the building blocks for peace.

**Cyprus.** As part of an ongoing, multiyear project called “Walking Together,” an international and inter-religious group met in December 2016 to explore different facets of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The group experienced unprecedented dialogue between religious leaders of Cyprus and faith communities.

Together, they built trust, improved religious freedom, and contributed to the peace process in Cyprus.

**Beirut.** The Middle East Council of Churches and the WCC, with the support of the German development agency Bread for the World, organized a capacity-building seminar in Beirut in November 2016. Nearly 50 participants came to Beirut’s Notre Dame du Puits monastery from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, as well as from partner organizations in Europe, North America and Africa.

**Erbil.** Each day churches in Erbil, Iraq, have offered shelter, food and basic support to more than 20,000 people from the Nineveh plain and Mosul during an occupation by terrorist fighters from the so-called Islamic State. The WCC offers training, dialogue and advocacy, which enhances and supports such humanitarian efforts. ■



© Sean Hawkey/WCC



## Standing firm for justice and peace in the Holy Land

Engaged in work for justice and peace, also on the level of global advocacy that lends voice to conscience in the halls of international bodies, the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace had its 2016 annual focus on the Middle East. Inspiring initiatives and challenging situations marked the engagement of the WCC in the Holy Land.

**Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).** Through EAPPI, the WCC continues to provide a sense of peaceful security for children on their daily walk to school. Results of a wide-ranging evaluation of EAPPI were presented during 2016, and efforts to strengthen EAPPI will continue through 2017 based on the evaluation’s findings.

**Israeli antagonism toward WCC initiatives.** Upon traveling to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv during 2016, several WCC staff and partners were detained or deported in a manner that WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit termed both unprecedented and intolerable. In the face of this challenge, WCC’s pursuit of justice is more vital than ever, he concluded.

**Unprecedented success for “Seven Weeks for Water” campaign.** Since 2008, the WCC’s Ecumenical Water Network has invited its member churches to use the season of Lent to reflect on water. During 2016, this campaign, Seven Weeks for Water, had unprecedented

visibility with the theme “Thirst for Justice: Pilgrimage of Water Justice in the Middle East, with a Special Focus on Palestine.”

**Photo contest.** For the first time, WCC organized a photo contest during the Lenten campaign on water justice issues. Hosted on the WCC Instagram page with a hash tag “#7Weeks4Water,” the contest moved the audience from being mere spectators to action.

**A Christmas message from children in Bethlehem.** During 2016, children in Bethlehem played a particular role in preparation of the WCC Christmas message. Through a collaboration between WCC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Palestinian children from a variety of schools in Bethlehem shared drawings, illustrating their own perspectives on the Christmas story. ■



## Changing climate change

“The Holy Spirit sustains us and all creatures every day.” These are the words of WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, speaking before the Pentecostal World Conference in Brazil in September 2016. He reflected that a world under threat of rapid climate change needs daily action from people who believe in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

The WCC brought that consistent sense of hope to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP22) in Marrakesh, Morocco, in November 2016, carrying the clear message that people of faith have something important to contribute to climate action: a sense of moral duty to act with an understanding of what it means to be a human living in God’s creation.

Collaborating with the ACT Alliance and the Lutheran World Federation, the WCC demanded a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy based on clean energy in order to stem rising global temperatures. It also called for more support for low-income countries most affected by climate change. ■



## Water justice

**Blue Community.** The WCC became a Blue Community in October 2016. The special occasion was marked by the awarding of a “Blue Community Certificate” by the founder of the Blue Planet Project in Canada, Dr Maude Barlow.

Several tap-water-based dispensers were installed in different areas of the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva in an effort to provide safe, clean and plastic-free water to WCC staff and visitors.

**Water justice statement.** Representatives from the WCC gathered in Nigeria in November 2016, where they released a statement entitled “A Pilgrimage of Water Justice in Africa.”

The statement acknowledges that access to safe water and, even more, access to adequate sanitation, remains a major challenge in the world.

The WCC Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) is a network of churches and church-related organizations that promotes the preservation, responsible management and equitable distribution of water for all, based on the understanding that water is a gift of God and a fundamental human right. ■

*For information on the EWN’s successful Lenten campaign Seven Weeks for Water, please see page 5.*



## Hope for a better tomorrow: rethinking economics

Challenging a self-centered economic model, the WCC and the World Communion of Reformed Churches organized a Governance, Economics and Management (GEM) School in Hong Kong in September 2016.

### What is on the minds of GEM school students?

GEM school students have strong thoughts on building economic competencies within the ecumenical movement and empowering communities with the tools needed to interpret their context and look for alternatives.

### How does this relate to people’s daily lives?

GEM student Gustav Theile, who studies international business, Korean politics, and international literature in Tübingen, Germany, believes the economy is what we, as a society, make out of it.

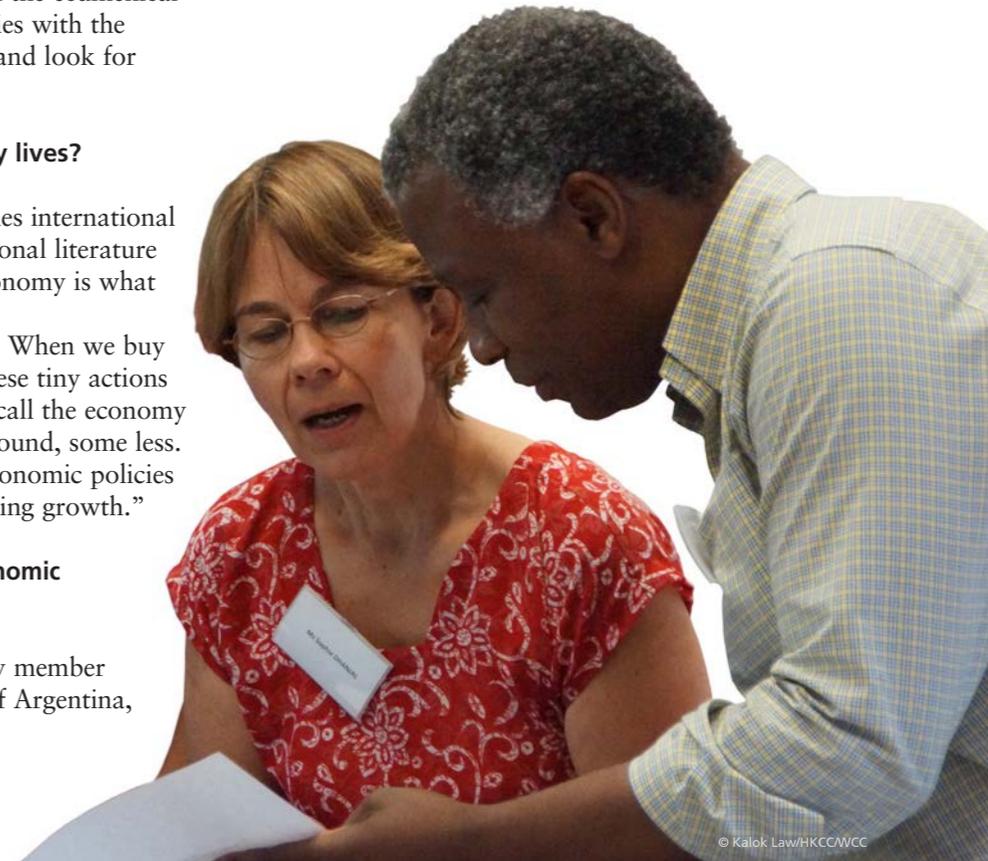
“It is the result of our daily actions. When we buy butter or take the train to work. All these tiny actions by every one of us add up to what we call the economy in the end. Some move more money around, some less. But that doesn’t justify that we treat economic policies as merely bureaucratic acts of maximizing growth.”

### Are we concerned about extreme economic inequality?

GEM student Deivit Montealegre, a lay member of the Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina,

believes there is an economic system that devours lives and uses them as raw material for its insatiable appetite for growth and excessive development.

“There is one single planet that we all share but which is ‘owned’ by very few people; in fact only one percent of the population. Ninety-nine percent of us owe to that one percent the quality of life we have.” ■





## The strong voice of Indigenous People

With a focus on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and Indigenous People, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit completed an ecumenical and interfaith journey through Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia in October 2016. His visits included worship services, public lectures, visits with interfaith and ecumenical leaders, talks with indigenous elders, and meetings with politicians and policymakers.

Following the August 2016 WCC Consultation on Indigenous Spirituality and Theology in Darwin, Australia — a gathering of indigenous theologians to critically reflect on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace from indigenous perspectives — Tveit’s visit offered support for aboriginal Australians struggling to understand the recently exposed, horrific abuse of aboriginal youth in detention.

The WCC commitment to indigenous justice was also clearly reflected at the June 2016 WCC Central Committee meeting. More than 170 indigenous persons gathered for a pre-Central Committee conference on Reconciliation and Healing, where they spoke movingly of serious human rights violations, even loss of life. Indeed, the conference statement, with its inspiring message that justice for Indigenous People is also justice for the earth and all of creation, was strongly endorsed by the Central Committee. ■

## “The church is a people’s movement”

As she called to order the World Council of Churches Central Committee for its June 2016 meeting in Trondheim, Norway, Dr Agnes Abuom reflected on the meeting’s theme, “Pilgrimage: Discerning the Landscapes Together.”

**Q: How does the WCC pilgrimage of justice and peace enable us all to be catalysts for change?**

**Abuom:** We exist in a rapidly changing and increasingly pluralistic world. The pilgrimage offers us immense possibilities to reimagine ourselves as a movement of God’s people in mission — open and inclusive, and agile and receptive to the promptings of the Spirit.

**Q: The Central Committee discussed, among many other issues, the rights of indigenous people, and peace and justice in Israel and Palestine. Even as**

**we face immense challenges such as these, do you believe we are defined by hope?**

**Abuom:** We have affirmed time and again that the church is a people’s movement and that the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace will also engage people of other faiths and men and women of good will. Let us reclaim and rebuild our capacity for discourse. I believe we can do this, and in that lies great hope.

**Q: What aspects are unique to the pilgrimage of the current WCC fellowship?**

**Abuom:** Churches need a holistic and inclusive vision of just peace in the face of national and international conflicts. Each generation has its challenges and its chances. Ours is to work to become just peace churches. ■





## #ThursdaysInBlack...around the world

“Thursdays in Black” is a campaign against sexual and gender-based violence and violence in general. It’s a movement you see evidence of every day across the globe. On Twitter. On Facebook. In the hallways. On the streets. In your churches. Everywhere.

Join #ThursdaysInBlack. It’s a growing, thriving pilgrimage.

[Tweet of 11/24/16] [Tweet of 10/26/16]

Christian Aid in Ireland and YWCA Hong Kong — two among many faith-based groups worldwide tweeting their support for #ThursdaysinBlack.

[Tweet of 7/28/16]

The youth of West Palm Beach United Church of Christ (USA) join #ThursdaysinBlack.

[Tweet of 12/8/16]

#ThursdaysInBlack even makes the virtual world! The popular 3D Second Life universe — with one million users — continues to advocate against rape and sexual violence in the real world. ■



## “Religion and Violence”

Each day, in multiple places across the world, conflict and violence are perpetrated in the name of religion or committed against persons because of their religious identity.

The World Council of Churches continues, as a focal point of its pilgrimage, to analyze geopolitical, inter-religious and theological aspects of religion and violence with a mind toward policy development and meaningful action. The WCC Central Committee, at its meeting in June 2016, engaged in critical introspection on religion and violence. It reviewed a study document, “Religion and Violence,” that probes the phenomena of religiously inspired violence, violence against religion and inter-religious violence, along with related factors of religious extremism and affronts to religious freedom. ■

## “The Gift of Being”

When we refer to the disabled as “vulnerable,” we strengthen the delusion that individuals without disabilities are strong and can take care of themselves.

Such evolving sensibilities and developing understanding of disability are reflected in a new, paradigm-changing document on the dignity of disabled persons. “The Gift of Being” was also discussed by the WCC Central Committee. The document states that most of us will experience reduced mobility in one form or another at some point in life.

The WCC’s Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) has worked with issues surrounding integration of the disabled in the WCC fellowship since 1998. As EDAN re-conceptualizes its role in the church, WCC will continue to approach the issue of disability from a human rights perspective. ■



## Leading by example: testing, removing stigma, ending AIDS

For World AIDS Day 2016, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fyke Tveit led efforts by religious leaders around the world to promote HIV testing by getting tested themselves and encouraging others to do the same.

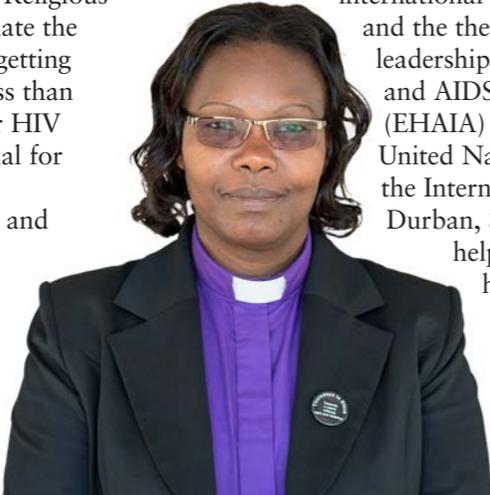
The campaign, “Leading by Example: Religious Leaders and HIV Testing,” aims to eliminate the stigma and fear many people feel just by getting tested for HIV. According to UNAIDS, less than half of people living with HIV know their HIV status, and knowing one’s status is essential for prevention, treatment and support.

Pastors, laypeople, community leaders and individuals from all corners of the globe in the WCC fellowship and beyond have taken up the challenge to lead by example, sharing their photos

and thoughts on HIV testing through the campaign coordinated by the WCC-Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA).

The WCC has actively responded to the AIDS epidemic since 1984, and the combined efforts of the international advocacy of the WCC-EAA and the theological and community-based leadership of WCC’s Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiatives and Advocacy (EHAIA) are widely recognized at the United Nations and at events such as the International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa, as critical to helping end AIDS as a public health threat.

The WCC Central Committee’s pastoral letter,



Bishop Alice Mutuma, Methodist Church of Kenya © Albin Hillert/WCC



“Churches Recommit to Accelerate HIV Response,” adopted in June 2016, outlines its pledge to continue to provide resources that help churches and communities address issues of overcoming stigma and discrimination, lead by example in HIV testing, and tackle sensitive issues about human sexuality. ■

## Open interreligious dialogue flourishes

The World Council of Churches continues to build new bridges and strengthen existing ones between religious groups in many countries.

### A visit from the Grand Imam

In an historic and unprecedented visit, the chief cleric of Cairo's prestigious mosque and university, H.E. Prof. Dr Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, accompanied by representatives from the Muslim Council of Elders, visited Geneva for a two-day dialogue and planning session with a delegation from the WCC.

Dr Al-Tayyeb also delivered a lecture on "The Responsibility of Religious Leaders in Building World Peace," in which he urged Christians and Muslims "to follow our path

as believers from the different parts of the world, in order to realize humanity's hope to overcome the uncivilized obstacles that could bring us back to the era of darkness, ignorance and the law of the jungle."

### Nigerian Christians and Muslims open historic peace centre

The WCC and the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought joined with Nigerian Christians and Muslims to launch the International Centre for Inter-Faith Peace and Harmony.

The centre is located in Kaduna. More than 20,000 people have died in various conflicts over the last three decades in Nigeria.

Amid a growing number of interfaith initiatives in Nigeria, the new centre has a unique goal: to systematically document interfaith relations to inform national and international policy-making. ■



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## "The people of South Sudan do not deserve this suffering"

In July 2016, Fr James Oyet-Latansio, general secretary of the Christian Council in South Sudan, described a tense situation in his country. "The ceasefire is broadly holding. It hasn't disintegrated into a full-scale, head-on military collision...there are growing military tensions, with reports of mobilizations."

At that time, more than 1 million South Sudanese were seeking refuge.

Oyet-Latansio publicly thanked South Sudan's partners in the World Council of Churches for raising awareness about daily life in South Sudan.

"I appeal to the international community through the WCC for support for the people of South Sudan," he said. "The people of South Sudan do not deserve this suffering."

Ferdinand von Habsburg-Lothringen, adviser on reconciliation for the South Sudan Council of Churches, noted how important it is for churches to highlight their humanitarian partners so the solution is not about turning to the international community but about solving the problem locally.

"Advocacy is really to get the regional countries to engage further," he said. "The church is talking to a whole range of actors through networks in Europe, the USA and elsewhere." ■



## Planning for the World Mission Conference

A World Mission Conference has been scheduled for March 2018 in Arusha, Tanzania, with a theme of “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship.”

The theme builds on the 2013 WCC mission statement, “Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes,” which emphasizes “mission from the margins.”

More than 700 delegates from churches worldwide are expected to gather for the conference, which will be hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

The conference is the first to be held in Africa since 1958, when it was hosted in Ghana. The first World Mission Conference was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. A series of conferences has followed at approximately 10-year intervals. ■



## Reclaiming evangelism

The WCC continues to work toward a renewed understanding of evangelism that celebrates diversity, change and collaboration. In Europe, Africa and beyond, the WCC has been working with churches in order to make the good news of the gospel relevant to people across the globe through a transformed and transforming understanding of discipleship. For example, *Sharing Good News: A Handbook on Evangelism in Europe* explores the changing context of Europe in light of the new paradigm of evangelism. ■



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## Moral discernment: helping churches understand each other

The World Council of Churches’ Faith and Order Commission continues to reflect on how churches arrive at the ethical decisions they make.

Between 2007 and 2013, the commission undertook an initial study, published as “Moral Discernment in the Churches: A Study Document.” The commission followed up on the document by convening a study group to focus on moral discernment in the churches and authority.

The study group met in July in Germany and will present its results and recommendations for further study at the next meeting of Faith and Order Commission in June 2017 in South Africa.

The WCC cannot tell any church the “right” position with regard to a particular moral or theological

issue, explained study coordinator Rev. Dr Dagmar Heller, a Faith and Order programme executive and Professor of Ecumenical Theology at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey.

“What we want to do at this moment — and this is a very modest aim — is to help churches understand each other better and, therefore, respect each other’s positions. Only this approach can finally lead the churches in a next step to sit together and try together to find solutions for the problems of our modern world, which are not immediately or directly answered in the Bible or in the texts of the church fathers and mothers.” ■



## Ecumenical Institute celebrates 70 years

Hundreds of current and former students and staff, partners and friends gathered at the Château de Bossey in October 2016 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Ecumenical Institute Bossey.

The warm words of students and alumni best highlight the role the institute has had and continues to play in the ecumenical movement.

**“I want to praise God, to thank God, for this opportunity to meet people from all over the world, from different countries and denominations, and to have fellowship with them.”**

— Khaing Moh Moh, Bossey student from Myanmar

**“Gathering here in Bossey, we find unity in our diversities. Here, we can both learn about and see unity, as we live together despite our differences.”**

— Rev. Kokou Pere, Bossey student from Togo

**“Gathering here in Bossey for these days of celebration is a great opportunity to meet friends and fellow students and to learn more about the institute’s work today. But most importantly, I think the fact that so many have come shows us the great usefulness of the Ecumenical Institute, and how highly valued the experiences from Bossey are in many people’s lives.”**

— Fr Mikhail Goundiaev, 1994-95 Bossey alumnus, sharing memories at the anniversary celebration ■



## Racism in US: “deep, wide, pervasive”... but churches can bring hope

After visiting the United States in a spirit of solidarity and accompaniment, a World Council of Churches delegation communicated a sense of hope that churches can help achieve racial justice.

Churches can offer a renewed and reinvigorated response to the sin of racial hatred, violence and discrimination, the delegation found, while at the same time noting the intense need for change.

“We had heard that racism continues to be an issue in the United States,” said Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator

of the WCC Central Committee. “But we did not expect to find it so deep, so wide and so pervasive.”

Abuom led a racial justice accompaniment visit in April 2016, which included the cities of Charleston, South Carolina; Ferguson, Missouri; and Chicago, Illinois.

The team of WCC visitors prepared a report on their experience and findings, with recommendations for next steps in response. ■

## 500 years after Reformation, more unites us than divides us

The story of the Reformation became one of deepened fellowship and service as thousands of people marked the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in various ways all over the world.

In November 2016, at a joint service in the Swedish city of Lund, Catholics and Lutherans apologized for their past divisions and conflicts, and pledged to deepen their common fellowship and service in the world.

There, Pope Francis joined Bishop Munib Younan, president of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and Rev. Martin Junge, LWF general secretary, for a service at Lund Cathedral on 31 October, the anniversary of the day in 1517 that marks the start of the Reformation

with Martin Luther's posting of his 95 Theses.

Meanwhile, in Geneva, the World Council of Churches (WCC) organized public workshops focused on the role of the Reformation in catalyzing and modernizing Christian faith communities' responses to the many existential issues of humanity, including child rights, health and food security, the plight of refugees, and ecumenical heritage.

Geneva also served as the first of 67 stops for a "Reformation truck" making its way, over the next year, across Europe, sharing local stories of the Reformation. ■



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## As Orthodox leaders convene, WCC urges common search for unity

When leaders of Eastern Orthodox churches gathered in Crete in June 2016 for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, the WCC sent a greeting sharing the thought that "hope in our common Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus Christ unites us in a common witness and common message of hope to the world."

The council was convened by Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

"As you are looking for meaningful and effective ways of witness and mission," wrote WCC leaders, "our hearts and prayers are with you all."

During the Holy and Great Council, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit attended celebrations of Pentecost with the Orthodox community, offering his prayers and support.

Ten of the world's 14 self-governing Orthodox churches attended the council. Orthodox patriarchs discussed the contemporary mission of the Orthodox church, marriage regulations, fasting guidelines, the place of Orthodox churches outside their historic venues, and ecumenical relations with non-Orthodox churches. ■





© Marcelo Schneider/WCC



© Marcelo Schneider/WCC

## Peacebuilding in Colombia

After welcoming news of an historic bilateral ceasefire agreement concluded by the government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in June 2016, the WCC welcomed its

ratification in December and continues to explore the vital role of churches in peace building in Colombia.

In a June 2016 statement, the WCC Central Committee noted: “In the context of the pilgrimage of justice and peace, the Central Committee invites consideration of a post-agreement ecumenical

delegation visit to Colombia, and of holding a forthcoming meeting of the WCC Central Committee or Executive Committee in Colombia to demonstrate that accompaniment.”

The WCC and Caritas Internationalis also promoted an event — co-sponsored by the ACT Alliance, the Lutheran World Federation, the Mennonite Central Committee and the Presbyterian Church USA — in New York City in August 2016. There, representatives from church-related and civil society organizations in Colombia shared their perspectives regarding the peace process in the country; their existing and future roles to support the implementation of the peace accords; and proposals regarding the verification of the ceasefire agreement, as well as unarmed protection in the territories. ■



## Looking ahead: ecumenical work on the “Moral Imperative”

At the second-ever convening of the Moral Imperative in New York City in September 2016, advocates from faith-based groups joined World Bank representatives and UN officials to discern the next steps for a diverse group of people trying to end extreme poverty by 2030.

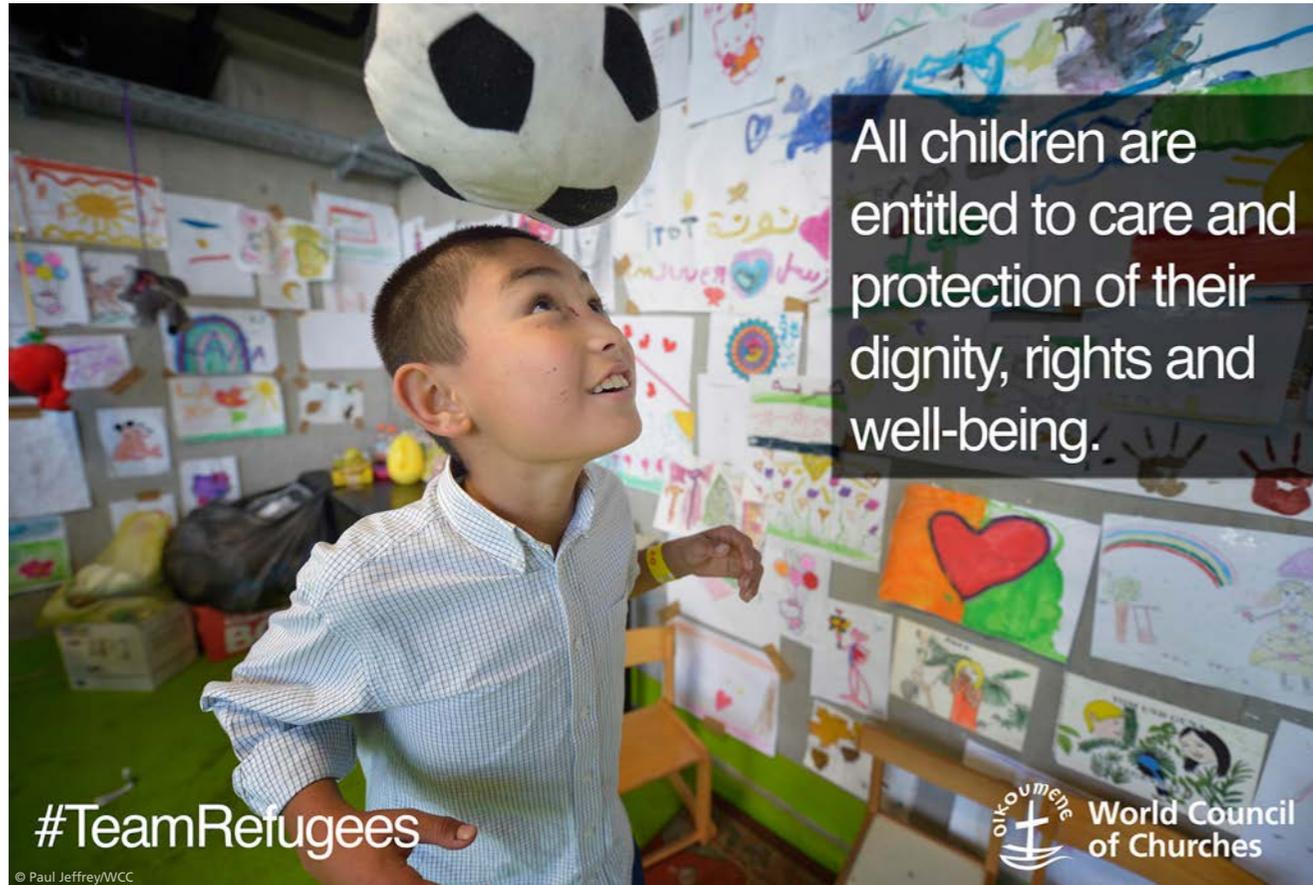
The meeting occurred as a side event during the UN General Assembly. Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, the WCC representative to the United Nations and coordinator of the Ecumenical United Nations Office, spoke at the meeting about the challenge of prioritizing advocacy.

De Faria has been leading an Advocacy Working Group as part of the Moral Imperative for the past year. After discussions, the group chose two potential major areas for advocacy work on both international and grassroots levels: land and water rights, and violence against children. ■

## The WCC's expanding partnerships

During 2016, the World Council of Churches created new partnerships and strengthened existing ones.

**UNICEF.** Through a new partnership, WCC and UNICEF committed to support children through churches. Among joint efforts during 2016, WCC and UNICEF produced a guide for consultations with children and adolescents.



**World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).** WCC and WEA leaders met to explore and discuss possible areas of future cooperation.

**United Bible Societies (UBS).** The WCC shared with its fellowship the story of how Bible societies are working in more than 200 countries and territories around the world to make known the word of God.

**Roman Catholic Church.** Celebrating more than 50 years together, the Joint Working Group of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church continues to forge new ways of working together on today's most pressing issues. ■





**The WCC is a fellowship of 348 member churches who together represent more than half a billion Christians around the world.**

WCC member churches can be found in all regions of the world and include most of the world's Orthodox churches (Eastern and Oriental), as well as African Instituted, Anglican, Assyrian, Baptist, Evangelical, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian, Old-Catholic, Pentecostal, Reformed, United/Uniting and Free/Independent churches, Disciples of Christ and Friends (Quakers).

## Growing the fellowship of churches

The World Council of Churches welcomed three new member churches in 2016.

**Dutch Reformed Church (DRC).** Founded in the 17th century by Dutch settlers in southern Africa, the DRC includes more than one million members and three theological faculties. A founding member of the WCC, the DRC broke its relationship with the WCC in the 1960s, due to harsh criticism from the ecumenical fellowship of the DRC's involvement in and support of apartheid. Beginning in 1986, the DRC rejected all forms of racism and opened its membership to all believers.

**Blantyre Synod.** A part of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) for the southern region of Malawi, the CCAP Blantyre Synod was established in the 19th century by Scottish missionaries and includes 1.8 million members in 800 local congregations.

**Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI).** One of the largest Baptist groups in India, the CBCNEI includes 1.2 million members in 7,263 congregations. The American Baptist Missionaries initiated the mission in 1836. Today CBCNEI has six regional conventions as participating bodies in North Eastern states.

At its 2016 meeting, WCC's Central Committee also accepted applications for membership of two other churches, on which final decisions will be made in 2018.



# WCC financial results 2016

Financial results 2016 (Swiss francs 000's)*	Unrestricted and designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
*Unaudited	2016	2016	2016	2015
<b>Income</b>				
Membership and other unrestricted income	3 928	-	3 928	3 877
Programme contributions	-	13 597	13 597	14 766
Investment and currency gains/(losses)	(82)	405	323	(210)
Rental income, sales and other income	6 746	414	7 160	7 158
Unrestricted income distribution	(3 891)	3 891	-	-
<b>Total income</b>	<b>6 701</b>	<b>18 307</b>	<b>25 008</b>	<b>25 591</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Direct programme costs: grants	-	409	409	993
Operating and other programme costs	5 936	7 323	13 259	11 611
Salaries	4 539	8 114	12 653	13 287
Redistribution of costs; internal (sales)/charges	(2 917)	2 917	-	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>7 558</b>	<b>18 763</b>	<b>26 321</b>	<b>25 891</b>
Transfers between funds	1	(1)	-	-
Transfers to funds	283	(220)	63	1 042
<b>Net (decrease)/increase in funds for the year</b>	<b>(573)</b>	<b>(677)</b>	<b>(1 250)</b>	<b>742</b>

Although total income was relatively stable from 2015 to 2016, there was a net decrease in contributions income of CHF 1.1 million (6%). Certain contracted funding came to an end in 2015, and there were reductions in contributions from a small number of partners. However, there were also three significant new contracts for special project work, two from relatively new partners.

The preliminary net result is a drawdown in funds of CHF 1.3 million, compared to CHF 1.6 million drawdown forecast. Following 2015, when funds and reserves increased by CHF 0.7 million, in 2016, programme funds retained from the prior year were duly applied as planned. General reserves increased slightly from CHF 6.9 million to CHF 7 million, and are above the target of CHF 6.3 million set by WCC Central Committee. ■



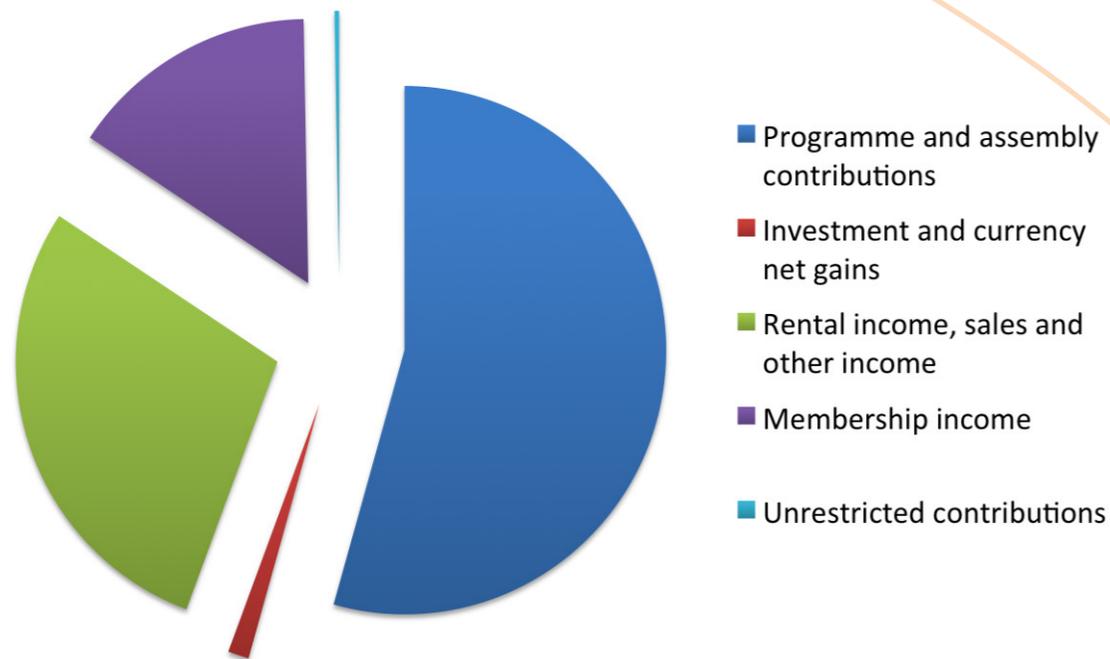
Financial report



- General Secretariat
- Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Relations
- Public Witness
- Diakonia
- Ecumenical Formation
- Communication
- Transversal priorities

WCC expenditure by programme 2016	CHF 000s	%
General Secretariat	3 122	17%
Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Relations	2 446	13%
Public Witness	4 221	23%
Diakonia	3 214	17%
Ecumenical Formation	2 323	12%
Communication	1 661	9%
Transversal priorities	1 745	9%
	18 732	100%

*Transversal priorities in 2016 included Relations with member churches, NCCs and REOs, Youth engagement in the ecumenical movement, Just community of women and men, Inter-religious dialogue and co-operation, and Spiritual life.*



WCC sources of income 2016	CHF 000s	%
Programme and assembly contributions	13 597	54,4%
Investment and currency net gains	323	1,3%
Rental income, sales and other income	7 160	28,6%
Membership income	3 857	15,4%
Unrestricted contributions	71	0,3%
	25 008	100,0%

Income trends 2016 (Swiss francs 000's)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Membership and other unrestricted income	5 887	5 250	4 605	4 388	4 120	4 206	3 877	3 928
Programme contributions	21 422	20 742	16 802	17 214	16 871	16 020	14 651	13 542
International Ecumenical Peace Convocation	42	351	492	-	-	-	-	-
Global Christian Forum	130	166	174	17	-	-	-	-
Multilateral sharing	575	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assembly	97	76	145	1 021	2 112	138	115	55
ACT Development	913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other income	7 196	5 882	6 447	7 409	8 179	8 998	6 948	7 483
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 262</b>	<b>32 468</b>	<b>28 665</b>	<b>30 049</b>	<b>31 282</b>	<b>29 362</b>	<b>25 591</b>	<b>25 008</b>

#### 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 2016.

African Methodist Episcopal Church, American Baptist Churches in the USA, Anglican Church of Canada, 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, CBM International, Church of England, Church of Norway, Church of Scotland, Church of Sweden, Council for World Mission, DanChurchAid, DEFAP- French Evangelical Department for Apostolic Action, Eglise protestante unie de France, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, EKD-Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, EKD-Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, EKD-Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland, Finn Church Aid,

Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Fondation pour l'aide au protestantisme réformé, Fondation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia, Hassib Sabbagh Foundation, Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz, Karibu Foundation, Kerk in Actie, Methodist Church, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbyterian Church in Canada, Presbyterian Church of Korea, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, Reformierte Landeskirche Aargau, Religious Society of Friends, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, Stichting Rotterdam, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), The Episcopal Church in the USA, UNAIDS, UNICEF, United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Uniting Church in Australia, Uniting Church in Sweden

#### Other contributors (less than CHF 20,000)

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



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