Olav Fykse Tveit (1960-)
Term: 2010-
A pastor from the Lutheran communion, Tveit began his term of office in January 2010 following seven years as leader of the Church of Norway’s council on ecumenical and international relations. Bringing wide experience in inter-religious dialogue, Tveit had also served as co-chair of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum core group and as a member of the WCC’s Faith and Order Plenary Commission. He began his term by preaching on “the ecumenical movement of the cross.”

W. A. Visser ’t Hooft (1900-1985)
Term: 1938-1966
A brilliant and visionary Christian leader from the Netherlands, Willem Visser ’t Hooft was named WCC general secretary at the 1938 meeting in which the WCC’s process of formation began. A Reformed minister, he emphasized the importance of linking the ecumenical movement to enduring manifestations of the church through history. In 1968 he was elected honorary president of the WCC by the fourth assembly.

Philip Potter (1921-)
Term: 1972-1985
A Methodist pastor, missionary and youth leader from Dominica in the West Indies, Potter was called to several positions in the WCC. During his mandate as general secretary, he insisted on the fundamental unity of Christian witness and Christian service and the correlation of faith and action.

Eugene Carson Blake (1906-1985)
Term: 1966-1972
A talented administrator and ecumenical leader in the USA, Blake previously served as stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA and as president of the National Council of Churches in the USA. An ardent advocate of the civil rights movement, he helped launch the WCC’s Programme to Combat Racism.

An Ecumenical Journey
A timeline of the World Council of Churches

WCC General Secretaries

W. A. Visser ’t Hooft (1938-1966)
A Reformed minister, Visser ’t Hooft was named WCC general secretary at the 1938 meeting in which the WCC’s process of formation began.

Philip Potter (1972-1985)
A Methodist pastor, Potter was called to several positions in the WCC. During his mandate as general secretary, he insisted on the fundamental unity of Christian witness and Christian service and the correlation of faith and action.

Eugene Carson Blake (1966-1972)
A talented administrator and ecumenical leader in the USA, Blake previously served as stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA and as president of the National Council of Churches in the USA. An ardent advocate of the civil rights movement, he helped launch the WCC’s Programme to Combat Racism.

Emilio Castro (1985-1992)
A native of Uruguay and a missiologist, Castro served as director of the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, then as general secretary. A Methodist pastor and theologian, he was noted for his eloquent preaching and progressive views on Christianity and the social order, and served as president of Latin America.

A German theologian who served on the WCC staff under Philip Potter, Raiser once described his ecumenical calling as “a second conversion.” During a sometimes turbulent period for the ecumenical movement, he led the Council as general secretary in a redefinition of its “Common Understanding and Vision” and in a fundamental review of the participation of Orthodox member churches.

Samuel Kobia (1947-)
Term: 2004-2009
An ordained minister of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kobia was the first African to hold the position of WCC general secretary. Kobia brought his lifelong concern for Africa to the world-wide ecumenical movement. Following his election, he called on the churches to “work tirelessly toward the healing of the world and the restoration of human dignity.”
### Timeline

**World Student Christian Federation founded, 1895**

**First proposal for a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 1908**

**2nd WCC Assembly**
- **Evanston, USA** • 15-31 August 1954
  - Theme: “Christ—the Hope of the World”
  - Delegates: 502 (161 member churches)

**3rd WCC Assembly**
- **New Delhi, India** • 19 November to 5 December 1961
  - Theme: “Jesus Christ—the Light of the World”
  - Delegates: 577 (197 member churches)

**4th WCC Assembly**
- **Uppsala, Sweden** • 4-20 July 1968
  - Theme: “Behold, I make all things new”
  - Delegates: 704 (235 member churches)

**6th WCC Assembly**
- **Vancouver, Canada** • 24 July to 10 August 1983
  - Theme: “Jesus Christ—the Life of the World”
  - Delegates: 847 (301 member churches)

**10th WCC Assembly**
- **Busan, Republic of Korea** • 30 October to 8 November 2013
  - Theme: “God of Life, lead us to justice and peace”
  - Delegates: 349 member churches

**9th WCC Assembly**
- **Porto Alegre, Brazil** • 14-23 February, 2006
  - Theme: “God, in your grace, transform the world”
  - Delegates: 728 (347 member churches)

**8th WCC Assembly**
- **Harare, Zimbabwe** • 3-14 December 1998
  - Theme: “Turn to God—Rejoice in Hope”
  - Delegates: 996 (336 member churches)

**7th WCC Assembly**
- **Canberra, Australia** • 7-20 February 1991
  - Theme: “Come, Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation”
  - Delegates: 852 (317 member churches)

**5th WCC Assembly**
- **Nairobi, Kenya** • 23 November to 10 December 1975
  - Theme: “Jesus Christ Frees and Unites”
  - Delegates: 676 (285 member churches)

**Timeline interpretation**
- **WCC Assembly**
- **World Mission Conference**
- **World Conference on Faith and Order**
- **World Conference on Life and Work**
- **World Council of Christian Education (WCCE) Conferences**
- **Various World Ecumenical Conferences**

**Selected Ecumenical Key Dates**
- **1st WCC Assembly**
  - **Amsterdam, The Netherlands** • 22 August to 4 September 1948
  - Theme: “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design”
  - Delegates: 351 (147 member churches)

**2nd WCC Assembly**
- **Oxford, England** • 1923

**3rd WCC Assembly**
- **Lausanne, Switzerland** • 1925

**4th WCC Assembly**
- **Edinburgh, Scotland** • 1937

**5th WCC Assembly**
- **Amsterdam, The Netherlands** • 1954

**6th WCC Assembly**
- **New Delhi, India** • 1961

**7th WCC Assembly**
- **Uppsala, Sweden** • 1968

**8th WCC Assembly**
- **Harare, Zimbabwe** • 1998

**9th WCC Assembly**
- **Edinburgh, Scotland** • 2006

**10th WCC Assembly**
- **Busan, Republic of Korea** • 2013

---

**Timeline River Chart**

---

**An Ecumenical Journey**

---

**References**