



Lament, hope and courage

WCC Annual Review 2021

“It is important that we stand together as a WCC fellowship on a foundation of hope built by reconciliation and peace-building.”

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
WCC acting general secretary

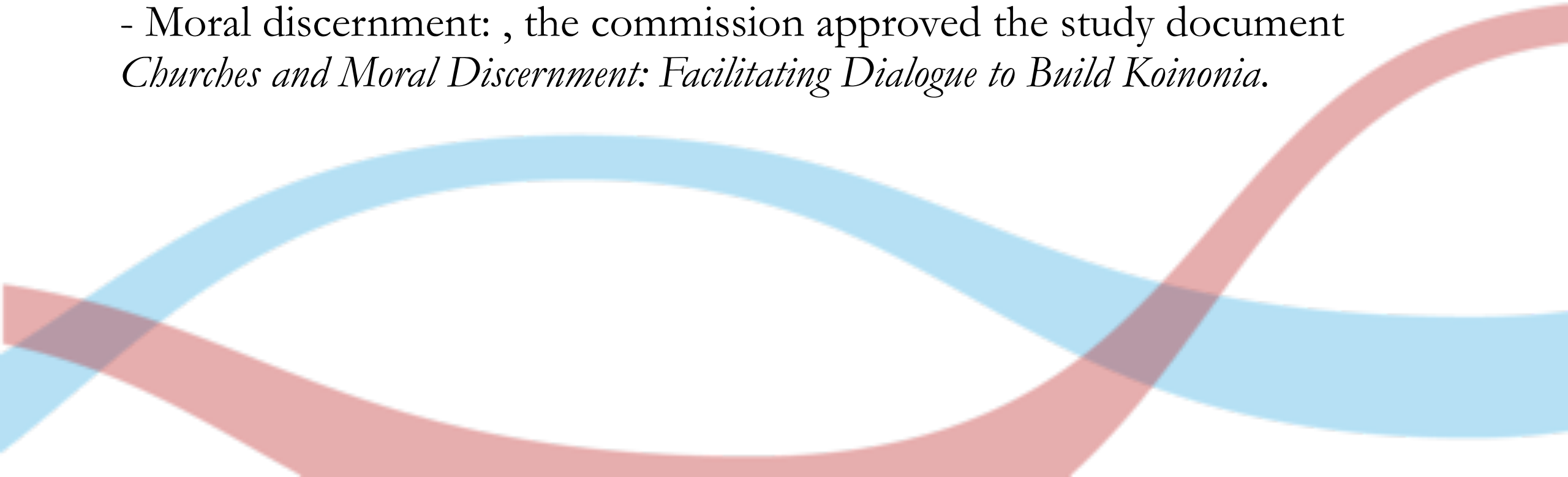


A photograph of a church altar. In the center is a crucifix with a small figure of Christ. To the right is a tall, lit white candle. To the left is a smaller, lit red candle. The altar is covered with a white cloth. Behind the altar is a large, dark, textured wall with a relief sculpture of a person. Below the altar is a colorful, abstract pattern. A large white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and a short paragraph.

Theological fruits in 2021

The WCC Commission on Faith and Order, through dialogue, publications, and webinars, continued to highlight the work of its three study groups, which looked to future activities with a sense of hope and a theological foundation that emerged from the pages of documents to transform our daily lives.

Faith and Order study groups forge ahead


- World Conference on Faith and Order in 2025
 - The study group on ecclesiology (78 responses to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*)
 - Moral discernment: , the commission approved the study document *Churches and Moral Discernment: Facilitating Dialogue to Build Koinonia*.
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Historic milestone in teaching ecumenism

Online conference: “Teaching Ecumenism in the Context of World Christianity.”

The early-June conference—the first of its kind—brought together 15 plenary speakers, 35 short paper presenters and some 150 emerging and senior scholars from around the world.



A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing in an open Bible. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket and a colorful patterned tie. They are holding a black pen with a green and blue clip. The Bible is open to a page with dense text. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

WCC 11th Assembly Bible studies received by the fellowship

A series of Bible studies leading up to the WCC 11th Assembly, to be held in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2022, became newly available to the WCC fellowship.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, with the WCC's first ever online global ecumenical prayer on 25 January, drew attendees from across the world who came together in a spirit of hope. The theme for this year, with materials prepared by the Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, was "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit."



Interreligious bridges: building new ones, strengthening existing ones

- International Day of Human Fraternity
- Social cohesion in Iraq
- Dialogue on COVID-19
- Is Christian Ecumenism a Model?” (Bologna)
- Bridge Builder Awards



Young theologians offer interreligious hope

Essays by five young theologians representing different church traditions have been chosen as the winning entries in an essay-writing competition organized to mark the 50th anniversary of the WCC Office of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation.



**Faith-based organizations
to COP26: “We must
respond with the
knowledge of science and
the wisdom of spirituality”**

In a message to the High-Level Ministerial Segment of the 26th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26), an interfaith liaison group urged a response to the climate emergency that balances science and spirituality.



Pandemic can't stop ecumenical formation at Bossey

The Bossey Ecumenical Institute in January 2021 graduated a group of 29 students from 22 different countries and 19 different church traditions, all of whom completed certificates in Ecumenical Studies.



Nurturing the WCC fellowship online

Social media channels were also crucial in helping people access over 100 online productions—including webinars, webcasts, podcasts, and video messages—that shared the prophetic work of WCC member churches.

During 2021, the audience of the WCC website grew by more than 50%, as a result of both renewed WCC online presence and active engagement with the WCC audience on social media.



Milestones on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

The WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace continued in 2021, with a regional focus on North America. The fruits of the Pilgrim Team Visits to the region will feed into the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe. Storytelling during Pilgrim Team Visits was deeply meaningful.



Easter Initiative 2021

Taking stock of a series of geographical sites as described in the Bible as part of Jesus' life, the initiative provided opportunities for reflection on what life in those same geographical sites looks like today, both as holy sites treasured by local communities and in view of the injustices caused by occupation.



Global input invited for actions to promote digital justice

The fruits of a September symposium on “Communication for Social Justice in a Digital Age” were shared globally—with an invitation to contribute to an action plan for steps on the way to digital justice.

Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The WCC continued to push for accurate information and vaccine equity across the globe during 2021.

The WCC also produced a first-of-its-kind handbook to help churches across the world promote good health in their communities and beyond. *Health- Promoting Churches, Volume II: A Handbook to Accompany Churches in Establishing and Running Sustainable Health Promotion Ministries*

Thursdays in Black

The campaign continued to gain momentum, strengthening its interreligious ties with Religions for Peace and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers.

Thursdays in Black ambassadors organized a series of Bible studies, beginning in August, to help people reflect on and respond to gender-based violence.



Protecting children

The WCC released an “Out of the Shadows” webpage sharing resources for helping individuals, churches, and communities act against violence against and abuse of children.

The Christian education programme encourages the full involvement of children, adolescents, and youth in becoming early proponents of nonviolence.



On the way to the WCC 11th Assembly

The WCC spent a significant amount of time in 2021 planning for the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. The many people involved endeavored to keep the path to the assembly open and inviting. The assembly theme, “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity,” is more vital now than ever.

The life of the assembly will combine elements of in-person gathering with online opportunities, allowing participation from across the globe. At the heart of planning is the spiritual life of the assembly, from daily prayers to thematic plenaries, from home groups to ecumenical conversations and “Brunnen” workshops.



Joy for Germany

In December, in a message to Baden and Württemberg churches, WCC acting general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca rejoiced in holding the assembly in Germany.

Sauca also joyfully shared plans for the assembly in a private audience with Pope Francis in December. Sauca was accompanied by Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.





WCC governance kept the fellowship together

During 2021, with WCC executive committee meetings in February, May, July and November, and a central committee meeting in June, the governance of the WCC continued, sometimes in-person and sometimes via videoconference.

Green Village

The Green Village continued to see achievements and challenges during 2021 as the development project follows a master plan that came into effect in 2018.

The energy plan is designed to meet the One Planet Living principles, which the WCC aims to adopt for the whole Green Village site, in cooperation with future owners and tenants.

