

Resource Book

World Council of Churches

11th Assembly

Karlsruhe, Germany 2022



World Council
of Churches

English

RESOURCE BOOK



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PREFACE

Like its predecessors, the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting 31 August through 8 September in Karlsruhe, Germany, will gather thousands of participants from around the world to meet each other, joyfully celebrate their Christian fellowship, pray together, and encourage each other in their life and work as Christian disciples. The assembly will also facilitate deep reflection on and discussion of the many opportunities and steep challenges that face the churches and the world at this time. Such discussion and deliberation will inform the direction of the ecumenical movement going forward and the programmatic initiatives of the council after the assembly.

This assembly *Resource Book*, a documentary collection published in four separate language editions, is meant to orient assembly delegates and participants to the assembly process, convey documents and reports upon which the assembly will act, and also link participants to a variety of important background documents about the many substantive matters that will engage the gathered fellowship there.

To that end, the *Resource Book* will function as a ready documentary reference and resource for assembly delegates as well as other participants. It leads with a fulsome description of what a WCC assembly is and does, including a description of the working parts of the assembly, its chief plenary sessions, and explanations of the assembly's business (Part One).

There follow theological reflections on the assembly theme (Part Two). Documents that must be received or acted upon by the assembly delegate comprise Part Three. Among the pieces collected in Part Three is the draft unity statement, proposed for consideration and action by the assembly and meant to crystallize the contemporary meaning of Christian unity in the context and amid the challenges facing churches today. The most important governance documents, often referenced at the assembly, are printed in Part Four, with highlights of proposed changes to the Constitution and Rules.

Finally, not all documents relevant for assembly concerns could be published in this volume. Some important documents are simply too long or are to be published closer to the date of the assembly or are reports produced by related commissions or reflections for or from the several pre-assemblies. These other documents, listed and linked in Part Five of this volume, are either separately available in published volumes and/or are available online, linked from the assembly resources webpage at oikoumene.org/assembly. Part Five thus provides synopses of and links to recent WCC programmatic or strategic documents germane to the plenary sessions and other meetings at the assembly. There readers will find important programmatic documents and statements and reports and studies published since the last assembly, spanning the range

of topics and issues that have captured the attention and dedication of the fellowship during the nine years since the last assembly, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2013. They range from understanding the meaning and character of church to learning from those with impairments, from protecting children to promoting global health, from envisioning the prospects for Christian unity to uniting in our ongoing, shared Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Items in this volume appear here in their original published form, not edited for style. As mentioned, some of the lengthier pieces are abridged or summarized, with links to the full document or publication online at the assembly webpage on **oikoumene.org**. This volume itself is also available online there.

It is hoped that this collection and the supplemental materials available online will inform and enliven reflection and discussion before and at the assembly and thereby illumine deliberations and decisions about the future of the WCC, its fellowship and its programmes.

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
Acting General Secretary

PART ONE

Welcome to the 11th WCC Assembly



WELCOME TO THE 11TH WCC ASSEMBLY

Functions of the Assembly

An assembly of the World Council of Churches brings together the member churches of the WCC to reaffirm their fellowship and to take counsel with one another. Since the inaugural assembly in Amsterdam in 1948, at which the WCC was officially founded, these events have marked key moments in the life of the churches and in the history of the council. They have been held at intervals of seven to nine years – at Evanston (USA) in 1954, New Delhi (India) in 1961, Uppsala (Sweden) in 1968, Nairobi (Kenya) in 1975, Vancouver (Canada) in 1983, Canberra (Australia) in 1991, Harare (Zimbabwe) in 1998, Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2006, in Busan (Republic of Korea) in 2013 and now in Karlsruhe, Germany, from 31 August to 8 September 2022.

The delegates, as the official representatives of the WCC member churches, constitute the assembly. The central committee in consultation with the churches decides the number of delegates for each church. While only the delegates named by the churches can participate in the decision-making process, they are accompanied by a variety of other participants who have been invited by the central committee to assist the assembly. Some of these other participants have the right to speak, but not to participate in decision-making. This is described in more detail in the section on “People at the Assembly.”

A WCC assembly has three general functions

First, as the most representative gathering of its kind, the assembly is an occasion to celebrate and reaffirm the mutual commitment that member churches and ecumenical partners have made through the WCC. It is a moment for the churches, through their delegates and all those gathered at the assembly to reaffirm their confession of Jesus Christ, to pray together, and to voice their intention to continue the search for the visible unity of the church. To ground its celebrations and commitments in the light of the present-day realities, each assembly has a theme. The theme chosen for Karlsruhe, “Christ’s loves moves the world to reconciliation and unity,” has guided preparations and encouraged reflection on the role of the churches, the WCC, and the ecumenical movement in the world today. At the assembly, the theme will be explored each day through prayer, study, discussion, and deliberation.

Second, the assembly is an opportunity for the churches to receive an account of the work facilitated by the WCC with its members and partners

over the years since the last assembly. Written materials, including *Pilgrims on the Path of Peace: The Journey of the WCC from Busan to Karlsruhe* and many of the documents published or linked in this book provide helpful information about the work of the WCC.

Third, the assembly, as the highest decision-making body of the WCC, must set policy and programme guidelines for the council's work in the years to come. It must also elect from among its delegates up to 150 members of the central committee, which will assume responsibility for guiding the work of the WCC through the next assembly. The assembly will also elect the presidents of the WCC.

A WCC assembly in Germany

The WCC accepted the invitation of the member churches in Germany to hold the 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe. The last assembly in Europe took place in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1968. The city of Karlsruhe is in Baden in southwest Germany, an historical and cultural “transborder-region.” Karlsruhe is the second-largest city of the state of Baden-Württemberg. The main venue for the assembly will be the Messe-Karlsruhe (www.messe-karlsruhe.de/en), located in the heart of the city.

The local hosting church, the Protestant Church in Baden, became a united church by petition of the people in 1821. The 200-year anniversary of the unification of the church was celebrated in 2021.

A WCC assembly in Europe

After World War II and with the changes in the geopolitical situation brought about by decolonization, a new reality of a mainly western European entity developed. At the same time, the opposition between the Soviet Union and the western powers caused the division of the continent into East and West, which lasted until the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. The European churches in the ecumenical movement and the WCC have always endeavoured to maintain and to nurture a sense of unity across the divide of the Cold War. This was also one of the main functions of the regional ecumenical organization created by the churches of Europe in 1959, the Conference of European Churches (CEC).

The geographical spread of the European region in the WCC and the ecumenical movement coincides for the most part with the political understanding of Europe stretching from the Urals to the Atlantic. On the southern side the countries of the Caucasus are included but not Cyprus, which is grouped with the Middle East. Sub-regional affinities are fairly strong: the Nordic region (the Scandinavian countries plus Finland and the Baltics), Central Europe, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Southern Europe.

The Protestant churches in western and southern Europe have formed a sub-regional conference. To some extent, there is also a sub-regional confessional pattern: the large churches of the Reformation (Protestant and Anglican) are mostly in the west and north, the Catholic Church is in a majority position in the south (and in Poland), the Orthodox churches form the majority in the central and eastern parts of Europe. The churches of the Protestant Reformation (Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist) are in full communion through the Leuenberg Agreement and have formed the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe. The Anglican and (episcopal) Lutheran churches in Great Britain and the Nordic countries (with the exception of Denmark) have also signed an agreement of full communion (the Porvoo Agreement). There are 77 WCC member churches in Europe.

The assembly theme

The theme of the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches is “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.”

The assembly will gather amidst perplexities, anxieties, and fundamental questions about the way we inhabit the earth, make sense of our lives, live in society, and accept responsibility for future generations. These questions have been amplified by the global COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, the climate emergency, and manifestations of racism worldwide, which have further revealed structural economic inequality, gender discrimination, and other forms of injustice in our societies and in our world. Further complicating the picture is the war in Ukraine, which also affects and involves WCC member churches in Europe and beyond.

In this fragmented and fractured world, the assembly theme is an affirmation of faith that Christ’s love transforms the world in the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Against the powers of destruction and sin, the assembly theme affirms that the love of the compassionate, crucified, and risen Christ is at the heart of this world. It is a radical call to the churches to work together unceasingly and with people of other faiths and all those of good will for just peace and reconciliation. It is a call for the visible unity of the church to become a prophetic sign and a foretaste of the reconciliation of this world with God, and the unity of humankind and all creation.

The assembly symbol

Created as a visual expression of the assembly theme (reproduced on the cover of this volume), the assembly symbol’s design is also inspired by the dynamic expressions and variety of the ecumenical movement in its search for Christian unity and promotion of justice and peace.

Inspired by the theme “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity,” the WCC fellowship will come together as a whole in prayer and celebration at the 11th Assembly. We will draw renewed energy for the WCC’s work far beyond the event itself. That’s why, anytime you use the assembly symbol, you should also offer space for the WCC official logo.

The symbol is formed by four elements:

- *The cross*: the assembly theme is an affirmation of faith that Christ’s compassionate love transforms the world in the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Placed prominently in the symbol, the cross is an expression of the love of Christ and a reference to the first article of the WCC Constitution.
- *The dove*: a universal symbol of peace and reconciliation, the dove stands for the Holy Spirit and also refers to deep biblical expressions of hope.
- *The circle*: evokes the whole inhabited world (*oikoumene*) – bringing a sense of unity, a common goal, and a new beginning. The circle is also inspired by the concept of reconciliation. As Christians, we have been reconciled with God through Christ, and as churches, we are agents of forgiveness and love both within and outside our communities. The ecumenical movement has responded to the call for unity and reconciliation through resolute work and action for a more just and participatory society and care for God’s Creation.
- *The way*: we all come from different places, cultures and churches; we walk different paths responding to God’s call; we are all on a pilgrimage through which we encounter others and join together on a journey of justice and peace. The different paths represent our various journeys, the movement, freedom and vibrancy of life that drive the WCC and its member churches around the world.

People at the Assembly

The assembly will gather more than 3000 church leaders, members and ecumenical partners from nearly every Christian tradition around the world, in addition to local participants. It is one of the broadest global gatherings of its kind.

Life in community

A gathering of persons from so many varied cultures and church traditions is a unique experience of the richness of God’s gifts and grace in our midst. For many participants the highlight of an assembly is the opportunity it offers to meet people from all over the world – sharing stories and a common witness, and experiencing the amazing diversity of the body of Christ.

Such diversity, however, can also create misunderstandings, frustrations or even conflicts in an ecumenical setting. To prevent this, each participant is asked to be patient and sensitive with all the persons they will meet. Each participant has his or her own language, culture, tradition and experience to share for the benefit of all. “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matt. 22:39).

The guidelines for the conduct of meetings and policy document “When Christian Solidarity Is Broken,” included in this volume, offer important principles for how the community life of the assembly can be fostered and protected.

Categories of participation

Each participant has a specific role to play at the assembly. WCC Rule IV (see Constitution and Rules in this volume) explains these roles in a formal way. All participants will wear a badge indicating their name, church, and home country, as well as the role or category of the participant. What follows is a brief summary.

The assembly includes many categories of official participants:

- **Delegates** (up to 760) of the WCC member churches. Eighty percent are designated by the member churches directly; up to twenty percent may be named by member churches at the request of the central committee in order to achieve various balances in the composition of the assembly (the details of this process are set forth in WCC Rule IV). The delegates of the member churches are the only persons entitled to participate in decision-making at the assembly.
- The **moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee** and WCC **presidents**, elected at the Busan assembly in 2013, may attend the assembly with the right to speak (and to participate in decision-making if they have been named delegates).
- Several members of the outgoing **central committee**, elected to serve from 2013 to 2022, will be present, either as delegates of their churches or as participants with the right to speak.

Other categories of official participants also have the right to speak at the assembly.

- **Delegated representatives** come from Christian world communions, regional and national ecumenical bodies, international ecumenical organizations and specialized ministries that are in a working relationship with the WCC.
- **Delegated observers** are officially named by churches which are not members of the WCC but with which the WCC has a working

relationship – the largest such groups come from the Roman Catholic Church and various Pentecostal churches.

- **Advisors to the assembly** are persons with expertise and experience invited by the central committee to contribute to the deliberations of the assembly.

Among the official participants who may attend the sessions of the assembly (but do not have the right to participate in decision-making and may not speak unless specifically requested by the moderator) are:

- **Advisors to the delegations** of member churches, who share responsibility for ecumenical affairs within the life of the church and accompany the delegation through the assembly.
- **Observers** from related ecumenical organizations or churches that are not members or that are not represented by a delegated observer or a delegated representative. Also participating as observers are the heads of member churches who are present at the assembly but who are not delegates of their church.
- **Guests**, invited in a personal or individual capacity.

In addition to the official participants, the assembly includes many other people joining the assembly in the following categories of participation:

- **Assembly participants** are persons from around the world and across who have come to Karlsruhe to share in and contribute to the life of the assembly. They may be individuals, congregations, student groups or ecumenical partners. Some will simply participate, while others will offer workshops, cultural celebrations and other activities. Many local participants will also join as assembly participants, some for the full assembly and others just for a few days.
- **Ecumenical Encounter Programme participants:** The local office of the assembly, Karlsruhe Local Office (KALO), will be organizing a regional ecumenical encounter programme targeted specifically to local and regional participants. This programme will be running in parallel to the assembly. More information on how to register in this programme is available through the local office website.
- **GETI participants**, taking part in the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI), which brings together 180 students and faculty from around the world for study and reflection on the church today.
- **Stewards**, approximately 150 young people between 18 and 30 years of age from around the world who give their time and energy to assist the assembly in its work, but also to share in an experience of ecumenical formation and to strengthen the voice of youth.

- **WCC staff**, approximately 100 persons employed by the WCC, who are present to facilitate the assembly programme and provide administrative, financial, logistical and communications services.
- **Co-opted staff**, persons who have been invited to assist the WCC staff in assembly operations.
- Members of the national and local **host committees** and **volunteers** who have helped to prepare the assembly over several years and who assist with various tasks at the assembly.
- Over one hundred **accredited media** representatives, who are covering the assembly for journalistic purposes, including writers, radio and television reporters, photographers and technicians.
- **Service providers and partners**, persons employed by the companies that have been contracted to assist the assembly with logistical and technical needs.

Presidents of the WCC

Rev. Dr Sang Chang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
 Patriarch John X, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
 Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
 Archbishop (former) Mark MacDonald (resigned 2022), Anglican Church of Canada
 Rev. Prof. Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel (†2020), Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
 Rev. Dr Meleana Maimoa Puloka, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga)
 Rev. Gloria Ulloa Alvarado, Presbyterian Church of Colombia
 Archbishop Emeritus Dr Anders Wejryd, Church of Sweden

Leadership of the central committee

Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator, Anglican Church of Kenya
 Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (†2022), vice-moderator, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
 Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, vice-moderator, United Methodist Church
 Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (from 2022), vice-moderator, Romanian Orthodox Church
 Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, acting general secretary, Romanian Orthodox Church

The Assembly Programme

The assembly is an expression of the WCC as a fellowship of member churches working together within the one ecumenical movement to enhance collaboration for justice, peace, reconciliation, and unity. The assembly programme provides space for prayer, reflection, and study to facilitate the work of the delegates in shaping the future strategic direction of the WCC.

The theme of the assembly – Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity – will be unfolded from day to day, taking participants on a journey that explores the purpose of God’s love in Christ for the whole of creation and Christ’s compassion for the world.

Through daily themes and Bible texts, participants will encounter Jesus as the one who brings good news, healing and hope to those who are “harassed and helpless” (Matt. 9:35-36). Throughout the assembly, participants will explore how Christ’s love challenges and strengthens the visible unity and common witness of the church.

A day in the life of the assembly

The flow of the assembly includes a daily rhythm of praying together, reflecting together, sharing together, and responding together.

Each day begins with prayer, song, and biblical reflection. After morning prayer, the assembly will gather for a series of thematic plenaries offering theological input and critical analysis of the contemporary challenges shaping the world today. Each plenary deepens reflection on the theme of Christ’s love and compassion.

After morning plenary, delegates and official participants will meet in home groups to reflect together on the biblical text and theme of the day. Other participants are invited to plenary-style Bible study.

After lunch, the assembly will meet in business plenaries, where delegates will consider the reports of the assembly committees on the future directions and leadership of the council as well as statements on public issues.

In the late afternoon, delegates and official participants will join ecumenical conversations to deepen their dialogue on twenty-three specific issues affecting the unity, mission, and witness of the church today – for which a common response is needed. While ecumenical conversations are taking place, other participants are invited to join the *Brunnen* marketplace and workshops. Everyone will gather under the worship tent at the end of the day in prayer before the evening meal.

The *Brunnen*, a veritable marketplace of workshops, networking zones, exhibits, side-events, and performances which accompanies the assembly, will provide an opportunity for the witness of member churches and ecumenical partners to strengthen the assembly.

The assembly will have many opportunities to share in the life and witness of its host churches. This will be highlighted in the ecumenical encounter programme and during the weekend pilgrimage programme, including on Sunday, when participants will join local congregations for worship and fellowship.

The weekend programme includes cross-border and inter-confessional excursions in Germany, France and Switzerland. Each excursion includes fellowship with local churches. On Saturday evening, 3 September, the assembly is invited to the Karlsruhe city light show; and on Sunday evening, 4 September, the assembly is invited to an evening of culture in Karlsruhe.

Assembly timetable

The assembly timetable, reproduced on the last pages of this volume, presents an overview of the assembly. Also, an updated daily schedule of events will be available in print, signage, and online.

Assembly Spiritual Life

The whole of the assembly is a spiritual experience of prayer, encounter, reflection, and discernment. This spiritual life is rooted in the assembly theme, itself an affirmation of the power and pertinence of Christ's love. Through daily prayer, discussion in home groups and plenary Bible study, the assembly spiritual life will nurture 'an ecumenism of the heart' as described in the draft unity statement in Part Three of this volume.

Prayer life

The 11th Assembly will be a "praying assembly." Prayers are held outdoors under a large tent. Each day begins with morning prayer, which sets a spiritual direction that continues in the thematic plenaries, home groups, and plenary Bible study. Participants will pause for midday prayer before lunch. Following an afternoon of discussion and business, the assembly gathers for evening prayer before dinner.

The assembly will be linked closely with local church life in the region, and congregations around the world will pray along with the assembly, using resources from the assembly website. Special services will be announced on the assembly website.

The prayer life of the assembly was planned by the assembly worship planning committee, whose members have been working for four years. The committee sought to prepare a prayer life that would be meaningful for all church traditions. Through daily prayer and Bible study, participants will explore the assembly theme holistically.

Opening prayer

The opening prayer will take place on 31 August, from 17:30 to 19:00. The celebration will gather 4000 assembly participants and people from local churches. The homily will offer a theological reflection on Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:1-26).

Morning prayer

Prayer begins each morning at 8:30, with time for singing and gathering beforehand. Prayers and songs can be found in *Oasis of Peace: Spiritual Life Resources*, which will be distributed at the assembly. Please bring your copy every day and come ready to learn new music from around the world.

Midday prayer

A brief midday prayer, with thematically related prayers and petitions and song suggestions, is also offered in *Oasis of Peace*, for possible use by the home groups after their morning meetings and in plenary Bible study.

Evening prayer

At the end of business each day and before dinner, the assembly will gather for evening prayer at 18:30. Evening prayers have been prepared by and follow different church traditions:

- Thursday, 1 September 2022 – Eastern Orthodox
- Friday, 2 September 2022 – Protestant
- Saturday, 3 September 2022 – Roman Catholic
- Monday, 5 September 2022 – Anglican and Old Catholic
- Tuesday, 6 September 2022 – Oriental Orthodox
- Wednesday, 7 September 2022 – Pentecostal

Worship with local congregations

Congregations from Karlsruhe and the surrounding area are invited to join the assembly for the opening and closing celebrations as well as for daily prayer. The assembly will have many opportunities to share in the life and witness of its host churches. This will be highlighted during the weekend programme, 3 and 4 September, and on Sunday, when participants will join local congregations for worship and fellowship.

Closing prayer

The assembly will close in prayer on the afternoon of Thursday, 8 September at 12:00. This final gathering will send participants home with renewed hope and joy as they return to their churches inspired by Christ's invitation to "follow me" (John 21:15-19).

Home groups and Bible study

The spiritual life of the assembly will be significantly enhanced by the opportunity to read the Bible together, sharing insights from different church traditions and experiences and discerning the signs of God's grace in the texts, in our lives and in the world.

A series of biblical reflections on the daily "anchor" texts have been published for use by assembly participants and congregations around the world. These reflections, together with morning prayer and thematic plenaries, will inform the work of home groups and plenary Bible study.

Home groups will provide space for delegates and official participants to reflect together on what was heard in morning prayer and the thematic plenary. The same group of about 30 people will meet five times during the assembly, from 12:00 to 13:15 on 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 September 2022. Each group is led by two co-facilitators.

Home groups aim to deepen fellowship with people across different church traditions, regions, contexts, professions, age, "old-timers" and "new-comers" at the assembly. They embody the relational, spiritual, reflective and action-oriented dimensions of Christian fellowship.

They meet to share in a spirit of love, respecting each participant's dignity and integrity, listening to the wisdom and insights of others. This will contribute to growing in Christian discipleship, strengthening the global fellowship of churches and invigorating each church's witness in their specific locality.

When home groups meet, assembly participants are invited to a plenary-style Bible study to continue reflecting on the biblical text of the day. The plenary Bible studies are led by the authors of the studies, many of whom are delegates to the assembly.

Assembly Plenaries

The assembly meets several times in plenary to inaugurate and conduct business. According to the WCC conduct of meetings guidelines, there are three categories of sessions during the assembly. General sessions are for ceremonial occasions, public acts, and formal addresses. Hearing sessions provide space for presentations, discussion, and dialogue. Decision sessions are designated for matters requiring a decision.

Orientation plenary

On Wednesday, 31 August, participants are encouraged to attend an orientation plenary from 10:00 to 11:00. The orientation will include information on the assembly programme, consensus decision-making procedures and the code of conduct for the assembly.

Opening plenary

On Wednesday, 31 August, from 11:30 to 13:00, the opening plenary will welcome participants and officially open the assembly. The plenary includes opening actions such as roll call, adoption of the agenda, appointment of assembly committees, and presentation of churches that joined the WCC since the last assembly. This is the first decision plenary of the assembly.

Moderator and general secretary reports

After lunch on Wednesday, 31 August, from 14:30 to 16:00, the assembly will hear two major addresses. The first will be delivered by Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator of the WCC central committee and a member of the Anglican Church in Kenya. The second will be delivered by Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, acting general secretary of the WCC and a priest in the Romanian Orthodox Church.

German welcome plenary

The assembly continues in plenary on Wednesday, 31 August, from 16:00 to 17:00, for a session with German political and religious leaders, reflecting on the importance of the assembly for the people and the churches in Germany.

Business plenaries

During a series of business plenaries, assembly committees will present their agendas, draft reports for feedback and final reports and recommendations for decision. The order of reports will be announced by the business committee at the assembly. More information on assembly committees can be found on pp. 29-35.

The first business plenary (hearing session) on Thursday, 1 September, from 15:00 to 16:30, includes the presentation by committee leadership of matters referred to each committee and the procedures for providing input. The session includes the first report of the nominations committee on the process of the elections. The session includes the first report of the public issues committee on proposed statements and the process of submitting input and proposals.

The second business plenary (hearing session) on Friday, 2 September, from 15:00 to 16:30, includes the second report of the nominations committee, with a first slate of nominees for central committee. The session also includes discussion on the draft unity statement.

The third business plenary (decision session) on Monday, 6 September, from 15:00 to 16:30, is dedicated to the election of presidents and central committee members.

The fourth business plenary (hearing session) on Tuesday, 5 September, from 15:00 to 16:30, includes a first reading of the assembly message. It also includes a first reading of the recommendations being proposed by all assembly committees. Draft public issue statements will also be presented as time allows.

The fifth and sixth business plenaries (decision sessions) on Wednesday, 7 September, from 15:00 to 16:30 and from 17:00 to 18:15, will include the final reading of all assembly committee reports and statements. Business will be concluded during the closing plenary (decision session) on Thursday, 8 September, from 8:30 to 11:00. The closing session includes a short morning prayer.

Thematic plenaries

There are five thematic plenaries at the assembly. Each plenary deepens reflection on the assembly theme – “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.” The plenaries are rooted in the experience of the churches, the challenges of the world and the compassionate love of Christ. They are presented as a series of inputs over many days that draw attention to the theological foundation of the theme, the signs of our times and the response of the churches.

From day to day, the plenaries explore the purpose of God’s love in Christ, compassion for life and call to transforming discipleship. Thematic plenaries take place in the morning, they continue the biblical reflection that begins each day in morning prayer and stimulate discussion in home groups on growing together in discipleship. Each plenary is inspired by a biblical story of Christ’s compassion. Every plenary includes young people and intergenerational dialogue. Many plenaries include delegates and participants as speakers. The plenaries use diverse methodologies of presentation and discussion.

Thematic Plenary 1 – The purpose of God’s love in Christ for the whole creation – reconciliation and unity

Thursday, 1 September 2022 (Day of Creation), from 9:45 to 11:15

Biblical anchor texts: Col. 1:19f. (Eph. 1:10) and Matt. 9:35f.

The plenary celebrates the purpose of God’s love in Christ for the whole creation, reconciling all things on earth and in heaven through the blood of the cross (Col. 1:19f.; Eph. 1:10). In a broken world, churches are called by

God in Christ through the Holy Spirit to proclaim the hope of reconciliation and unity for all. Moved by the compassion of Christ's love, Christians are to repent and transform what is broken with acts of justice and peace, healing and compassion (Matt. 9:35f.).

The plenary takes place on 1 September, the Day of Creation, which is observed by churches worldwide. It will be inspired by the three spiritual dimensions of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace as a sacred journey to reconciliation and unity:

- Celebrating God's gift of life, the beauty of creation and the unity of reconciled diversity,
- Visiting wounds with God's incarnated compassionate presence in the midst of suffering and discrimination, and
- Engaging in transforming actions for reconciliation and unity.

Objectives:

- Celebrate together the Day of Creation.
- Demonstrate God's compassionate love for a broken world, focusing on the Middle East.
- Inspire churches to move forward together as a fellowship witnessing to reconciliation and unity in Christ.

Thematic Plenary 2 – Europe

Friday, 2 September 2022, from 9:45 to 11:15

Biblical anchor text: Luke 10:25-37 (Good Samaritan)

The plenary is rooted in the parable of the Good Samaritan with a focus on Christ's compassionate love, which transcends boundaries and borders, calling us to care for the stranger with love and hospitality. Contemporary Europe faces many diverse challenges with global consequences. The war in Ukraine has dramatically affected peace and security in the region, creating a refugee crisis and a global humanitarian food and energy crisis with direct consequences for the world's poorest one billion people. The pressure on governments to increase expenditure on armaments affects expenditures on social, humanitarian, environmental, development and infrastructure budgets, as well the escalation of conflict.

With the scene set by the parable of the Good Samaritan, the plenary will focus on the situation in Ukraine. This is followed by discussion on the churches' diaconal response and global implications. The plenary concludes with young delegates sharing their hopes for peace, reconciliation and unity.

Objectives:

- Facilitate dialogue between the churches on the situation in Ukraine.
- Consider the humanitarian response of the churches in welcoming refugees and migrants.
- Contribute to reconciliation, unity and peacebuilding in Europe.

Thematic Plenary 3 – Affirming the wholeness of life

Monday, 5 September 2022, from 9:45 to 11:15

Biblical anchor text: John 9:1-12

This plenary affirms the wholeness of life and the compassion of Christ who is the light of the world (John 9:5). It will challenge indifference and systemic injustice, illustrating life-affirming alternatives that reflect the deeply interconnected world in which we live. Compassion is key to transforming injustice in a world dominated by the pandemic, failing neoliberal economies, climate emergency, and militarization – the intertwined crises of our time that aggravate inequalities and amplify suffering.

Compassion is embodied by seeing, listening and turning to those who are excluded, marginalized and oppressed. When Jesus heals the blind man, he restores the wholeness of life with new sight, new purpose and new direction. Those touched by Christ are sent into the world to confront injustice and domination with compassion for neighbours and care for creation. The plenary will lift up voices from the margins that point to the light of Christ and inspire compassionate and transforming discipleship.

Objectives:

- Challenge systemic injustices in the economy, the climate emergency, wars, and inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Illustrate alternative visions of economy, community, health and healing for wholeness of life.
- Inspire compassionate discipleship and solidarity in the face of the many threats to life.

Thematic Plenary 4 – Affirming justice and human dignity

Tuesday, 6 September 2022, from 9:45 to 11:15

Biblical anchor text: Matt. 15:21-28

Affirming justice and human dignity requires a radical impatience with practices that foster the sin of systematized, structural inequality and abuse. Transforming discipleship is expressed through practical acts of love. Jesus was challenged by what denies human dignity, and the church must boldly proclaim the truth about the injustices in its midst and show its commitment to transformation. To be credible agents of reconciliation, moved by Christ's love,

we must begin with the recognition of our complicity in encouraging, normalizing and perpetuating injustices.

The story of the Canaanite (Phoenician) woman reminds us that no one can be rendered “disposable” or inferior, to justify deprivation of their rights and dignity. The church must re-vision its understanding of justice for overcoming gender injustice and racism. It must challenge exclusionary practices that perpetuate stigmatization and disempowerment. Christ’s love liberates us to move with one another toward reconciliation and unity.

Objectives:

- Listen to the marginalized voices; particularly women, young people and the racialized, letting their stories and their lives empower our actions for justice and human dignity.
- Acknowledge biases and reform theologies of cultural and religious superiority.
- Confront and denounce privilege and prejudice; advocating for human dignity and justice for all.

Thematic Plenary 5 – Christian unity and the churches’ common witness

Wednesday, 7 September 2022, from 9:45 to 11:00

Biblical anchor text: Matt. 20:20-28

The plenary is an occasion to reflect on what Christian unity means today and the new horizons for the mission of the church. The reconciling love of Christ summons Christians to concrete actions of unity and common witness. In Matthew 20:20-28, Jesus teaches the disciples about love and humility in service. The love of Christ becomes the mark of true leadership, the foundation of commitment to Christian unity (*koinonia*), public witness (*martyria*) and the call to serve (*diakonia*).

The plenary will challenge the churches to examine the quality of their companionship and togetherness on their common journey in Christ. The search for “visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship” includes addressing what separates the churches. Christian unity and mission are at the heart of our common calling (John 17:21). The love of Christ transforms our discipleship and invites us to proclaim and participate in his ministry of love and reconciliation. This requires acknowledging and repenting for the wrongs of the past, restoring justice and peace, healing memories, and acting with forgiveness.

Objectives:

- Challenge the churches toward growth in humility, love, mutual accountability, and service.
- Express ecclesiological distinctions as opportunities for mutual understanding and enrichment, while highlighting what binds us together.

- Share concrete stories of common actions towards unity and transforming discipleship.

Ecumenical Conversations

Ecumenical conversations engage assembly participants in sustained, in-depth dialogue on critical issues that affect the unity, mission, and witness of the church today – issues that require a common response by the churches together. The results of the conversations will help to guide future ecumenical cooperation.

There are 23 ecumenical conversations. Each conversation focuses on a unique topic and provides four sessions for sustained dialogue. Each conversation has between 80 and 120 participants. Participants are asked to choose one conversation in advance and to commit to being present for all four sessions. Ecumenical conversations take place on 1, 2, 5 and 6 September from 17:00 to 18:15.

Ecumenical conversations follow consensus procedures and use methodologies that seek to inform, engage, and promote dialogue. Conversations will include:

- input and sharing on the topic from participants and resource persons;
- presentation of different viewpoints from participants and resource persons;
- discussion and debate among the participants; and
- a harvest of affirmations and challenges that are relevant for future ecumenical cooperation.

Each ecumenical conversation is moderated by a delegate and supported by leadership team of delegates and official participants. The team is responsible for leading the conversation and preparing the report.

While ecumenical conversations are open to all participants, they serve to deepen the dialogue between member church delegates. The delegates have a particular responsibility for agreeing to the affirmations and challenges that should be put forward to the churches. The delegates are resourced by many other participants representing other churches, ecumenical partners, and congregations and by local experiences. While every attempt will be made to encourage the active participation of all participants, member church delegates have a particular role and responsibility in ecumenical conversations.

All ecumenical conversations are asked to prepare a short narrative report (3-4 pages) that includes ecumenical affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the churches, ecumenical partners and the WCC. The reports will be made available to participants, churches, and partners. The reports will

be submitted to the WCC central committee at its first full meeting after the assembly in June 2023 for consideration and appropriate action.

The success of each conversation depends on the genuine and committed encounter among the participants. At times this may be difficult, but it will serve the process of spiritual discernment and provide a better understanding of how people experience the world and how the churches, by working together, can promote justice, peace, reconciliation, and unity.

Descriptions of ecumenical conversations

EC 1: Mission Reimagined: Transforming Disciples Challenging Empire

The church is inherently missionary, and it participates in the movement of Christ's love to the world, creating reconciliation and unity. At its best, the church's witness to Christ is expressed in intercultural communities of faith, hope, and love: communities of redemption and renewal at a personal and collective, as well as local and global level. The ecumenical conversation challenges its participants to have a renewed imagination of their own journey as transforming disciples of Jesus Christ, and to consider his prophetic word to their own situation. The ecumenical conversation also invites them to identify the challenges we face in today's world, such as inequality, ethnic division, polarized identities, and socio-economic imbalances; it encourages the WCC and its assembly to take a lead in the transforming of the world and to pursue a vision of transformation that can capture the imagination of a diverse church and world in the next generation.

EC 2: Dreaming a New Future: A Call from the Margins

The Arusha Call to Transforming Discipleship is a response "to Jesus' call to follow him from the margins of our world (Luke 4:16-19)." The systemic marginalization of communities around the world has increased rapidly in recent years due to capitalism, militarization, authoritarian politics, systemic inequalities, racism, perceived cultural superiority and socio-political victimization. Further to this, global megatrends, such as the climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic, have further marginalized and exacerbated existing inequalities. Affirmation 4 of the Arusha Call presents us with the charge "to joyfully engage in the ways of the Holy Spirit, who empowers people from the margins with agency, in the search for justice and dignity" (Acts 1:8; 4:31). The call from the margins is a challenge to the various centres of our world to discern how the Spirit is at work among the marginalized and to listen to and affirm what those at the margins are saying. The call from the margins of our world is a call to dreaming a new future. Compelled by this call, this ecumenical conversation is an invitation to dream and explore together a renewed vision of a new future

from the perspectives of the margins aided by the lens of contextuality and intersectionality and its implications for mission.

EC 3: Walking Together Hand in Hand: Evangelism and Justice – Exploring Theology and Practice for Mission and Evangelism in an Unjust World

Called to transforming discipleship, churches have the responsibility to work for the restoration of justice: to be in solidarity with the oppressed, the marginalized, the “least” of every society that are conveniently kept under the radars of our comfort zones. However, this necessitates also an honest, uncomfortable self-critique, a self-evaluation of our theologies and practices of mission today. This ecumenical conversation aspires to motivate and inspire churches to re-examine and finally reshape their missional commitment. To emphasize the importance and urgency for a kind of discipleship that strives for the transformation of the unjust world we live in! A transformation brought about as Christ’s love shakes and moves the world! A transformation that comes from, begins from within; from within the individual disciple; from within our theologies of mission, from within our evangelistic practices and from the challenges we face as we witness to Christ’s justice in a broken world, being broken ourselves.

EC 4: The Gift of Being: A Church of All and for All – Inclusion and Full Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Ministry and Mission

The title of the conversation is borrowed from the theological reflection on disability which was received and approved by the WCC central committee of 2016 entitled “The Gift of Being: Called to Be a Church of All and for All.” The conversation will look at the various layers of marginalization based on disability through a process of critical theological reflection on our ecclesial practices and empower the churches to find meaningful inclusion within religious communities. Discussions on our common vulnerability as the human race, especially in the context of the assembly theme, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Sustainable Development Goals, will be explored as will shared experiences on the gift of life as an endowment in countless ways from others throughout our lifetime. From the conversation the participants will get a deeper understanding of re-encountering God in the light of the experience of disability and a search for fresh understandings of what it means to live in the image of such a God.

EC 5: Creation and Common Prayer

One of the affirmations made in the Ecumenical Conversation 5 at the 10th Assembly of the WCC in Busan was “Prayer is something we can already do

together. We should pray together as often as possible.” As we continue to address the issue of common prayer in the ecumenical movement in our ongoing pilgrimage toward unity and reconciliation, we must continue to affirm that our praying together is a spiritual gift. This ecumenical conversation will: (a) examine how creation, a gift that is shared by all, can be a source that informs both the content and contour of common prayer; (b) reflect on how elements of creation have already contributed to shaping Christian spirituality and theology throughout the centuries in various faith traditions and (c) explore how expressions of common prayer, modelled on the shared gift of creation, can open new vistas for ecumenical prayer and open a door through which unity and reconciliation are approached as we welcome all believers in the Triune God to be joined together in common prayer.

EC 6: Broadening the Dialogue on the Church

What is the ecumenical relationship between new ways of being church, which have emerged in connection with the globalization of Christianity, and the search for a common understanding of the Church expressed in the 2012 WCC document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision?* Throughout the 20th century, the landscape of Christianity changed significantly. Primarily centred in the Northern hemisphere, Christianity has become global and taken on new contextualized faces in different continents. At the same time, new denominations, often proposing new ways of being church, have emerged. As a result, the search for the visible unity of the churches, which is at the core of the ecumenical movement, must face the challenge of reaching out to those communities or denominations, which so far have not been partners in the ecumenical dialogue about the Church. This ecumenical conversation will first offer a brief introduction to what the WCC Commission on Faith and Order has done in recent years on the common understanding of the Church and on the dialogue with new expressions of world Christianity. It will then propose a theological discussion on future steps toward the manifestation of Christian unity amid a growing diversity of ways of being church.

EC 7: Creation Justice Now! Climate Action and Water for Life

The present world development model based on extractive economic growth is unsustainable and triggers climate change. The brunt of climate change impacts are faced by the poor and marginalized communities, including indigenous people, women and children. Climate change manifests its impacts through water – the lack of it (drought) or excessive presence (floods). About 1/3 of the world’s population does not have access to safely managed water and about 2/3 does not have access to safely managed sanitation facilities. COVID-19 has also shown us a snapshot of a “new normal” that is possible for a planet that

is sustainable focusing on an economy of life. The aim of this conversion is to promote a theological and ethical reflection on the urgency of climate change and water crisis and to come up with a roadmap for reconciling with nature.

EC 8: Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Cares? The Churches' Role in Health and Healing Today

The current pandemic has highlighted that health affects all aspects of life, and that churches can and should play a more proactive role to promote a holistic understanding of health and wellness. As the world races toward the 2030 target of the Sustainable Development Goals, and tries to “build back better” post-COVID-19, this ecumenical conversation will explore the unique contributions that churches can make at this critical juncture, from the local up to the global level. This ecumenical conversation will: (a) Reflect on the theological basis for medical mission, with implications for our times; (b) Deepen the understanding of health and healing, with a focus on churches as healing communities; (c) Discuss theological and ethical implications of emerging health issues; (d) Explore ecumenical partnerships and resources to strengthen church health ministries globally.

EC 9: Economy of Life in a Time of Inequality, Climate Change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Widening inequalities, persistent hunger, structural racism, runaway climate change, and destructive pandemics stem from and expose the brokenness of the prevailing global economic order, pointing to the urgency of pursuing an Economy of Life for all. In the current climate of intertwined crises, artificial intelligence, genetic manipulation, and other innovations are touted as solutions but raise profound socio-ethical concerns. Faith together with science reveal the path away from planetary breakdown towards a flourishing future, demanding deep-seated transformations in the way our societies produce and consume. This ecumenical conversation addresses the following questions: What can we harvest as good practices from churches' engagement in promoting life-affirming economies? How do we live our faith and practice transforming discipleship in times and landscapes shaped by financial capital? What can we learn from the perspectives of communities living in the margins with a view to striving for reparative and restorative economies? What are the emerging challenges and how must we as churches respond?

EC 10: WCC and ACT Alliance: Ecumenical *Diakonia* – Building Bridges and Local Action by Churches Together

Faith actors are important agents of change and transformation. Jointly, members of WCC and of ACT Alliance are recognized for their impact at local,

national and global levels – not least their diverse and innovative responses to COVID-19. How do we reinforce this? This ecumenical conversation aims to energize the collaborative Christian contribution to a better and more just future in three ways: (1) Sharing examples of Christian social action (*diakonia*) on such issues as COVID-19, HIV and AIDS, gender justice, climate change and other contemporary challenges. What are best practices? How can we finance and build capacity? How can we engage with the UN Sustainable Development Goals? (2) Strengthening our theological and conceptual understanding by working with the WCC and ACT Alliance document: “Called to Transformation: Ecumenical *Diakonia*.” (3) Re-imagining diaconal literacy, capacity building and education jointly across WCC and ACT Alliance, including use of the recently published “International Handbook on Ecumenical *Diakonia*.”

EC 11: Conversations on the Pilgrim Way: Invitation to Journey Together on Matters of Human Sexuality

At the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, in response to the issues raised during the ecumenical conversations, business sessions and other presentations regarding the challenges that issues of human sexuality pose to WCC member churches and its constituencies, the assembly through the Programme Guidelines Committee made the following recommendation: “Being aware of divisive issues among churches, the WCC can function as a safe space to enter into dialogue and moral discernment on matters which the churches find challenging. Examples which have been heard strongly in this assembly include questions of gender and human sexuality. Controversial issues have their place within that safe space on the common agenda, remembering that tolerance is not enough, but the baseline is love and mutual respect.” In response to the above recommendation, the WCC general secretary formed both a Staff Group and a Reference Group on Human Sexuality to work on a resource document, which was presented to the WCC executive committee in November 2019. The executive committee received the document and recommended to “transmit the report to the central committee for information with the suggestion that the WCC 11th Assembly could have an ecumenical conversation on this topic.” The aim of this ecumenical conversation is to create a space for dialogue and discussion on human sexuality as it is being carried out in different contexts of the WCC fellowship and how the conversation can be carried out in the future, emphasizing love and reconciliation.

EC 12: Trends and Emerging Issues in a Rapidly Changing World.

This ecumenical conversation will discuss and reflect on trends in a rapidly changing world that will affect the life and work of churches 20 years from now;

guide ethical and moral discernment; and contribute to checks and balances for the development and utilization of these new technologies. It will focus on new ways of being church and community, demographic transformation, artificial intelligence and genetic modification. The participants will discuss the implications of these key issues in the life of the church and recommend steps for faith communities to provide ethical and moral discernment and accompaniment and contribute to checks and balances for the development of these technologies. The facilitators will bring in-depth expertise and initiate group conversations. The participants will receive succinct and comprehensive resource material on the subjects well in advance and are expected to reflect on and review the issues from their contexts as preparation for the conversations.

EC 13: Toward a Just Peace in the Middle East

The question of Just Peace in the Middle East remains at the heart of the work of the ecumenical movement. Unfortunately longstanding circles of violence, political instability, destruction of the social cohesion systems in place, and social injustices threatened all populations of the region, but above all the most vulnerable among the religious, ethnic and cultural components, such as the Christians. The crucial question of the historical Christian presence and witness in the Middle East shifts to a narrative of terrorism, extremism, and threatening Christians in the Middle East. The ecumenical movement has an important role to play in shaping the future narratives for peace and social cohesion while ensuring and strengthening the role and place of Christians as equal actors and partners of the Middle East.

EC 14: Ecumenical Call to Just Peace: Holistic Approaches to Peacebuilding

The period from Busan (10th Assembly) to Karlsruhe (11th Assembly) has been defined by the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, pursuing a holistic vision of just peace as described in the 10th Assembly “Statement on the Way of Just Peace.” This ecumenical conversation will examine how churches in key national contexts – especially those identified as priority countries during this period – have responded to this call, the challenges they have faced, how the ecumenical movement has sought to support and accompany churches and communities in those contexts, and the impact of those efforts. (A separate ecumenical conversation – EC 13 – addresses the issue of Just Peace in the Middle East.) In addition to learning about churches’ efforts to promote a just peace in their own contexts, this ecumenical conversation will seek to identify best practices and lessons learned from these experiences, and to further develop the ecumenical approach to holistic peacebuilding.

EC 15: Freedom of Religion and Belief: The Church and Others in the Face of Religious Discrimination and Oppression

This ecumenical conversation will address concerns about Christian suffering, persecution and marginalization and promote understanding and acceptance of the principle of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) as applicable for all people, regardless of faith or belief. The issue of how FoRB claims are sometimes used to suppress the rights of others must also be addressed. Different regions and different groups of people, i.e, women, children, people with disabilities, and migrant populations, experience violations of FoRB differently. Consideration of the different impacts will be integrated across the conversation, as will the theological underpinnings of the principles of FoRB. The conversation will comprise four elements – introduction to the topic, context and sharing of experiences, the role of the church, and tools for advocacy. The conversation will inform and challenge attitudes about the different facets of FoRB beyond the usual geographic contexts and own faith orientations of participants, building on the assembly theme Christ’s love moving the world to reconciliation and unity.

EC 16: Together toward Racial Justice: Confronting and Dismantling the Enduring Legacy of Slavery and Colonialism in a Time of Increasing Populism and Xenophobia

The legacy of slavery and colonialism continues to affect the lives of millions today: white supremacy, racial discrimination against black and brown bodies, Afrophobia, xenophobic violence, racism and white privilege, racism in relation to gender violence, hate speech against minorities, discrimination, and exploitation on the basis of religion and caste. The aim of this conversation is to create awareness of the complex and intersectional nature of racism and its manifestations, to deepen awareness of and to confront the churches’ past and ongoing complicity with racism and the ways these have justified and validated racism, and to identify as well as uphold existing markers for anti-racist and anti-discriminatory behaviour. These principle markers and new life-affirming possibilities will be made available to churches as a resource. Throughout the four sessions, the ecumenical conversation will include personal testimonies, storytelling, small-group sharing, panels and short presentations.

EC 17: Exile, Exodus, and Hospitality: Human Mobility, Displacement, and the Public Role and Witness of the Church

Migration and/or human mobility in its varied forms not only poses specific challenges concerning human rights. It calls into question the ongoing mission and prophetic role of the church. This ecumenical conversation will explore the tensions and intersections between human rights and Christian faith and the

churches' pastoral, prophetic and public role. The conversation will explore the changing and extremely diverse profiles of people on the move, the challenges migration raises, and the many ways migrants transform ecclesial life, mission and praxis. As migration is likely to become increasingly complex in the years to come, this ecumenical conversation will consider how and why it is necessary for churches to continue to be strong witnesses and advocates in the public sphere as well as addressing current, emerging and future migration challenges.

EC 18: Interreligious Solidarity as Interreligious Engagement

Trying to bridge the theological and practical dimensions of interreligious dialogue, this ecumenical conversation will explore interreligious solidarity as a viable model of interreligious engagement in a world affected by the COVID-19 and many other ongoing pandemics. Using the WCC-PCID joint document on “Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity” as a foundation, it will develop strategies to foster practical interreligious solidarity in a multi-religious world. It will begin by exploring the spiritual/theological inspiration for interreligious solidarity within religious traditions and seeking to understand how solidarity is inbuilt into the self-understanding of religious communities. Then, using experiences of interreligious solidarity as a prism, participants will analyse: (a) What approaches to solidarity have worked well so far? (b) What issues pose obstacles to interreligious solidarity? It will seek to build this analysis into action by reflecting on strategies to translate interreligious engagement into interreligious solidarity in a post-COVID-19 world.

EC 19: Theological Education – Why Its Ecumenicity Is Essential

Theological education is a key concern of the ecumenical movement. It provides a vital space for developing and nurturing constructive theological reflection in the midst of changing ecclesial and religious landscapes. In view of sectarian and inward-looking tendencies, ecumenical theological education calls upon churches to reflect jointly and profoundly on the nature and mission of the church in the world. The ecumenical conversation will discuss the opportunities and challenges, with particular reference to how pedagogical innovation, methodologies, epistemologies, curriculum development, and institutional frameworks could strengthen the ecumenicity of theological education today. This ecumenical conversation at the WCC assembly will seek to explore ecumenical theological education as a profound reflection of lived mutuality and unity, and envision (with theological rationale and historical precedence) ecumenical theological education as a project for resistance and transformation today.

EC 20: Minding the Gaps: Safeguarding Gender Justice in Unity and Reconciliation

Current global realities, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and violent conflicts, have resulted in increased sexual and gender-based violence and widened the social and economic gap between men and women. These gaps present a distinctive challenge to the unity within the church, and the reconciliation we seek among all people. Recent World Council of Churches initiatives – including the proposed Gender Justice Principles, the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (DCSW) 20th Anniversary Commemoration Consultation strategies, and Women of Faith Pilgrim Team Visits – offer to the church a basis for programmatic work toward ending inequality and violence (building on the WCC’s history of gender justice work). This conversation invites the WCC and its member churches to foster unity and reconciliation in relation to justice between men and women through its programs and leadership structure during the post-assembly period. This will promote inclusion and holistic development in church and society.

EC 21: Christian Ethics and Human Rights

The WCC’s history is closely connected with that of modern international human rights law, starting with the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. However, in many parts of the world today the legitimacy of the principles and obligations expressed in international human rights law are being undermined and attacked as never before. Moreover, there is an increasingly evident diversity of perspectives within the ecumenical movement on the relationship between Christian faith principles and international human rights law. Drawing on the outcomes of a prior process of reflections, consultations, and publications (2020-2022), this ecumenical conversation will explore this issue from a range of theological and regional and cultural perspectives, and in light of the experiences of victims of human rights violations. It will seek to (re)establish an ecumenical consensus with regard to church engagement in promoting and protecting human rights, utilizing the instruments of international human rights law.

EC 22: Churches and Moral Discernment: Facilitating Dialogue to Build *Koinonia*

How can churches enter into a constructive dialogue about disagreements on moral issues? The new Faith and Order study document “Churches and Moral Discernment: Facilitating Dialogue to Build *Koinonia*” invites churches to explore together the different dimensions of moral discernment. The uniqueness of this study is that, based on the self-descriptions of diverse church traditions and the study of historical examples, it proposes a tool that helps to

navigate the landscape of moral discernment in the churches. It provides a detailed study of the relationship between continuity and change. The “conscience of the church” is proposed as a key concept that articulates the living engagement of the church with new challenges. The ecumenical conversation will discuss insights from this study together with a sharing from contemporary processes in local churches, regional ecumenical bodies, and dialogues within and between Christian World Communions.

EC 23: Inspired by the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace – Moving Together by the Love of Christ

Participants in this ecumenical conversation will share inspiring stories of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and reflect together both on the spiritual grounding of the pilgrimage and four existential topics that show how people *experience* the impact of violence, structural injustice, and the climate crisis as threats to their communities and the physical basis of their lives: Truth and trauma, land and displacement, gender justice, and racial justice. These four topics are rooted in the authentic and transformative spiritualities of local communities. Seen together as cornerstones of a theology of companionship, they could become an inspiration for the ecumenical movement in the coming years.

Assembly Business

Assembly business is intended to facilitate the participation of delegates in making decisions about the future direction of the WCC. Assembly business is conducted using the consensus model of decision-making. During the orientation session and opening plenary, the consensus procedures will be formally introduced. They are published in this volume.

The consensus model encourages prayerful listening to one another and growth in understanding between ecclesial traditions. Consensus procedures allow room for consultation, exploration, questioning and prayerful reflection, with less rigidity than formal voting procedures – though procedures for voting are maintained. Through consensus, participation, dialogue, and commitment among participants and member churches are strengthened.

Assembly business will be moderated by the leadership of the outgoing central committee or other members of the assembly business committee. The assembly will be supported by a consensus facilitation team of persons with experience and expertise in the ethos and practice of consensus decision-making.

Committees

Assembly committees will contribute to the future mandate of the World Council of Churches. Their reports, reflecting the spirit and dynamics of the assembly, will be brought forward for decision in business plenaries. To ensure that the outcome of the committees will guide the future WCC in a coherent way, cooperation among the assembly committees started prior to the assembly in a preparatory meeting of their leadership. The preparatory meeting included encounter with the leadership of the central committee on expectations from the assembly and post-assembly programmes and policies, collaboration with staff members in charge of each committee's work, and consensus training. The collaboration and interaction of the committees will also be facilitated by regular meetings among the assembly committee moderators and rapporteurs during the assembly.

In the course of the assembly, the Programme Guidelines Committee and Finance Committee will inform one another so as to prepare their recommendations, taking into consideration both the priorities identified by the assembly and the available human and financial resources.

All committees will deliberate and prepare their reports and their recommendations following the consensus procedures. The assembly committees include:

Message Committee

The committee is responsible for listening carefully to what is happening at the assembly – in its prayer life, Bible study groups, plenary sessions, ecumenical conversations and the *Brunnen*. Based on what it has heard, the committee develops and presents for adoption by the assembly a text that captures the experience and hopes of those gathered in Busan. This message is intended to serve as an inspiration to Christians and the churches in their ecumenical commitment and to offer a clear and convincing Christian witness to the world.

Finance Committee

The committee reviews the developments in and profile of the WCC's finances over the past nine years. Following consultation with Programme Guidelines and a review of income perspectives, the committee proposes general guidelines for the financial strategy of the WCC in its next cycle of work. Discussing the finances of the WCC over the past seven years and financial projections for the period ahead, the Finance Committee proposes general guidelines regarding financial matters for the new central committee to follow.

Nominations Committee

Based on the recommendations from member churches, regional and confessional meetings, the committee makes proposals for the election of presidents and members of the central committee from among the delegates. Members of the Nominations Committee are not eligible for election. Procedures of the Nominations Committee are detailed below.

Policy Reference Committee

The committee presents recommendations for action by the assembly based on the reports of the moderator and the general secretary, membership matters and amendments to the WCC constitution and rules. The committee will also review, amend, and bring for final approval the “Unity Statement” of the WCC 11th Assembly.

Programme Guidelines Committee

The committee reviews the evaluation and reports since the 10th Assembly. It prepares and presents for adoption by the assembly a report and recommendations for future work in the areas of unity, mission, ecumenical relations, public witness, *diakonia*, ecumenical formation and other cross-cutting issues.

Public Issues Committee

The committee prepares and presents for adoption draft statements on selected issues of international concern, including ecumenical engagement in peace-building, human rights, and justice. See further discussion of this committee’s work below.

Additionally, the assembly is served by the following committees:

Business Committee

The committee includes the leadership of the central committee, presidents, moderators of assembly committees and thematic plenaries, and other delegates. The committee coordinates the daily business of the assembly. Its membership is defined by Rule IV.5 of the WCC Rules.

Assembly Worship Committee

Responsible for the rich spiritual life of the assembly, the committee organizes the daily worship prepared for the assembly and coordinates other prayer services during the assembly.

Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration

This committee serves the assembly in an advisory capacity, helping to maintain the spirit of the mandate, concerns, and dynamic of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC.

Public Issues Committee

Rules on public statements

Public statements are one way in which the WCC responds to critical issues on the international agenda. The basic provisions for making such statements are set out in WCC rule XII:

In the performance of its functions, the World Council of Churches through its assembly or through its central committee may issue statements on any situation or concern with which the Council or its constituent churches may be confronted. While such statements may have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgment or concern of so widely representative a Christian body, yet their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom, and the publishing of such statements shall not be held to imply that the Council as such has, or can have, any constitutional authority over the constituent churches or right to speak for them.

Politics is an inescapable reality, and involvement in it is a Christian responsibility. Churches are therefore expected to address current affairs. At the Amsterdam assembly in 1948, the framework for public issues was given in a way that remains valid: “the Council regards it as an essential part of its responsibility to address its own constituent members as occasion may arise, on matters which might require united attention in the realm of thought or action.”

The WCC responding to political challenges

A public statement may take various forms, including consultation reports and assessments of situations, pastoral letters and appeals to member churches, resolutions, and representations and appeals to governments and intergovernmental bodies.

Public statements are only one form of response to international affairs available to the council; and in many situations other forms of action may be more effective. These include pastoral visits to churches in difficult or critical situations, discussions with governments, interventions with intergovernmental bodies, delegations dispatched to study and report on specific issues or situations, confidential

representations to governments, and support to and solidarity with churches and action groups. All of these are undergirded by continuous monitoring of developments as they affect the life and witness of churches in particular situations and the fellowship of churches as a whole.

Criteria for public issues

The WCC has identified the main criteria used in selecting issues on which public statements are made:

- areas on issues on which the WCC has had direct involvement and long-standing commitment;
- emerging issues of international concern to which the attention of the churches should be called for action;
- critical and developing political situations which demand the WCC to make known its judgment and lend its spiritual and moral voice;
- expectations from the member churches that the WCC should speak;
- the need to set policy or mandates for the WCC staff.

Public issues give guidance to member churches for their own public actions and can serve as a tool for a more united voice. Public issues offer policy, by formulating the language to bring to governments, intergovernmental organizations and other structures of political decision-making. Public issues guide programme work at the same time as programme work experiences guide public issues.

Public issues reflect all political concerns of the council, including war and peace, economy, ecology, and human rights. They deal with violation of all rights – economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political ones.

The public issues are brought to the assembly through a long, careful, and transparent process, involving the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, the leadership of the central committee, the central committee, and the executive committee to ensure the best possible ownership by the constituency and quality of the message.

Process at the assembly

In Karlsruhe, the approval of the assembly will be sought on the issues at an early business session at which the delegates will also be informed of procedures and deadlines for proposing additional issues on which they believe the assembly should speak. Proposals from the floor for additional public issues should ideally have the support of at least 10 member churches.

The public issues committee then will review these proposals in the light of the criteria listed and select topics on which it will recommend that statements be issued, taking into consideration the time constraints and other limitations

under which the assembly works. The topics selected should be of considerable international and ecumenical significance. The public issues committee will not propose statements on specific issues or situations which can be dealt with in the normal course by the general secretary, the leadership of the central committee or the central or executive committees. Nor will it propose statements on issues for which other forms of actions would be more appropriate.

The public issues committee discusses and prepares draft statements that are then brought before a business plenary of the assembly for adoption.

Nominations Committee

One of the important tasks of a World Council of Churches assembly is to elect from among its delegates the members of the new central committee, which will give leadership to the WCC in the years until the next assembly, and the presidents.

The WCC Rules provide for the election of an Assembly Nominations Committee to (1) nominate the Presidents of the World Council of Churches and (2) prepare the list of nominees to the new central committee. The members of the Nominations Committee are themselves not eligible for nomination.

The assembly will be expected to elect up to eight Presidents, who should be “persons whose ecumenical experience and standing is widely recognized by the member churches and among the ecumenical partners of the World Council in their respective regions and ecclesial traditions.” Appropriate names for consideration by the Nominations Committee were solicited prior to the assembly. By virtue of their office, Presidents will be members of the central committee.

The WCC Constitution specifies the number of central committee members to be elected: not more than 150 from the member churches, including five from the member churches not meeting the criterion of size (formerly known as “associate member churches”).

The churches have been invited to nominate candidates for the central committee from among assembly delegates. Consultation between churches in each region is encouraged, such that a name supported by more than one church will carry more weight. The churches have been informed in advance that the Nominations Committee, in normal circumstances, might call upon any one of their delegates to serve on central committee.

The principles guiding the work of the Nominations Committee in preparing its slate are as follows:

- the personal qualifications of the individual for the task for which she/he is to be nominated;
- fair and adequate confessional representation;
- fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;

- fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the World Council;
- the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong;
- not more than seven persons from any one member church;
- adequate representation of lay persons – men, women and young people;
- appropriate participation of persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and persons of racial and ethnic minorities.

It has been the normal practice that the central committee should reflect in its composition the proportion of representation at the assembly. This applies not only to the representation of confessions and regions, but equally to the presence of women, youth, and lay persons on the central committee. In order to ensure an inclusive and balanced assembly and in line with earlier practice, the following goals have been established: women 50 percent, youth 25 percent, lay persons 50 percent, Orthodox 25 percent.

In view of the above principles and to facilitate the task of the Nominations Committee, the churches have been asked to submit prioritized lists of nominations rather than single names, insofar as possible following the criteria for balanced representation set forth in the WCC Rules. The Nominations Committee will seek to respect the wishes of the nominating churches, while acknowledging that it may not be able to accept all recommendations.

The considerable information about potential nominees gathered through this process will therefore be available to the Nominations Committee as it will begin its work at the assembly. Basically, its task will be to select nominees from the lists thus provided and to fill out the slate in a way that achieves a balanced representation overall. To facilitate what is evidently an extremely complicated task, the committee will consult as necessary with delegates from member churches and from various regions. Delegates will also be given an opportunity to propose names for the new central committee. The precise procedures and deadlines for doing so will be explained during a business plenary early in the assembly when the Nominations Committee presents its initial report. During that session, the Nominations Committee will present a first proposal on the anticipated profile of the new central committee (without names) for consideration and approval by the assembly. Subsequently, a first reading of nominations will be presented for general discussion. Delegates may bring proposals for changes to specific nominations to the Nominations Committee outside of the plenary. Any change needs to offer a replacement with the same demographic profile (region, gender, age, etc.) – *unless the replacement will improve the balances sought* – and must be signed by six delegates from at least three member churches.

The Nominations Committee will consider these responses, bearing in mind the criteria for balanced representation mentioned above. On this basis

it will formulate a second slate to be presented in a business plenary for the assembly to vote on.

Following the election, the new central committee will hold a brief initial meeting to choose from among its own members a nominations committee responsible for proposing a slate of the moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee and executive committee members. The new central committee will hold one further meeting toward the end of the assembly for these elections and any other organizational matters which need to be dealt with prior to its first full meeting, which is planned to take place in June 2023.

***Brunnen* Programme**

Brunnen is a German word for well. The well is the space for encounter and sharing, satisfying one's thirst, greeting a visitor, and welcoming a stranger. The *Brunnen* has also a spiritual meaning; it is a space that shows diversity as well as existing and expected unity. It is a space of encounter that aims to open the horizon. It gives space to the broader ecumenical movement and civil society. The *Brunnen* will provide space for harvesting the outcomes of the pilgrimage and developing ideas for the future.

Previous assemblies provided similar spaces through the *Padare* in Harare (1998), *Mutirão* in Porto Alegre (2006) and *Madang* in Busan (2013).

The *Brunnen* will be the heart of the assembly, open from 11:00 to 21:00 every weekday of the assembly. The *Brunnen* programme includes workshops, exhibitions, networking zones and side-events, including performances and discussions.

Confessional and Regional Meetings

On Thursday, 1 September, from 19:15 to 20:45, participants are invited to join confessional meetings. These will be hosted by Christian world communions (CWCs) and member churches. The meetings are an opportunity for participants from the same church family to join in fellowship and prayer. The meeting is an opportunity to discuss and to affirm the gifts that different church traditions offer the one ecumenical movement and to reflect on the possible outcomes of the assembly and to strengthen the commitment of each confessional tradition as it continues the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace beyond the assembly and into the life of the churches.

On Friday, 2 September, from 19:15 to 20:45, participants are invited to join regional meetings. These will be hosted by regional ecumenical organizations (REOs). The meetings provide an opportunity for fellowship among delegates and other participants from the same region. Online preparatory

meetings have been organized in each region in advance of the assembly. The regional meeting in Karlsruhe will provide space to continue these reflections. Delegates will also be asked to consider the gifts of leadership they would like to offer to the future central committee of the WCC, particularly its presidents.

Related Meetings

Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI)

The Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) 2022 is taking place in two phases—online and residential—under the theme “Christ’s Love (Re) moves Borders.” GETI 2022 is the third such global ecumenical formation programme the WCC has offered alongside one of its major ecumenical events, after the initial GETI at the 10th Assembly 2013 in Busan, South Korea, and the 2018 GETI in accompaniment of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha, Tanzania.

GETI 2022 is an ecumenical theological education event drawing about 200 young and emerging ecumenical theologians and educators from a broad spectrum of Christian traditions and all eight regions of the WCC to engage with one another on critical themes of our time. The online phase takes place from 25 July to 20 August 2022. The residential phase is taking place at the BWGV Akademichotel in Karlsruhe, Germany, 28 August – 9 September 2022 in the context of the WCC 11th Assembly. Students admitted to the Bossey Ecumenical Institute for the academic year 2022-23 automatically join the programme.

Pre-assembly gatherings

Prior to the assembly, a number of preparatory events with different constituencies have provided an opportunity to meet, confer, and formulate their contributions to the larger issues and discussions of the assembly.

Specialized Ministries Pre-Assembly. The leadership of specialized ministries (SM), which are the related agencies of WCC member churches, serving the one ecumenical movement in the areas of mission, *diakonia*, relief and advocacy, gathered for an online pre-assembly 9 and 10 March 2022.

The pre-assembly addressed three critical issues confronting humanity and creation: overcoming racism, discrimination, and xenophobia; the rise of populism; and the climate emergency. Participants noted that all three are framed by complex crises that manifest locally and globally and stressed the need for common ecumenical action in response.

The pre-assembly concluded by articulating a message of encouragement to the WCC 11th Assembly and commitment to act together toward a vision of justice, peace and reconciliation for humanity and creation.

Inter-Orthodox Pre-Assembly. Fifty-two delegates representing 20 Eastern and Oriental Orthodox WCC member churches participated in a pre-assembly in Cyprus, 9-16 May. The purpose of the meeting was to study, discuss, and reflect on the theme of the assembly, “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity” from an Orthodox perspective.

Discussions also centred on current global challenges and how the Orthodox agenda at the WCC 11th Assembly can keep dialogue open. Representatives of the Orthodox families presented papers on the assembly theme as well as on the thematic plenaries.

The consultation report centred on the most profound themes of Orthodox theology and their relevance to the ecumenical movement and the state of the world, emphasizing, “The Holy Trinity, the *koinonia* of love, calls humans to be participants in the love that does not discriminate but unites, that embraces not only the beautiful but also the disfigured, not only the perfect but also the imperfect, not only the world of angels blessed by heavenly bliss but also the world of pain and the realm of death.”

Ecumenical Youth Gathering (EYG). The EYG is a global celebration, taking place immediately prior to the assembly in Karlsruhe from 27 to 30 August 2022. It is the umbrella event for all youth-led and youth-focused activities, involving around 400 young people from WCC member churches and ecumenical partners. The event will provide an open and inclusive space for youth-led and intergenerational dialogue and consultation with young people to strategize together a common message that will be brought forward to the assembly. This event also aims to help frame a more inclusive agenda for the ecumenical movement moving forward.

Women and Men’s Pre-Assembly. The pre-assembly will take place on 29 and 30 August 2022 in Karlsruhe. Since the inaugural 1948 Amsterdam Assembly and subsequent assemblies of the WCC, a women’s pre-assembly has underscored women’s participation and called for special focus on women’s concerns, struggles and contributions in church and society. This pre-assembly will afford participants an opportunity to explore the assembly theme, “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity,” from a contextual, gendered perspective. Attendees will have opportunities to reflect theologically on the theme using contextual Bible studies, liturgical frames, and keynote presentations. In addition to the spiritual life, the joint sessions with the other pre-assemblies will offer opportunities for theological reflection through the lens of those who are often on the margins.

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace motif will be woven into the fabric of the pre-assembly, as delegates will celebrate the gifts and lament the wounds in making recommendations for transformation of gender injustice.

Indigenous People's Pre-Assembly. The pre-assembly will take place on 29 and 30 August 2022 in Karlsruhe. It is an open invitation to all who seek to join in committing anew to act with compassion, to practice inclusive and relational justice and to affirm our unity in Christ whose love moves us to restoring wholeness in all of creation. This is an invitation to a worldwide partnership of Indigenous Peoples and church-related networks of peoples dedicated to the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and to the renewal of creation in dreaming together a continuing vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

The indigenous pre-assembly seeks to challenge and critique notions of reconciliation that are too eager to gloss over the wrongdoings and violations of the past without addressing the ongoing systemic and structural causes of oppression and injustice of the past and present. Reconciliation is an intentional commitment to restoring wholeness in all creation. Indigenous peoples bring many insightful perspectives, wisdom, and knowledge from their experiences, cultures, and contexts that will enrich the ecumenical dialogue on reconciliation and the broader assembly theme, with the hope that we can continue to reimagine a just and equitable future together.

EDAN Pre-Assembly. The pre-assembly of the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocates Network (EDAN) will take place on 29 and 30 August 2022. The pre-assembly will be held under the theme “Celebrating diversity while moving toward reconciliation and unity of the church.” It will provide an opportunity to harvest what has been done through the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, which calls on us to walk together in a common quest in celebrating life and in concrete steps towards transforming injustice and violence. This will take the dimension of celebrating the gifts of persons with disabilities; visiting the past and present wounds and also come up with steps of how to transform the injustices. It will also prepare persons with disabilities to take the opportunity through their participation at the assembly to remind the churches that their Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is not only a God-given demand and obligation, but also a matter of credibility in the world.

PART TWO

The Assembly Theme



CHRIST'S LOVE MOVES THE WORLD TO RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

A Reflection on the Theme of the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Karlsruhe 2022

In 2022, the World Council of Churches is gathering in Karlsruhe, Germany, for an assembly. Assemblies are moments when the churches within the fellowship of the WCC, responding to Christ's prayer "that they may become completely one" (John 17:23), call one another to visible unity for the sake of the world that God loves and for the sake of the creation that God declares good. This extensive reflection probes the biblical and theological warrants for the assembly theme and its particular relevance to the mounting problems faced by the Christians, their churches, and the world today.

The Context in Which We Will Meet

The 11th Assembly will meet in the heart of Europe, in Karlsruhe, Germany, a country with much wealth but, like so many, reeling from the impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of the people: personally, economically, and spiritually.

This assembly will come after a time of waiting because of the global pandemic, a virus that has exposed and highlighted both the vulnerability of all humankind and the profound inequalities and divisions among us. The world has been awakened to the ugly realities of privilege and oppression, of economic, social, and ethnic injustices.

In the shadow of this experience, the churches will come together, in response to God's call, to hold a light of hope and to celebrate the love of God the Holy Trinity, a love made fully manifest in Jesus Christ that moves people to reconciliation and unity. In the times in which we now live, we will ask of one another, "How does a church – in whom the love of Christ is pleased to dwell – organize, speak, and act in this season?" and "How, in this moment, shall we share together in God's mission of love to the world?"

Since 2013, the common calling of the churches has been expressed as a pilgrimage of justice and peace, and there will be much to recall and to celebrate with joy as we reflect on all that has happened in our walking together since then. The assembly will also be a time to find inspiration for the next steps of the journey – steps to be taken under the banner of the love of God,

the Holy Trinity; a love revealed in Christ; and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, a love moving in and through all humankind and all creation.

The global pandemic has taken many lives and challenged profoundly the ways of life that many have come to count as “normal.” In the face of tragedy and death, we have rediscovered our dependence on one another, the limits of individualism, the challenges of globalization (that enable the spread of a virus so readily), and our mutual responsibility for one another (and sometimes also our fear of one another).

At the same time, war and poverty continue to bring much misery, suffering, and death. The changes in our climate, unheeded by most for decades, now provoke a new level of fear among some, while already they bring disasters and threats for the very poorest in the world. Politics is changing fast, among both rich and poor communities, and democracy itself, to some, seems tired and often an empty promise. The multilateral spaces and collective decision-making processes at the global level are rapidly shrinking and are sometimes forgotten as we face profound crises.

Those who are in Christ, living out the love of Christ which is working in us, are called to do so in this world, to be an eschatological community, living as a sign and a foretaste of the kingdom to come and making visible the love that fills our hearts with joy, even on the bleakest days.

The assembly will be a time to gather strength for our common pilgrimage in the world in its present reality, to hear from each other, and to encourage one another as we celebrate the love that, through the Holy Spirit, moves, heals, and empowers us.

Together, immersed in love for Christ, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and lifted up by God who is the source of our very being and of all creation, the fellowship of churches will find strength for the journey and hope for the future. We will search for ways to respond to all who believe themselves unloved, unregarded, and unnoticed and to bring God’s love to the lost, reconciliation to those in conflict, and unity to all who are divided at the same time as we rejoice to receive those gifts and blessings ourselves.

“Christ’s Love . . . ”

The biblical and theological bases of the theme

The theme “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity” is directly inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:14 and draws on the very heart of the gospel that offers to the world the depths and wonder of the love of God the Holy Trinity. It is rooted in God’s design for the unity and reconciliation of all, a design made visible in the incarnation of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

For Paul, who wrote to the Christians in Corinth, Jesus Christ is not simply a Galilean teacher or the founder of a new and exclusive religion, but the cosmic and universal Christ, in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col. 2:9). Out of love for us and for the whole of creation, God became flesh, assumed all the suffering and passion of humankind and of the whole created order to heal us, restore us, save us, and reconcile us with God. Our faith proclaims that “God is love” (1 John 4:16) and that, in Jesus Christ, this very love of God has been revealed to the world.

As the eternal Word became flesh in Jesus Christ, so we are called to be “in Christ” and to dwell with Christ in the love of the one, holy, and eternal God. The church, as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), receives, lives in, witnesses to, and shares that love with others so that peace, justice, and unity may be poured out in all the places where the children of God now cry out from their suffering and from places of injustice and violence.

The theme of any assembly sets a frame around the gathering of the fellowship and offers a picture of our life and journey together, setting the direction for future travel. It becomes an effective way for the churches to see anew their common call to seek the communion (*koinonia*) that is God’s gift and promise, to shape their service (*diakonia*) to the people of the world and to creation, to commit themselves to God’s mission of love to the world (*missio Dei*), and to give words to their common prayer for each other and for the whole world (*leiturgia*).¹

The theme set for the 2022 assembly in Karlsruhe reminds us that the church, as the body of Christ, is moved by Christ himself – whose love for the world, which was the very love of God, was so deep that he gave himself up even to death for its sake. As we are moved by what is revealed and given through Christ’s love, so we are given the gift of loving Christ and, through him, all that God has made. Being “in Christ,” we are not simply inspired to love but blessed with the gift of love. In 2 Corinthians, Paul tells the early church that “the love of Christ urges us on.”

Gospel texts and many passages in the whole of the New Testament – many of them to be studied throughout the assembly – show us how the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ was first witnessed and interpreted by the early church. A key text is Matthew 9:35-36, which describes what Christ’s love, revealed and exercised in his ministry, looked like. We read that

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

1 2 Corinthians 5:14a: “For the love of Christ urges us on . . . ”

We see in this text the Christ who is moved by compassion, moved profoundly “in his guts,” the one who brings good news, healing, and hope to those who are “harassed and helpless.” His love is not only for his immediate disciples, but much more widely for the crowds, for those in all the cities and villages who had gathered in the wilderness to listen to his teaching, and for all those whom God has made. This love is not only the love of an inspiring human being but is the love of God revealed in and through him. This divine love is expansive, deep, bringing practical and life-transforming hope. It is this kind of love, the love of the one in whom God is made present in the world in all its woundedness and brokenness, that moves both church and world.

The assembly will provide an opportunity to reflect profoundly on the meaning of Christ’s love – and to find ourselves, and the love we both receive and offer, renewed and reimagined through Christ’s loving gaze. We will discover together how love is not (as it is so often framed) simply a sentimental or romantic feeling but may be a participation in the love of God revealed in Christ: love that is redemptive, self-denying, and sacrificial, as well as practical and active in bringing change for the good.

“Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity” Responding to the challenges of our times moved by Christ’s love

An assembly of the World Council of Churches is a place where we gather as a fellowship from all over the world, and the cries and needs of the world come with all of the participants and delegates. As churches, we are signs to the world of God’s kingdom to come: we seek to respond concretely to the many challenges of our times and to become disciples whose lives are transforming the world.

But what shall we say about the world that Christ’s love moves? What in the life of the world, in these times, challenges our faith, our witness, and our search for the unity of Christians and the unity of humankind and creation?

COVID-19

The whole world has shared in the experience of facing a global pandemic. So many have died, and for many more COVID-19 has brought sorrow, fragility, and profound anxiety about the future.

This has been a ruptured time that has brought us to our knees, with many people and communities experiencing profound trauma, with some even so desperate as to take their own lives. We have been humbled by these events. They have revealed to us how much we need connection with each other even

while, to prevent infection, we must stay distant from one another. All people are in need of love and support, but love becomes harder to express and make vivid in such times.

COVID-19 has also exposed how the assumed self-sufficiency, independence, and individualism on which so many have come to rely, particularly in the West, are but illusions. It has made plain that we human beings are not the masters of creation but part of creation and vulnerable within it.

The pandemic has also brought more clearly into the light many of the inequalities in the world and has heightened our sense of the most significant challenges of our times. Churches, too, have struggled to know how to continue in worship, in celebration of the sacraments, and in service to the world, and have sometimes argued within themselves or with the state about how they should be faithful to God and God's people.

The world resounds with many cries of pain, suffering, and protest from communities and peoples, as well as from creation itself. All over the world people are "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." And upon all the people of the world, particularly upon the poor who suffer most, as always, Christ has compassion.

Climate change

We live in a world where the climate is changing, and changing because of what human beings have done.

The earth, our common home, is suffering under human domination. Many people, especially young people, now speak of a climate emergency. From the top of Everest (garbage) to the bottom of the oceans (plastic), from Siberia (record high temperatures) to the Kilimanjaro (its "eternal" snow is disappearing) and the Pacific islands (many may be submerged), the planet's vital signs show the consequences of the lives so many have lived. Many species are now facing extinction, and the rich biodiversity of creation, on which we all depend, is under serious threat. We have learned that a life without limits brings destruction without limits.

For many scientists, the earth is today in a new period of its history, called the Anthropocene, in which the impact of human domination, especially during the past 200 years of industrialization, can no longer be reversed. Humankind has failed to take care of creation and now the love of God for all creation, made visible in Christ, calls out for change and for our repentance. Nonetheless, as those in Christ, who is the first fruits of a new creation (as a renewal of the earth), we have an irresistible hope for the future.

Inequalities

We live in a world still dominated by a global economy that concentrates wealth in the hands of a very few and deepens inequalities between and within nations. Such inequalities have only been deepened and strengthened by the pandemic. In some places, countries have been brought to the edge of economic ruin, since coping with a pandemic on top of so many challenges seems to be the last straw. In some places, governments and peoples are tempted to face inward, to draw back from international agreements and aid, and to “feed our own.”

This worldwide reality is at odds with the biblical tradition of compassion for the orphan, the widow, and the foreigner as signs of faithfulness to God’s covenant with God’s people, a tradition embodied in Jesus’ compassion for those living “in the margins” as sheep without a shepherd. In recent years, many churches and ecumenical organizations have been calling for a new “economy of life” through a new international financial and economic architecture.

We have also become witnesses of terrible atrocities and seen powerful protests against the inequalities that white supremacy supports and that racism fuels, as the world hears the prophetic voices that proclaim that “Black Lives Matter.”

In his recorded message to the delegates of the seventh annual G20 Interfaith Forum, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I stressed, in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement, that

“every human being’s God-given infinite worth . . . cannot be reduced to market value, to a mere product for exchange.” He also noted that “human dignity does not have color, gender, age, ethnicity or religion. Everyone has the same value and therefore respect for and equal treatment of human persons must be provided at every time and every place . . . We would like to use this opportunity to raise our voice against structural inequalities, any form of expression of racism, ethnocentrism, tribalism, casteism, and classism. The policy makers and those who do policy implementation need to know that we call for zero tolerance of injustice and any other form of discriminatory practice.”²

The digital revolution

The new digital-technological revolution sweeping the world may be much more radical in its consequences than the previous industrial revolutions. It is changing at high speed the way we live, work, and relate to one another. It serves well some of the needs of peoples who can no longer be physically

2 As reported by <https://www.romfea.gr/oikoumeniko-patriarxeio/39899-oikoumenikos-patriarxis-kaloume-se-mideniki-anoxi-apenanti-stin-adikia>

present to each other, enabling communication and working across many boundaries, but also raises profound and uncomfortable questions about our understanding of what it is to be human.

The movement away from face-to-face communication may, in some instances, lead to new forms of estrangement among us. We may, in the future, find ourselves apparently able to overcome human physical and mental limitations such that what we mean by “human” today may no longer correspond to what being “human” will be like then. Artificial intelligence, algorithms, machine learning, biological research to create more “perfect” human beings, the development and use of robots – all these raise new questions about human freedom and identity.

A loss of hope and confidence in the possibility of a better future

In a world where many have lost faith in their governments, in international forums, or in cooperation and where many have seen an erosion of human rights and freedoms, there is a need for a revival of hope and vision for the future. Recent years have seen a turn in the world toward self-centredness and separation rather than unity, toward localism rather than the universal and international, and an increased value placed on difference and identity rather than on the oneness of all humanity.

The world groans in pain because there is violence between peoples, because there are so many refugees and landless or persecuted peoples, because women and children suffer violence, and because so many are hungry and vulnerable and afraid. Before so much suffering and injustice, the world’s governments and organizations seem to have limited effects and may even deepen the suffering and wrong.

Yet the pandemic has also evoked, in many places, an impressive and moving response: as neighbours help neighbours, as governments and health organizations work to bring relief, as scientists labour to find and test a vaccine, and as nations work together. There are signs that the world needs, and cries out for, a renewed sense of solidarity and hope. There are those searching for ways to make real and tangible, on the public stage, the love that has enriched so many of our personal and private lives. We live in a world in which when it comes to such things as climate, poverty, and health, we are as one. The pandemic has made this truth plain.

The world cries out for peace and justice

The world in which we live, and in which the World Council of Churches assembly will meet in 2022, is one marred by many kinds of injustice and by the pain of many of its people, its creatures, and even the earth itself. There is

terrifying war and violence in many places – sometimes, tragically, even enacted in the name of religion – while people continue to pray and long for peace. There is stark inequality and unfairness, when a few feast while many starve. There are many ways in which human beings continue to exercise domination over others, to heighten prejudice and exert power to exclude and oppress. The resources of creation continue to be exploited and abused, when repentance and renewal are called for from all of us who share this common home.

God's first and foremost attitude toward the world: Love

But in times like these, as those who are in Christ, we are never without hope, even as we are faced with such great challenges. Indeed, we have such gifts and blessings from God that we know we do not struggle alone and that we do not have only our own resources to rely on. God is working in the world and within God's people in the church. The WCC Faith and Order text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, in its final chapter, reminds us that

The first and foremost attitude of God towards the world is love, for every child, woman and man who has ever become part of human history, and, indeed, for the whole of creation.³

This “foremost attitude of God” is made flesh in Jesus Christ: in the compassion he lived in his earthly ministry; in the mystery of his incarnation; in his suffering, dying, and being raised again to new life; and in the promise of the future renewal of all creation. And this love, the love with which he loved and the love he makes possible in us, is the gift of God to the church and to the world. It is this love which inspires, moves, and creates all that is possible in the life of the church as it becomes a sign of God's love for the world.

The theme of the assembly does not explicitly mention the church and leaves open just how the love of Christ might be made manifest so that the world might be moved. The church may need to have a certain modesty, since not all its people and in every way always make visible the profundity of the love of God. But the church may rejoice that, in God's design, it is a new creation, sign, and servant of the mission of God to the world, and this mission is rooted always in love, expressed and founded in the faith proclaimed by the apostles.

The life of the church, in its worship and service to the world, is called to be a sign of the love revealed in Christ and lived out by the apostles through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the love that can move the world to reconciliation and unity. The unity of the church, as witness to reconciliation, is also always to be identified with and connected to its service in and

3 *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper 214, §58 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), <https://archive.org/details/wccfops2.221/page/32/mode/2up>

for the transformation of the world. An earlier WCC text, *Church and World*, expressed it like this:

In offering its common life in the service of God and God's love for the world, the church has also constantly to struggle both through its presence alongside those who suffer and by its action on their behalf. In this sharing of God's love the church enables them to perceive the suffering love of God in Jesus Christ for them, and the church itself is led to a deeper experience of that love.⁴

It is this love that inspires those who follow Christ to draw closer to one another in the unity that is God's gift. Love inspires communion and love draws us to one another. Christ himself, for love of Jerusalem, cried out,

“How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!” (Luke 13:34)

Love, more than ideas and ideals, gathers, inspires, and creates unity. The church is a sign of this sacrificial love of Christ in the world, and the people of the church are servants of the gospel so that, through their love, both in attitude and practice, they may inspire those beyond the walls of the church. This witness does not come from human effort alone and is not founded on a romantic and naive notion of human aspiration but is made possible by the love of Christ working in us.

Christ, out of love, prayed for the unity of his friends and disciples (John 17). He prayed “that they may be completely one,” not only for their own sake but also so that the world might believe. What the church is to be and what the church ought to do are two sides of the same coin. The church is one, according to the scriptures and the apostolic faith, and is also called to be a sign of unity for a broken world.

From the heart of the loving Christ comes the prayer for unity. In Christian worship, the eucharist conveys the reality of the love of God made known in Christ through the incarnation, the cross, and the resurrection. It is this love that moves Christ's followers to love not only one another, but also the world for which he died. Christ moves his people to love the world that he loved and to become a sign of the healing, reconciliation, and unity for which a broken world cries out. The witness of the apostles is that Christ breaks down all the familiar markers of difference and division.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)

⁴ *Church and World*, Faith and Order Paper 151, §38 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), https://archive.org/details/wccfops2.158/page/321_mode/2up

The church witnesses to the love of the triune God who loves, who is loved, and who is love.⁵ The church shares in the unity at the heart of God and offers itself as an eschatological sign and servant of the promised unity of God's fulfilled and glorified creation. The unity we seek is therefore not simply a kind of common project based on shared aspirations, but is founded in the love of God that draws us together and unites us.

It is a cause for lament that our present disunity, our lack of love for one another, and our own need to be reconciled make us, in the church, sometimes a poor sign and servant of the Christ who calls us to be one, but this is the challenge before the church, and the promise and hope too.

When churches find unity, they do so not only as witnesses to the world, but as part of the world that God has made. Already, within the church itself, the world is being gathered into unity. As *Church and World* puts it,

What is gathered, reconciled and renewed in the church is, in fact, "world" in its estrangement from God and therefore this renewing process continually refers back to the world and forward in its final redemption.⁶

Christ's love, even as it brings unity in the church, is moving the world to reconciliation and unity.

An Ecumenism of the Heart

This is the first time that the word "love" has been part of a WCC assembly theme. What might it mean for the ecumenical movement to be shaped by the heart as also by the head, to live in imitation of God's foremost attitude toward the world – love itself?

Many people among the churches are urging that our seeking for unity must not be only intellectual, institutional, and formal, but also based in relationship, in common prayer, and, above all, in mutual affection and love. It must also always be rooted in the faith of the apostles, of those who were given the new commandment to "love one another," while the Christ who called them friends (and not servants) washed their feet (John 13).

This same Christ urged that "they who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me" (John 14:21), so that love is never simply an emotion but is grounded in faithful and transforming discipleship.

As human beings, we know so well that unity and love belong together. The very word "communion" (*koinonia*), a word that we often choose above

5 An allusion to a suggestion made by Augustine, according to the Western tradition, in his work *De Trinitate*.

6 *Church and World*, §14.

the term “unity,” implies the kind of unity that happens when people love one another. In our most intimate lives we may experience, if we are truly blessed and if it is our vocation, the wonder of the kind of love that brings human beings together in such a way that they are made one – not just physically but, we might say, spiritually. And there are many relationships in our lives in which we know how close unity and love can be.

Love draws us to one another, makes us want to be together, to share everything we have, to make a new community, to bring forth life and to stand beside one another even when trouble comes and when suffering is deep. Love and communion go hand in hand. Unity and love are found together. Love draws us into union.

The focus on love does not only unite us together as Christians but also draws us to a deeper relationship with all people of faith and all people of goodwill. Love as a theme that flows through different faith traditions has provided strong foundations for service and the pursuit of justice that transcends boundaries.

In love we are attentive not only to our own but also to the “other” – making neighbours out of strangers through radical hospitality and solidarity. Love as the language of our faith can actively and prophetically engage the world as we see and experience it today in a way that will make a difference for a shared tomorrow.

Our existence as Christians in a multireligious world calls us to live out Jesus’ command to love our neighbours by embodying a faith that is at once rooted in passionate commitment and eager for expansive dialogue. As the text *Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19 and Beyond*, which was jointly produced by the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, reminds us:

Our faith becomes alive in action that lives out Christ’s love . . . It keeps our faith and our mission alive and active, it shapes our life as Christians into a loving sign of Christ’s presence, and it builds love and understanding between us and those with whom we join together to express our love in action.⁷

We learn, too, that love is much more than emotion and feeling, that it is tested through time and is about a commitment of the will and the intellect as much as an expression of emotions. Love is something that Christ even commands of us; it is not something we can only “fall” into. It is as much about our politics, our actions, and our careful thinking as about our feelings. It is, as St Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13:1-7, 13), patient and kind, not

7 World Council of Churches and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19 and Beyond* (WCC and PCID, 2020), 17, https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/serving_a_wounded_world

insisting on its own way, not resentful, rejoicing in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

In the pilgrimage toward Christian unity, we have sometimes assumed that when we know ourselves to be fully and visibly united, when that great day comes, we shall then be able to love each other fully. When we can know that we share the apostolic faith, when we can recognize within one another the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, when we can gather around one table, then we shall be able to love one another.

But until that time, perhaps our communion will be possible, and we will be moved to receive it, as we begin to love each other – not just theoretically or abstractly, but in ways that are visible and thoughtfully made present, that anyone looking at us could see. This would truly be an ecumenism of the heart.

Conclusion

The ecumenical movement has always been about the churches calling one another to visible unity, to full communion. Today, when because of a pandemic even meeting in person has become so difficult, that vocation is all the more needed.

The churches need now, together, in a renewed ecumenical movement for the sake of the world, to find a more public voice to speak a truer hope than the empty optimism of any faded political rhetoric: a hope that might build a better world than the one so deeply shaped by materialism, individualism, and consumerism, a world in which resources will be shared, inequalities addressed, and a new dignity found among us and for all of us.

Churches that live and pray only in hidden, private communities, separated from one another, are called by the risen Christ to be “sent” into the very public and open spaces of the world, to reframe our corporate sense of what matters, to make idols fall, and to be part of welcoming the kingdom of God in which the poor are blessed and the captives set free. A world crying out for profound love, for community, for justice and hope needs churches that are visibly in communion, longing for oneness where there is division and finding a new future for humankind and for all creation, as expressed in Revelation

Christ’s Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity. The theme of the 11th Assembly is *a song of praise* for the God whose love, in Christ, moves us. It is *a statement of belief and trust* that it is the will of God to move us by love to reconciliation and unity. It is *a message* to the world about the love that is the heart of the Christian faith. It is *an invitation* to the churches and to all people of goodwill across the world to share in the common wisdom of love to move us all to be reconciled and to find our true unity as humankind.

PART THREE

Documents and Reports to the Assembly



CHRIST'S LOVE MOVES THE WORLD TO RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

Draft Unity Statement

It is customary for the assembled delegates at each WCC assembly to consider and adopt a brief unity statement. The statement reflects on the meaning and aim of Christian unity in the contemporary context and its relation to the overarching theme of the assembly. The statement below is offered for the consideration by the assembly in Karlsruhe.

Preface

1. This unity statement offers both reflection and challenge on where we, the churches of the fellowship of the WCC, are on our ecumenical journey. It is written from and speaks to a world which is both God's beautiful creation and, at the same time, broken by violence, pandemic, hunger, climate change and many manifest sufferings. Inspired by the theme of this assembly, it is written in a pastoral voice, and seeks to offer hope to the churches and to the world. It is founded in confidence in God's indefatigable love and begins there, with the love that never abandons us. It reflects on the significance of that undaunted love, revealed in Christ, for the ecumenical movement. It challenges the churches to live, and to pray, for unity, inspired and encouraged by such a love as this.

United in Christ's love

2. St Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the *love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 8:38-39).

Now, as through the ages, the love of God, freely, graciously and unconditionally given, the communion of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, is working to defeat all those forces in the world that try to separate us from God and from one another. The love of God has been made manifest in the incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ; in his compassion for so many, in his washing of his disciples' feet, in his gift of a command to love even our enemies, and by his arms stretched out in love for the world as he gave his life on the cross. We see, in Christ, a love that never fails, that overcomes separation and brokenness.

John Chrysostom describes Christ speaking of his love in this way:

I am Father, I am brother, I am bridegroom, I am dwelling place, I am food, I am raiment, I am root, I am foundation, all whatsoever you will, I am. Be thou in need of nothing, I will be even a servant, for I came to minister, not to be ministered unto; I am friend, and member, and head, and brother, and sister, and mother; I am all; only cling thou closely to me. I was poor for you, and a wanderer for you, on the cross for you, in the tomb for you, above I intercede for you to the Father; on earth I have come for your sake am ambassador from my Father. You are all things to me, brother, and joint heir, and friend, and member. What would you more?

The distinctive Christian witness to love

3. In the earliest days of the church, many wondered at the ways in which Christians lived and affirmed their faith. How is it, they asked then, that Christians have no fear even of death? How do they have such *affection* for each other? And where does their strikingly different way of living come from? In the second century, during a period when Christians were particularly renowned for their willingness to stay with the many sick and dying, the author of *The Epistle to Diognetus* declared that the miracle of the church is “no mere earthly invention... or a mere human system of opinion,” but it comes from “the one love of God” for humankind, “on whose account God made the world.” The author asks the reader, “How will you love God who has first so loved you? And if you love God, you will be an imitator of God’s kindness.”

4. In these times, that early Christian witness to God’s love challenges us to love now. Church divisions remain. There are wars and conflicts between nations and peoples. A pandemic has made more vivid the inequalities of the world and creation faces a climate emergency. But the churches are rooted in a living faith that God made us and gives us each a true dignity. We look always to the hope for a renewed future that is God’s eternal promise and we are moved above all by the love of God that is constantly revealed in Jesus Christ. In these days we hear and proclaim the eternal Gospel message that “faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). It is love, above all, that is the inspiration, the foundation, the source, of our ecumenical movement. It is in response to the love we have seen in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, that we are moved to search together for reconciliation and unity based on the truth of our faith.

This call magnifies the message of the earlier chapters of Paul’s letter that eloquently describe how we are members together of the one body of Christ; by waiting for one another so that we eat at the same table (11:33), by receiving and honouring the variety of gifts of the one Spirit (12:4), and by celebrating the apostolic witness (12:28). And then Paul shows us the way of love. This is

why we are affirming, at this 2022 assembly, that Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.

Today's world

5. The faithful, the people of the churches, with so many around the world, have been deeply affected by the pain of the times. Families have been separated, and in some cases grief stricken, by a pandemic and have longed to be united. Violent conflicts and wars bring death and suffering to every continent. Once again, in some places, Christians are even killing each other. Refugees are being cast out of their homeland by war, by climate change and by the simple human need for food, security and safety. So many sins of profound injustice, such as casteism, racism, sexism, and economic exploitation, alongside so many kinds of alienation work to push people apart from one another and to suppress our God-given longing for recognition, connection and communion. In such a world as this the churches are called to bear witness to the indestructible power of love to reconcile and bring together. The churches carry for each other and for the world this counter-cultural testimony to the hope of unity, justice and peace, through the faith they proclaim in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Despite Christ's invitation to unity, the churches continue to remain divided, and not only the churches, but the world. Amid this division Christ's call to unity rings out even more profoundly.

Unity statements on the way

6. Successive assemblies of the World Council of Churches have each offered a statement or theme to inspire the churches to reflect on why they have chosen to journey together and on the significance of the call to unity. As we recall what our predecessors have said, so we ask ourselves what we are being called to say in our own time.

Both the 1948 founding assembly in Amsterdam and the second assembly in Evanston in 1954 affirmed our oneness in allegiance to Christ, addressed the sin of persistent church divisions and expressed hope that the churches might "stay together" in their imperfect fellowship. According to the New Delhi assembly of 1961, the unity which is God's will and gift to the church is made visible as "all in each place" find reconciliation in the apostolic faith, sacramental life, ministry and mission and are united with all in all places and ages.

Seven years later, the Uppsala assembly approached the vision of unity from the perspective of catholicity as the quality by which the church expresses the fullness, the integrity and the totality of life in Christ. Catholicity is therefore "the opposite of all kinds of egoism and particularism." The assembly held together the unity of church and the unity of humanity and called the churches

to work for the time when “a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all Christians, and lead the way into the future.”

The 1975 Nairobi assembly took up the Uppsala perspective on conciliarity in its vision of unity. The One Church, it stated, “is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united.” From the Vancouver assembly in 1983 came a reminder that visible unity has three marks: unity in apostolic faith, unity in the mutual recognition of Baptism, Eucharist and ministry, and unity in common decision-making and teaching with authority.

According to the Canberra 1991 assembly, the unity of the church understood as *koinonia* will be realized “when all churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, in such a way that “diversities which are rooted in theological traditions, various cultural ethnic or historical contacts are integral to the nature of communion.” In Harare, at the WCC’s 50th anniversary, the 1998 assembly urged the churches to call one another to “Turn to God and rejoice in hope,” as they also reflected on the decade of churches in solidarity with women.

All who have been baptized into Christ “are united with Christ in his body,” stated the text on ecclesiology, “Called to Be the One Church,” adopted by the 2006 Porto Alegre assembly. The church as communion of believers “is created by the Word of God.” As the people of God, body of Christ and temple of the Holy Spirit, “the Church is called to manifest its oneness in rich diversity.” In our present state of imperfect communion, “each church is called to mutual giving and receiving gifts and to mutual accountability” because “apart from one another we are impoverished.” Finally, the Busan 2013 assembly put emphasis on the unity of the church as a sign and servant of God’s reconciling of *all* humankind, and even of the whole of creation itself, the whole inhabited earth.

This assembly: an ecumenism of the heart

7. In this 2022 assembly of the World Council of Churches, we now turn to celebrate and affirm the ways in which the quest for a true unity is always founded in *love*, the love of God revealed in Christ and lived in the Holy Spirit, a love that moves us, and moves the world, to reconciliation and unity. In these times the vision of unity sometimes seems less clear than we would hope for, and more difficult to pursue, but the call to unity is still urgent and compelling. The true goal of Jesus Christ, and with him all Christians, is to reach a visible fellowship, one in holy unity. The responses made by the churches to the Faith and Order text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* reveal that we now agree more than we disagree on many aspects of the apostolic faith, on much about our understanding of the sacraments and the imperative to serve God’s people in the world. There is a deep commitment to the goal of

visible unity, a renewed focus on ecumenical spirituality and on ecclesiology that begins with baptism. An increasing convergence is real concerning the need to hold together the local and the universal in thinking about the church, along with an evangelical passion for proclaiming the gospel together and for sharing together in the mission of God to the world.

Churches do ask now quite *how* unity might be made visible, and there are wide differences about how mutual recognition might be understood or made evident. There is a move, amongst some, to emphasize the *experience* of ecumenism more than formal agreements and a recognition that as we first walk together on our common pilgrimage we are then also led to reflect together on questions of faith and truth. The churches' responses reveal a longing for an ecumenism in which we bring all of ourselves to the journey and to the table; not separating thought from prayer, prayer from action, or action from thought.

There remain questions about the limits of diversity in our understanding of unity, a request from many for some common criteria for discernment, particularly in relation to moral questions, and a need to explore together the theological understanding of humankind. There are profound challenges to our unity in these times. Some ecumenical conversations are difficult even to begin. Sometimes even those who are in communion with each other are yet, tragically, at war. Many voices call for an ecumenism that can provide both the challenge, inspiration and courage that will move us to change.

Can we open our hearts so that *Christ's love* may move us in ways that breathe new life into the search for full visible communion? And is this note, of love, heard for the first time in this way at an assembly, one that will sound clearly also in the world?

8. The work of unity needs to be inspired anew by the love that we have seen in Jesus Christ. It needs to begin with the love of the heart, the love that is in response to Christ who said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13:34). The love of Christ is the spiritual source of the ecumenical movement. It moves us to walk together, impels us to pray together, and urges us to respond to Christ's invitation to be of one spirit and one mind. The quality of the relationships between us and between our churches will be an inspiration for our journey and our common work towards that full visible communion for which Christ prayed (John 17:20-23).

9. It is when we are able to be kind to one another, warmly welcoming of each other, building profound and evident friendship in sincerity and respect, when we are drawn to one another out of compassion, fascination and longing for one another that we will find the grace to search for that common faith, the truth together held, that will overcome our separation. Unity in apostolic faith,

in sacramental life and in ministry, and the work of sharing in common action together, all need our “heads,” “hands” and “feet,” the whole of us, to be fully engaged (1 Cor 12). But the vital search for agreement in faith, the working together in service to the world, the walking the way of discipleship together; all these are stirred by the love of Christ, who moves our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

10. The search for unity that is inspired by love and rooted in deep and mutual relationship may be termed an “ecumenism of the heart.” It is Christlike *love* that moves us to walk honestly and wholeheartedly beside one another, to try to see the world through the eyes of others and to have compassion for one another, to build the trust that is such a vital part of our ecumenical journey. It is love that will reject any distorted kind of unity that overcomes, overpowers or coerces the other, and neither will it settle for a weak kind of encounter that is merely formal. This love goes beyond every level of restriction and restraint, is not abstract, sentimental, soft or romantic, but is embodied and whole, witnessed in the visible and the practical, in the passionate and the truly challenging, able to address the deepest evil and injustice. As the African American theologian and philosopher Cornel West often says, “Justice is what love looks like in public.” Bishop K.H. Ting, a leading Chinese theologian and ecumenist, said too that “The justice of God is also God’s love. If love spreads throughout humanity, it becomes justice.” This truest and deepest love then also enables a genuine and critical accountability. Admonition and challenge, “speaking the truth in love,” as much as gentle kindness, will also be part of growing communion. Love embraces our whole being to unify mind, body and soul in igniting true affection and in actively resisting evil together for the sake of justice. It includes working together for the transformation of the world. It goes as far as the challenge and the command to love not only our friends, but even our enemies. This kind of love, seen in Christ and known among us as *we are in Christ*, receiving him and believing in him as the only Son of God (John 1:12, John 3:18), can reshape both our relationships with each other and our witness to the wider world.

Our witness to the world

11. An ecumenism of the heart springs from an experience of the love of Christ stirring in us the *metanoia* that purifies our hearts, minds and wills so that we are able truly to embrace one another. This love can also make of us witnesses to love in the world. The churches, nations and communities of our world today are crying out in pain, and it is the very love of God working within us that opens our ears and hearts to their cries. We have been walking together on the way towards visible unity, and we have learned, even on our pilgrim journey, that only the love of God can get us moving together to enter faithfully into

God's new future. Churches committed to growing in communion with one another, to a true love for one another across even profound difference, will live in ways that are deeply counter-cultural in today's world.

12. We will never seek to divide and conquer, to exploit and humiliate, to overwhelm by violence or enforce unity. We will not collude anymore with the inequalities of the world. We will not be tempted by politics that is shaped by deepened individualism or dangerous nationalism. We will never accept as inevitable the systemic inequalities that divide the world, or suffer without resistance the dominance and dangers of technologies that alienate us from one another or that undermine or damage our God-given humanity. Out of love we will always seek to build a world for the *common* good, for all humankind. We long for the kind of communion that celebrates and affirms the dignity of all people and honours the whole created earth and all living beings as the work of God the Creator. Together in Christ, formed in Christ's image, walking the way of love, and in repentance, we celebrate unity as both gift and virtue, knowing that we are called to bear witness to communion in a world that creates and celebrates division. In a world of separation, inequality and injustice, Christ calls his followers to witness to the unifying power of the love that is a gift of the Spirit. This provokes a strong challenge in the world and sounds a call to an alternative order, one moving towards unity and reconciliation.

Christ's love on the pilgrim way

13. We have gathered, as a fellowship of churches, as pilgrims on Christ's way, confessing our faith, receiving and sharing hospitality with brothers and sisters in Christ. We journey together energized by Christ's love, offering glory to God, sharing with each other our stories, our laments, our cries for justice, our dances of joy, nourishing our faith and giving one another hope. The practice of love that turns a stranger into a neighbour and a neighbour into a sister or brother calls us to make space for one another, to be patient, kind, humble, generous and truthful with one another. We will make reconciliation and unity practices of unconditional love and marks of the ecumenical movement. In this journey, we remember before our God and Father the work produced by faith, the labour prompted by love, and the endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

A call to loving discipleship

14. From the decades of the life of the World Council of Churches, we call one another now not only to stay together and to move together, but, most of all, to love one another, as Christ himself commanded his disciples. The fellowship of churches in the WCC is invited to pray together to the God whose love,

revealed in Christ, transforms us. We call one another to proclaim together the faith we share that God's love, in Christ, will indeed move our churches towards visible unity. We commit ourselves to strengthen each other in a transforming discipleship, inspired always by the hope that Christ's love can move the world to reconciliation and unity.

For the future

15. So, we affirm the vision of the WCC for the visible unity of all Christians, and we invite other Christians to share this vision with us. We also invite all people of faith and of goodwill to trust, with us, that a different world, a cleaner world, a world in which everyone has daily bread and life in abundance, a decolonized world, a more loving, harmonious, just and peaceful world, is possible. In a world weighed down with so much pain, anguish and fear, we believe that it is the love that we have seen in Christ that brings the liberating possibilities of joy, of justice for all, and of peace made with the earth. Moved by the God we have seen in Jesus Christ, impelled by a vision of unity, we journey on together, resolved to practice Christ's love following his steps, as his disciples and carrying a torch for love in the world, trusting in the promise that Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.

A prayer

*Holy God, source and creator of all things,
love made flesh in Jesus Christ,
and known among us through the Holy Spirit,
gather us together in your loving arms
that we may grow in visible communion
and so witness to unity in the world.
Where your people are broken, may love mend.
When hatred shouts in the world, let love bring peace with justice.
As creation groans, may redemption come to all the earth.
Come with your divine love, and enter our hearts.
Move your church, and move the world,
to reconciliation and unity. Amen.*

REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE: PILGRIMS ON THE PATH OF PEACE: THE JOURNEY OF THE WCC FROM BUSAN TO KARLSRUHE

A major function of the WCC assembly is to assess the recent activities and programmes of the WCC and to set its course for the future. A robust report on the activities, Pilgrims on the Path of Peace reviews the work of the WCC and its partners and allies since the last assembly, in 2013, especially in light of its stated strategic objectives. The full report, rich in detail on each objective and engagingly presented, is available with other resources on the WCC assembly webpage. What follows here is an introduction to the full report, a sketch of the trends in the work of the council in this period, and an analysis of the cumulative work of its guiding theme, the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Foreword

What have the world's churches been doing to confront and address today's most pressing problems? What might the ecumenical fellowship undertake to do in the future?

In a tradition that dates to the beginning of the World Council of Churches, we of the WCC's central committee offer to the next assembly this account and assessment of the council's work since its prior assembly, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in October-November of 2013.

Rather than a straightforward chronology or a summary of its programmes, we have chosen in this report to review these years in light of the council's own five stated strategic goals and in light of its guiding motif of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

As a fellowship of 352 churches in 110 countries and representing more than half a billion Christians, the WCC in these years has continued its perennial quest for visible unity, grounded in our shared faith in God, our witness to the saving work of Jesus, and our imitation of his self-giving love for all humanity. That is who we are.

Yet we know, too, that the ecumenical vocation is not static but dynamic, a pilgrimage or sacred journey of new encounters and continual learning and discerning, always headed toward fuller unity, justice, and peace. In these extremely demanding times, praying, walking, and working together on this Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace has allowed us to be risk-takers and to leave our comfort zones. It gives us the impetus to join other pilgrims for justice, to discover each other and the larger, deeper truths God will reveal on the way.

I hope that these chapters also convey something of the excitement and energy of these years, of the churches learning more about the regional contexts and local concerns through Pilgrim Team Visits, of the strong partnerships forged to collaborate for climate justice, of reflecting on the ecumenical convergence captured in the central concepts of *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, of the engagements of the churches in the Colombian peace process or the racial reckoning in the USA, of the closer ties with the Roman Catholic Church as well as the World Evangelical Alliance, of the challenging vision of transformative discipleship, and of the innovative ways in which the WCC and its fellowship have stayed together in mission and ministry through the pandemic.

It has been my special honour in these years to serve the council and its member churches as moderator of the central committee. From my heart I thank all the members of the committee, colleagues in the leadership, and the thousands of dedicated Christians with whom I have been able to pray and walk and work in this time.

We hope that this recent past will serve as prologue to a creative and productive 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, in September 2022. A lot has changed since a WCC assembly last convened in Europe, in 1968. At the same time, some of the issues addressed at Uppsala remain or have resurfaced, from racial injustice to gross inequalities and ongoing struggles with colonial legacies. In light of the particular perils we face now, at the assembly we will explore our role through the theme, “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.”

We hope that all our delegates and other participants will be able to attend the assembly, especially amid this COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to an enabling environment for prayer, celebration, discussions, exchange of views and ideas, as well as a glimpse of church life in Germany.

Our prayers are many: As a global ecumenical movement, it is our prayer that the assembly will energize and inspire churches to continue to work for the unity of the church and the unity of humankind. It is our prayer that we in the ecumenical movement will recommit to the goal of visible unity, so that, agreeing on critical aspects of our Christian faith, we one day we will worship together, accept each other’s baptism, and celebrate the eucharist as one. We pray that many young people will find the WCC and ecumenical movement relevant as it addresses matters affecting them. We pray that assembly participants will give programme and policy priorities and direction for the future.

As we all reflect on how to further that unity, we hope you will find this report informative, thought-provoking, and even inspiring of an ever-stronger ecumenical fellowship, a bolder ecumenical witness, and a transformative engagement by all Christians for the human future. Please join me in praying:

*Jesus, our risen Lord and compassionate brother,
Walk with us as we together in fellowship seek your reign of justice,
search your ways of peace, and share your love with everyone.
In all ways and always, draw us ever closer to you and your coming reign.
Amen.*

Dr Agnes Abuom
Moderator, WCC Central Committee

Stations on the Way: From Busan to Karlsruhe

When the World Council of Churches concluded its 10th Assembly in the fall of 2013, it emerged with a clear mandate to move together in solidarity with all those who strive for justice and peace and, in the words of its sending sermon by Rev. Michael Lapsley, to move from pain and lament to prophetic witness and hope.

This report describes the signal journey that the council and its member churches undertook after that gathering and how its activities and programmes have measured up to that mandate. The report gauges those years of ecumenical endeavour against the WCC's five strategic aims, articulated soon after the assembly:

- Strengthening the fellowship
- Public witness and *diakonia*
- Spirituality, formation, and prayer
- Building trust and understanding
- Inspiring and innovative communication

The chapter narratives capture some of the ambition, innovation, and excitement of the council's activities and relationships in these years, as well as its challenges, as it pursues its goal of visible Christian unity. They also exhibit ways in which the work of the council and the fellowship as a whole has evolved during these years and some characteristic trends in contemporary ecumenical engagement:

1. Toward visible Christian unity. 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, to embody the prayer of Jesus that "they may all be one." Since the Busan assembly, the WCC as the privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement has continued to deepen the fellowship of its member churches while also continuing dialogue and sharing with the Roman Catholic Church,

Evangelicals and Pentecostals. Together with the Roman Catholic Church, the WCC has prepared the resources shared each year globally for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

A major focus since the Busan assembly has been harvesting the responses of churches to the text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, the convergence document that is the fruit of three decades of international ecumenical conversation. After analyzing almost 80 responses to the report, the Faith and Order Commission has prepared papers on 16 key controversial theological themes in these responses, published in 2021. The message to the churches on the meaning of the responses for their common life will feed into the Karlsruhe assembly. Continuing the quest for Christian unity, the Faith and Order Commission has been preparing for a Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order, the first since 1993.

2. Confluence of unity and justice agendas. The years since Busan have brought together the council's unity and justice agendas, that is, the traditional "faith and order" quest for defusing division and creating ecclesial unity with the traditional "life and work" quest for social justice. The theme or motto of the gathering in Busan, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace," hinted at the future direction. In fact, the work of the assembly had been prepared through the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, held in Jamaica in 2011, where the "Just Peace" framework was adopted, offering a fulsome analysis of the many dimensions of peace, justice, and the human good.

The invitation of the Busan assembly to join a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace offered a new metaphor under which Christian churches everywhere could see their work for justice and peace – new or existing – as part of a larger quest, uniting churches everywhere in praying, walking, and working toward the God's coming reign of justice and peace.

As detailed below and throughout this report, the pilgrimage presented not a new programme or initiative as such but a dynamic framework for the churches' life and work, understood as a sacred journey of openness, encounter, learning, and collaboration toward the God of life and for a world of peace and justice.

The pilgrimage could draw on important insights of several ecumenical statements and studies, including the Just Peace framework, Faith and Order's *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, the landmark mission statement *Together towards Life*, and a years-long study of *diakonia*, "Called to Transformative Action: Ecumenical *Diakonia*," which attempted to bridge the theological concepts of service with those of civil society and NGOs.

For churches, the pilgrimage has valorized local contexts and concerns, encouraged ecumenical collaboration, and tied their spiritual lives to their diaconal and outreach work. For the council, the pilgrimage motif has centred attention on what the churches can distinctively or even uniquely bring to the

myriad of today's issues: faith and hope. These perspectives converge in the recent Faith and Order study document *Come and See: A Theological Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*.

Few events capture the inspiration and power of the pilgrimage motif as well as the physical pilgrimages of Christians toward Paris and the climate summit, COP21, in 2015 and recently to COP26 in Glasgow.

3. Intensified engagement of churches. The ecumenical movement has always been the child of the churches themselves. During the period after Busan, churches and their specialized ministries have been even more deeply involved in formulating, planning, and fulfilling the initiatives and activities of the WCC.

This collaborative model recognizes that the world is multi-centred and that the fellowship of churches as a whole can support regional initiatives, advocate in the international arena, and build a worldwide network of concern around an issue.

Such is the case with the WCC's persistent engagement during this period with issues of peace on the Korean Peninsula. Emerging from its Busan assembly with close working relations with Korea's churches and the National Council of Churches of Korea, the leadership of the WCC and its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs have advocated with them for a formal end to the Korean War, reunification, and other visible actions for peace, leading to successive campaigns of prayer, a youth pilgrimage, and demonstrations for peace on the peninsula as well as a visit to Pyongyang, North Korea, by an ecumenical delegation, including the WCC general secretary in 2018.

An important and distinctive feature of the extended collaborations with the churches has been the centrality of ecumenical spirituality. Global prayer has been at the heart of recent initiatives, campaigns, and communications, from special days or weeks dedicated to prayer for Korean peace, food security, the peace in the Middle East, in addition to the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Ecumenical response to the pandemic, too, has highlighted shared prayer, including special publications featuring prayers of lament and consolation, related Bible studies, and a daily morning prayer sent to the WCC's extensive communications network.

4. Expanded partnerships have also characterized this period. Extending its effective reach, even during a challenging financial period, the WCC has placed partnership relations at the centre of its programmes and initiatives. The period witnessed a revived working relationship with the Regional Ecumenical Organizations as well as closer collaboration with the specialized ministries of many church bodies and with the ACT Alliance, the premier Christian agency for disaster relief and development aid, and well as such civil society initiatives as the Blue Communities.

An instructive illustration and promising model for such partnerships is the “Churches’ Commitments to Children.” Building on its longstanding relationships with the World Health Organization and with UNAIDS, the WCC has forged a close programmatic relationship with UNICEF for the protection of children. The WCC invited churches everywhere to join a global network enabling the protection of children, their increased participation in church life, and their active engagement in work for climate justice.

Coalitions of regional churches with the WCC and civil society allies have successfully tackled such global issues as climate commitments, the UN Arms Trade Treaty (2014), and the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017), as well as relentlessly advocating for migrants, refugees, and the stateless.

5. Transversal focus. During these years, an innovative feature of WCC programming has been careful attention to those values that should undergird and characterize all its work. These include spirituality, gender justice, and interreligious understanding. Explicit attention to these concerns has enriched WCC activities, encouraging collaboration across programme lines. A Buddhist-Christian dialogue in 2015, for example, focused directly on gender justice and sexuality, while a study group of Faith and Order explicitly addresses theological dimensions of climate change. In July 2021, the council added race and countering racism as a further transversal concern.

6. Heightened interreligious engagement. Each day’s headlines attest to the pertinence of interreligious understanding. While the ecumenical banner has always championed dialogue among and unity of the churches, increasingly, the broader interfaith and interreligious concerns of a pluralistic world directly affect global issues and Christian communities. The period since Busan has witnessed many interreligious initiatives and new or revived relations with groups from other faith communities. As the programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation passed its 50-year mark in 2021, it could point not only to ongoing consultations but also, for example, to training youth leaders in interreligious relations, issuing collaborative Jewish-Christian statements on the pandemic, and sponsoring joint Muslim-Christian peacemaking efforts in Nigeria.

Encounters with other religious traditions are offering Christians new opportunities for deeper theological understanding not only of the other traditions but also of their own. So, for example, in collaboration with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the WCC issued a statement, *Serving a Wounded World*, on the Christian basis and urgent need for solidarity with other, non-Christian faiths.

7. Convergence of global concerns. The coronavirus pandemic has reinforced perceptions of the confluence of justice issues since infections, vaccinations, treatment, and governmental aid have starkly divided along racial and economic lines. Inter-programmatic collaboration, attention to transversal concerns, and wider partnerships have enabled the council not only to leverage wider impact but also to work directly at the intersections of the most vital of global concerns. Race, violence, gender, global health, and climate—in some measure, addressing any of these systemic issues entails addressing them all.

A pioneer model of such an intersectional approach remains WCC's Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiatives and Advocacy (WCC-EHAIA), which has responded to HIV and AIDS with medical information, pastoral counselling, training workshops, advocacy, and theological reflection on the deeper cultural issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender violence. The WCC's highly impactful Thursdays in Black campaign toward a world without rape and violence also illustrates the importance of effectively engaging a single vital issue in ways that also illuminate and confront related ones.

8. Centrality of faith and hope. Addressing the many systemic issues that imperil the lives of humans and the planet today requires an ample supply of selfless commitment such as faith-based communities bring to their benevolent work. The WCC and the Pilgrimage have served as a catalyst for local and global efforts to address climate change, economic injustice, and other challenges. This reality is increasingly acknowledged and welcomed by international agencies and governments. For example, WHO director Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in August 2021 lauded the roles of the WCC and faith communities, saying, "Faith communities have played a particularly important role for many people in the funding, trust, the sources of support, comfort, guidance, and information with the support of the COVID-19 solidarity response fund."

But the WCC has found readier welcome in international agencies not only because religious communities are on the ground and prepared to pitch in but also because they nurture the hope-filled values, willingness for social change, and support for large-scale cultural shifts in attitudes about consumption, the health of the planet, or gender relations that justice and peace require.

As the World Council of Churches prepares for its 11th Assembly, and as the following chapters document, it is the strength of Christian faith and the witness to hope by the churches and their allies that promise a vital ecumenical contribution to humanity's survival and future.

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: An Invitation to Move Together

“We intend to move together. Challenged by our experiences in Busan, we challenge all people of good will to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions. This Assembly calls you to join us in pilgrimage. May the churches be communities of healing and compassion, and may we see the Good News so that justice will grow and God’s deep peace rest on the world.” (Message of the 10th Assembly)

Since the 10th Assembly in Busan in 2013, these words have motivated the expression of the common calling of the WCC as a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

As already described in this report, the pilgrimage presents not a new programme or initiative but rather a dynamic framework for the churches’ life and work, understood as a sacred journey of openness, encounter, learning, and collaboration toward the God of life and for a world of peace and justice - expressed across the range of WCC programmes and initiatives.

In its first meeting of the WCC central committee after the Busan assembly, the committee approved a strategic plan based on the assembly mandate. In this strategic plan, the overall objectives of the council for the period between Busan and Karlsruhe were identified: Strengthening the fellowship, witnessing together, encouraging spirituality, building trust, and understanding, and inspiring and innovative communication. These objectives also form the structure of this report. The ethos of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace permeates all these objectives, and the activities are reflected throughout this report.

Although the Pilgrimage is a way of being, rather than a way of doing, specific expressions, initiatives, and support structures developed in the pilgrimage, and specific insights were gleaned in this period. These are highlighted here.

A Reference Group of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace guided this process, and the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Theological Study Group continued to reflect on the theological implications of this journey and the themes that developed.

Expressions of the pilgrimage

Three well-known movements were identified as expressions of the Pilgrimage: *via positiva*, *via negativa*, and *via transformativa*. These dimensions guided many encounters along the way and structured reflections. These three different yet inseparably related dimensions are not to be understood sequentially, but rather in a dynamic way:

Celebrating the gifts (*via positiva*)

We do not journey with empty hands, nor do we walk alone. The “original blessing” of being created in the image of God and together – as a fellowship – means that we are a unique part of the broader web of life. Together we celebrate God’s great gift of life, the beauty of creation and the unity of a reconciled diversity. We feel empowered by this grace of participating in God’s movement of love, justice and peace. We receive in prayer.

Visiting the wounds (*via negativa*)

This pilgrimage leads us to the locations of violence and injustices. Here we look for God’s incarnated presence amid suffering, exclusion, and discrimination. The true encounter with real, contextual experiences of a broken creation and of sinful human behaviour might inform us anew about the essence of life itself. It leads to repentance and – in a movement of purification – liberate us from the obsession with power, possessions, ego, and violence, so that we become ever more Christ-like. We listen in prayer.

Transforming the injustices (*via transformativa*)

Being transformed ourselves, the pilgrimage leads us to concrete actions of transformation, where we grow in our courage to live in true compassion with one another and with nature. This includes the strength to resist evil, injustice and violence, even if a church finds itself in a minority situation. Economic and ecological justice, healing the wounded, and striving for peaceful reconciliation is our call – in every context. The credibility of our actions grows from the quality of the fellowship we share – a fellowship *of* justice and peace. We are transformed through prayer and act in prayer.

Regional focus

Regions were identified as the focus for each year. These areas became the focus for the range of WCC activities as well as for physical and virtual Pilgrim Team Visits.

Israel/Palestine (and the Middle East) - 2016
Nigeria (and other places in Africa) - 2017

Colombia (and other places in Latin America and the Caribbean) - 2018

Thailand (and other places in Asia) - 2019

Fiji (and other places in the Pacific) - 2020
North America - 2021

The Role of women and young people

The role of women on the Pilgrimage was emphasized early in this period.

A seminar “Women’s Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace—Inspired by UNSR1325,” was held in June 2014, sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute Bossey. With young women mostly from conflict areas as participants, it focused on making UNSCR1325 accessible to religious women to build their capacity in advocacy and awareness raising on issues that affect them.

UNSR1325 is the UN Security Council resolution that mandates focus on and involvement of women in post-conflict arrangements for peacebuilding and reconstruction, a key asset for developing or restoring gender justice in war-torn areas that have witnessed large-scale gender violence.

Throughout the Pilgrim Visits, the role of women and of gender justice continued to be emphasized, as shown throughout this report. On the visit to Korea, in May 2015, a group of international women peace activists revived the International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament, by walking a pilgrimage in and around the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea.

Young people also had a specific focus in the visit to Korea. Here and elsewhere (as described in this report) young people played a particular role on calling people of faith to greater activity and involvement in ecological justice.

The involvement of young people in the Pilgrimage is suitably reflected by the publication of “The Africa We Pray for on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace,” a publication highlighting the voices of young people from Africa, as the first publication in a series co-published with Globethics.net.

Themes

During the annual regional focus, and particularly the Pilgrimage Team Visits, four central themes emerged, each raised in different ways by the various hosting communities: truth and trauma, land and displacement, gender justice, and racism.

Since the 10th Assembly in Busan in 2013, the ecumenical peacebuilding process in Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Israel and Palestine, Iraq, the Korean Peninsula, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine has strengthened the ecumenical bonds in our common journey of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and empowered the theological reflection on the intersectionality of the four themes.

Truth and trauma

It became clear that justice comes when truth is revealed and acknowledged, and only then is peace possible. In this process, one will inevitably encounter

the darkness of human misery and violence, with experiences that embed trauma within victims, survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators, and the communities they belong to.

Although truth should be liberating and even restoring, it can be twisted, manipulated and become divisive when claimed from only one perspective and exclusively understood from that position.

During the Pilgrimage, participants realized that understanding truth requires placing it within a dialogue, in relation to other people, and with the interdependence of different narratives, even opposing ones. Truth-telling is always relational.

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace reflection on truth and trauma in different contexts brought to light topics like forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation and called people of faith to action.

“The truth remains that no battle is ever won by force. In every similar struggle, there are times to take breaks to evaluate, review strategies, and opt for dialogue. When dialogue is out of place, abuse of intention is unavoidable. The war Nigerians are fighting is more than the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, and having gained the attention of the government and seeing that they are gradually minding the request of the youth, it is expedient to have some recess to rework strategies—especially so as not to lose focus in this special liberation moment that has been built during the protests almost across the country.”

—**Brother Adebayo Anthony Kehinde**, international vice president of the Youth Ministry of The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide and member of the WCC’s Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), WCC blog November 2020.

Land and displacement

It became clear that struggles related to land are rooted in the perception that some have more right to the land than others. These conflicts come in many forms: from the first colonizing movements claiming “new territory” (and its people) as their own, to national governments selling natural resources—including land and water (an integral part of creation), to multi-national companies stripping and exploiting land and water sources making them uninhabitable for indigenous people, to people thinking they have more right to the land because their ancestors have lived there, resulting in rejection and discrimination towards those people who migrate to the land.

During the Pilgrimage, participants reflected that such colonization, corruption, and exploitation of the land—and the waters—and its people result in the displacement of indigenous people, the disconnection of communal belonging, and the realities of slavery, human trafficking and severe poverty,

and cause violence (in many forms), inequality and discrimination. One of the latest outcomes of the failure to take good care of the land is forced migration due to climate change.

The issues of land and displacement were vital in the stories and experiences shared by the communities during Pilgrim Team Visits to Nigeria, Colombia and the Thai-Myanmar border.

“The communities around us saw each other. They know that those who protest are not alone. We brought them hope, we told them that God is accompanying them in their struggle, and we gave them words of encouragement in the midst of their struggle. We invite our churches to continue praying and to accompany this situation with a solidarity and concrete presence, since the solution to this complex reality in our country seems uncertain.”

—**Rev. Gloria Ulloa Alvarado**, Presbyterian Church of Colombia and WCC president for Latin America and the Caribbean, reporting on an ecumenical solidarity visit to communities in Cali, May 2021.

Gender justice

It became clear that women still continue to be abused, violated, and oppressed. The often heroic actions of individuals and organizations cannot, by itself, bring the transformation the world needs. The prophetic voices of those often quietened by unjust systems cry out for an end to all the words and structures that keep women silent, indoors, and powerless and call people of faith and goodwill to bring about deep and lasting change.

During the Pilgrimage, participants realized the challenges faced by different churches in creating a healthy dialogue on issues such as the role of women in church and society, participation of women in leadership, sexual violence against women and children in homes, institutions and public spaces, sexual discrimination, and sexual orientation. Social structures ensuring that women are not accorded their full human dignity and destiny are still often in place, and there are signs of a backlash against steps already taken.

Where faith is co-opted to justify an unjust status quo, people of faith are called to conversion.

“My focus changed from seeing women and girls as victims to understanding that they are survivors. This is also my experience during my travels around the world. Women may be abused or oppressed, but somehow they find strength and perseverance to live, to raise children, to build community. What they need is solidarity from men and women around the world.”

—**Berdine van den Toren-Lekkerkerker**, from the Netherlands, WCC blog September 2019.

Racism

It became clear that we are challenged to continue to confront racism, understood as a combination of discrimination and power¹ where the disproportionate distribution of power preserves the privilege of one racial group and denies the flourishing of another group, thus ensuring inequities across generations became clear.

Both racism and current expressions of ethnic discrimination can be understood as consequences of colonialism. The colonial project has set not only a structure in a given period but a trajectory that keeps reproducing itself in different forms in different contexts, which makes it sometimes challenging to recognize it.

In the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, the call to fight racism became primarily a call to the churches themselves. Where faith communities are part of systems symbolized by white privilege, they need to confront these structures and engage in repentance, and together work to actively heal and transform the realities of discrimination, xenophobia, and racism as part of the call to metanoia.

“We are all in this together’ now includes care about the unreconciled sufferings, both historic and contemporary, that are encompassed in the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement. The linkages between the pandemic, climate justice and an end to racism are more vivid. Public discussion has more gravitas. People are looking for wise, capable leadership because survival is at stake!”

—**Bishop Philip Huggins**, president of the National Council of Churches in Australia and director of the Centre for Ecumenical Studies at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, WCC blog, July 2020.

Reflecting theologically

At each station of the Pilgrimage from 2014 to 2021, the PJP Reference Group and the PJP Theological Study Group – after listening carefully – revisited the themes and reflected on them theologically to inform an emerging *Ecumenical*

1 The World Council of Churches and the Vatican organized in Rome, September 2018, a conference on “Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration”. The final message resulting from the conferences defines race as “...a social construct which claims to explain and justify the separation between human groups by advancing physical, social, cultural and religious criteria”, and racism as “...the systemic and systematic impact of actions taken against groups of people based on the colour of their skin. It separates people from each other in the name of a false notion of the purity and superiority of a specific community. It is an ideological stance expressed through marginalization, discrimination and exclusion against certain persons, minorities, ethnic groups or communities”. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/message-from-the-conference-xenophobia-racism-and-populist-nationalism-in-the-context-of-global-migration>

Theology of Companionship. Economic greed and the related human-made climate change are root causes for forced migration and the resultant displacement and struggles for land and natural resources. Very often, the experienced violence results in long-term trauma. In the search for human dignity and a life in peace with justice, individuals and communities in all parts of the world are struggling for gender justice and against racism.

“So I have thought again and opened my eyes to a new view of the history of my land. And my feet have found again the ancient paths and the holy places. And in walking and visiting and praying, with my own tired feet and pilgrim’s limbs, I have found something of God. My faith is no longer just in my head or in my books, but in my body and in the world around me, in the stories of ancient and modern saints, and in the journey that takes me where I had little thought to go, worshipping in words and songs not once mine.”

—**Rev. Dr Susan Durber**, United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom, moderator of the WCC’s Commission on Faith and Order, WCC blog March 2016.

PRE-ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORT

Executive Summary

The evaluation was a learning exercise. It sought to assess how the strategic plan connects “who we are” as a fellowship of member churches with “what we do” programmatically, particularly through the strategic direction of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The evaluation was conducted by a team of central committee members and advisors appointed by the WCC executive committee.

Following a desk review of annual programme reports from 2014 to 2020, the evaluation team identified highlights from 2018 to 2021 that reflect milestones in the life of the WCC. It took account of the digital adaptation required during the pandemic to continue WCC programmatic work.

The evaluation team invited member churches and ecumenical partners to complete a survey. The survey produced quantitative results and over 80 pages of comments.

The evaluation team concluded:

- The pilgrimage is a tangible and dynamic expression of a fellowship committed to moving together on a common journey of faith.
- The strategic plan promoted an integrated approach to the programmatic work of the WCC.
- The work of the WCC contributes to transformational change over time.
- Pilgrim team visits are positive, concrete expressions of accompaniment – visiting the wounds, celebrating the gifts and transforming injustices.
- The WCC should be more attentive to the churches’ concerns and different contexts.
- More effort is needed to deepen the fellowship between and among the churches through encounters that promote dialogue, accompaniment and solidarity.
- More effort is needed to interpret the importance of WCC activities, not simply make the WCC more visible as an institution, but as a fellowship of churches.

The evaluation team recommends that the WCC:

1. Continue the pilgrimage as an expression of commitment to visible Christian unity, rooted in Gospel values and engaging the churches’ common witness for justice, peace, reconciliation and unity.
2. Strengthen the strategic plan by rooting it more firmly in the common understanding and vision of the WCC.

3. Develop the next strategic plan in consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders.
4. Continue pilgrim team visits as an expression of programmatic engagement to deepen the fellowship between and among the member churches.
5. Strengthen the regional, sub-regional and national engagement of the fellowship of member churches in collaboration with relevant ecumenical partners.
6. Strengthen the fellowship by nurturing the engagement between and among member churches with a stronger focus on listening, accompanying and sharing the life and work of the fellowship.
7. Continue digital adaption as a way of bringing the fellowship together, delivering programmes and addressing issues of justice related to new communication technologies.

Introduction

Among the constitutional functions of an assembly is to “determine the overall policies of the World Council of Churches and to review programmes undertaken to implement policies previously adopted” (Article V.1.c.iv.).

The pre-assembly programme evaluation report, along with the report “Pilgrims on the Path to Peace,” recounting the journey from Busan to Karlsruhe, and other reports from commissions and joint working groups, will help the 11th Assembly fulfil its mandate of reviewing programmes undertaken to implement policies adopted by the 10th Assembly in Busan.

The overall objective of the pre-assembly evaluation was to review how programmes undertaken since 2014 have helped to implement the strategic plan, enhancing the relevance and achievements of the WCC as a fellowship of churches calling one another to visible unity and engaged in a common Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

WCC strategic plan

In 2013, the Busan Assembly recommended that a strategic plan be developed to serve as a tool for monitoring and evaluating programmatic work (cf. Report of the Programme Guidelines Committee, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan, 2013). Furthermore, the assembly affirmed that the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace provides an integrating focus for the fellowship.

In 2014, the central committee established a strategic plan to guide the work of the WCC until the next assembly. The strategy included two four-year periods (2014-2017 and 2018-2021) with a mid-term evaluation at the end of

the first period. The strategic plan was extended to 2022 in light of the pandemic and postponement of the assembly.

The strategic plan is rooted in the mission of the WCC (Article III) and identifies the *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* as the strategic direction with five strategic objectives:

- Strengthening the fellowship
- Witnessing together
- Encouraging spirituality, reflection and formation
- Building trust and understanding
- Inspiring and innovative communication

Approach of the Evaluation

The evaluation was implemented as a learning exercise seeking to respond to the question: How does the strategic plan help to connect “who we are” as a fellowship of member churches with “what we do” programmatically, particularly through the strategic direction of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The evaluation took into account lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with regard to the use of electronic communication as a means of programme delivery.

Methodology

The WCC executive committee appointed the evaluation team of central committee members and advisors, supported by staff. The team met seven times online in November 2021, December 2021, January 2022, February 2022, March 2022 and twice in May 2022; and once in person at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute (May 2022).

The evaluation began with a desk review of annual reports on WCC programmatic work implemented between 2014 and 2021, offering a view on how WCC work contributes to transformational change over time. The team identified highlights from the period 2018 to 2021, i.e., events, resources or processes that reflected significant milestones in the life of the WCC as a fellowship of churches. It took account of the digital adaptation that took place during the pandemic as a significant experience, not only for WCC programmatic work, but in the life of the member churches.

After completing the desk review, the evaluation team developed an online survey to gather input from member churches and ecumenical partners. The survey (in English, French, Spanish and German) was sent to the following constituencies:

- WCC member churches
- Members of the WCC central committee, commissions and advisory groups
- Ecumenical partners recognized by the WCC central committee

The response rate was over 30%, which is a record for WCC surveys.¹ The results mirror the regional distribution of member churches with little variance. The survey produced quantitative results and over 80 pages of extensive comments.

The evaluation team reviewed the survey results during their in-person meeting. The team was encouraged by the unprecedented response and the significant level of engagement by those who responded, offering sincere, concrete and insightful suggestions for how to strengthen the WCC as a fellowship of churches.

This evaluation itself was a case study in adaptation. Previous WCC pre-assembly and mid-term evaluations were conducted through a series of in-person meetings over 12-18 months. The present evaluation was delayed and eventually conducted on-line due to the pandemic. The approach became more focussed on how the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace strengthens the life and work of the WCC as a fellowship of churches.

The evaluation team also considered input from a WCC staff discussion on learnings from work during the pandemic (Staff Planning Days in April 2022), a discussion on the survey results with WCC round table partners (Working Together May 2022) and a review of the pilgrimage with regional ecumenical organizations that hosted pilgrim team visits (May 2022).

Key Results Observed

On the strategic plan

In response to the Busan Assembly, the WCC central committee adopted a strategic plan in 2014. It was the first time the WCC established a strategic plan as a tool for planning, monitoring and evaluating its work. The mid-term evaluation (MTE) in 2018, mandated by the central committee, affirmed the continuation of the strategic plan, highlighting the importance of the *strategic role* of the WCC in convening, shaping discourse (common witness) and ensuring coherent ecumenical cooperation. “The MTE team considers the strategic direction and the strategic objectives, as they are formulated in the strategic plan, to be relevant and helpful.”² It recommended strengthening the

1 According to GENROE, a web-based marketing firm, “a good survey response rate is one that is above average and, based on some industry data, that would be anything above 25% and subject to having enough total responses.”

2 Central Committee Document No. GEN PRO 04, Mid-Term Evaluation Report, June 2018, Geneva, Switzerland.

connection between strategic objectives and activities, namely through programmatic objectives.

The strategic plan is firmly rooted in the mission, or “primary purpose,” of the fellowship of member churches to call one another to visible unity and common witness as expressed in the WCC constitution (Article III). The evaluation team observed that the strategic plan has helped to integrate the plethora of WCC activities through the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace as a common *strategic direction* for all WCC work.

The team noted that a future strategic plan could be strengthened with greater attention to the identity of the WCC as a fellowship of churches and reference to the common vision to deepen the fellowship between member churches and broaden the involvement of other churches and partners in the one ecumenical movement (cf. Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC).

The team also noted that the use of the strategic objectives could be strengthened, not only as a tool for monitoring and evaluating, but for communicating the work of the WCC to its constituency and other audiences, e.g., by associating practical examples, as in the report *Pilgrims on the Path of Peace: The Journey of the WCC from Busan to Karlsruhe*.

On the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

The survey results confirm that the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is a strong strategic direction for the work of the WCC as a fellowship of churches, but that more effort can be made to integrate it and make more widely known in the life and work of the member churches.

The evaluation team observed that after nine years, the pilgrimage has developed significantly, “taking root” among member churches and ecumenical partners, through the regional and thematic foci as well as the pilgrim team visits, which express solidarity and promote learning, reconciliation and unity.

Many respondents affirmed the critical importance of working together for justice and peace as the Gospel mandated role of churches in God’s mission as well as an important witness of Christian unity. The pilgrimage was referred to both as a universal message and a clear Christian response with practical and spiritual dimensions.

The pilgrimage, and the pilgrim team visits, were referred to as expressions of Christian unity and solidarity. The responses named the importance of visiting, listening and accompanying member churches as a more responsive way to develop programmatic work. Many comments affirmed how churches and congregations have made use of the pilgrimage in their work, while others said more work is needed to raise awareness and strengthen the involvement of the fellowship.

The team concluded that the pilgrimage, as a paradigm for moving together, continues to have great potential for enhancing the relevance of the WCC and the visibility of the fellowship in living out their common calling.

On the strategic objectives

When asked if the strategic objectives are relevant for the future programme work of the WCC as a fellowship of churches, 88% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

Many participants affirmed that the strategic objectives reflect a holistic approach, express important values and are rooted in the historical vision and mission of the WCC. Some respondents observed that the objectives were aspirational in nature, reflecting the direction of the pilgrimage and expressing solidarity in a spirit of fellowship. Many respondents affirmed that the strategic objectives are compatible with the current global situation, more timely than ever and remain highly relevant.

The respondents observed that not all the objectives receive the same attention. A number of responses suggested that Christian unity should be more visible in the objectives. A similar observation was made about mission. Others affirmed the WCC is an effective voice to promote justice, peacebuilding, human dignity and rights.

Whereas the first three objectives were seen as areas where the work of the WCC had advanced, a number of responses indicated that building trust and understanding (objective 4) and inspiring and innovative communication (objective 5) could be strengthened, particularly with regard to the engagement of the fellowship. The most constructive remarks requested closer collaboration and more communication with member churches.

The evaluation team affirmed that the strategic objectives helped shape and integrate WCC work as a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The team questioned if objectives 4 and 5 should be considered as methodologies rather than objectives.

On highlights from recent work

From its review of annual reports, the evaluation team selected eleven programmatic highlights it considered significant milestones from WCC work between 2018 and 2021. Respondents were asked to select the top five highlights. The results counted how often each highlight was selected, i.e., frequency of selection, not rating of importance.

All eleven examples were selected by at least 20% of all respondents, indicating that all of the suggested highlights were relevant to enhancing the achievements of the WCC as a fellowship of churches. When asked to identify additional highlights, the most frequently mentioned activities were WCC

peace-building initiatives in conflict areas, such as Palestine and Israel, Syria, Iraq, the Korean Peninsula, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan, Burundi, Colombia and Ukraine.

Highlights from recent work:

- Global and regional consultations on the manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia today – selected by 64% of respondents
- World Conference on Mission and Evangelism on the theme “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship” – selected by 62% of respondents
- “Ecumenical *Diakonia* – Called to Transformative Action” – resources for churches and agencies – selected by 57% of respondents
- Road map for congregations, communities and churches for an economy of life and ecological justice – selected by 50% of respondents
- Scaling up the campaign “Thursdays in Black: Towards a world without Rape or Violence” – selected by 49% of respondents
- Interfaith collaboration on world peace and living together with the Hither Committee for Human Fraternity – selected by 48% of respondents
- What the churches are saying about the church – key findings from the responses to *The Church towards Common Vision* – selected by 45% of respondents
- Churches’ Commitment to Children and WCC collaboration with UNICEF – selected by 39% of respondents
- Work on treatment adherence and faith healing in the context of HIV and AIDs in Africa – selected by 24% of respondents
- Nobel peace prize for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons – ICAN – selected by 22% of respondents
- WCC 70th anniversary celebration with Pope Francis in Geneva – selected by 21% of respondents

The evaluation team remarked that all of the highlights reflect work for justice, peace, reconciliation and unity. Some were large events involving many people, some were processes developed in consultation with many churches and some were campaigns that have been promoted widely. All of them are the result of years of preparation, cooperation and engagement, reflecting the persistent witness of the fellowship to critical issues facing the churches and the world today.

The evaluation team felt the highlights are evidence that the fellowship is moving together on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. They affirm that WCC work contributes to transformation over time. The team reflected on the importance of activities that involve, invite and inspire the fellowship of churches to work together. The team noted that more effort is needed to

interpret the importance of WCC activities for the world and the churches, not simply make the WCC more visible as an institution.

On issues and concerns for future work

In an effort to offer a perspective on the future programmatic work of the WCC, the evaluation team identified issues and concerns that reflect the profile of WCC work. It purposefully named issues and concerns, rather than existing programme/project/activity titles. It incorporated the themes with which the pilgrimage began – life affirming economies; climate change; non-violent peacebuilding and reconciliation; and human dignity. It also incorporated emerging themes identified by the pilgrimage reference group – truth and trauma; land and displacement; gender justice, racial justice; and health and healing.

Respondents were asked to select five issues and concerns in response to the questions “According to your church or organization, on which five issues listed below should the WCC focus its programmatic work until the 12th Assembly?” Again, the results counted how often each issue was selected, i.e., frequency of selection, not rating of importance.

All seventeen issues and concerns were selected by between 8% and 61% of all respondents, indicating that all were considered relevant for future programmatic work. The evaluation team noted that most issues and concerns are interrelated. For example, human dignity and rights is inclusive of many other issues and concerns listed below.

Issues and concerns for future programmatic work:

- Christian unity – selected by 61% of respondents
- Climate justice – selected by 54% of respondents
- Human dignity and rights – selected by 53% of respondents
- Peace building and reconciliation – selected by 47% of respondents
- Gender justice – selected by 38% of respondents
- Mission and evangelism– selected by 36% of respondents
- Economic justice – selected by 29% of respondents
- Interreligious cooperation – selected by 29% of respondents
- Youth engagement – selected by 23% of respondents
- Racial justice – selected by 21% of respondents
- Theological education – selected by 20% of respondents
- Spirituality – selected by 19% of respondents
- Health and healing – selected by 15% of respondents
- Land and displacement – selected by 12% of respondents
- Well-being of children – selected by 11% of respondents
- Digital change – selected by 10% of respondents
- Truth and trauma – selected by 8% of respondents

The evaluation team compared the results with the response to similar questions in the pre-assembly programme evaluation conducted before the 10th Assembly. It observed that in both 2013 and 2022, the two most commonly named issues or concerns for future work were Christian unity and climate justice, affirming the primary purpose of the fellowship in calling one another to visible unity and common witness. The issues for which there was the most increase of interest since 2012 were gender justice and youth engagement.

The team discussed what it considered emerging issues. Some reflect renewed interest, partly in response to the pandemic, i.e., health and healing or digital change. Others were identified during the lived experience of solidarity between the churches through pilgrim team visits and other forms of accompaniment, i.e., land and displacement or truth and trauma.

On the response to COVID-19

The evaluation team observed that the strategic period began with an epidemic³ and ended with a pandemic, noting the significant change in the global engagement of faith leaders over nine years. It took months for the WHO to engage religious leaders in promoting “safe and dignified burials” to stop the spread of Ebola. Whereas the WCC, together with regional ecumenical organizations, responded proactively to the COVID pandemic. Immediately, they encouraged the churches “to avoid the risk of becoming sources of viral transmission rather than means of grace,” strengthened collaboration with the WHO and other public health authorities; and advocated for a just global access to vaccinations.

The survey results affirmed the WCC response to COVID-19. When asked if the WCC adjusted to changing world contexts and emerging needs in response to the pandemic, 67% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

In their comments, many people expressed appreciation for the rapid response of the WCC with a focus on public health, vaccine equity and gender-based violence. Many respondents also affirmed the WCC transition to digital delivery of online programmes, webinars and governance. Many people named the difficulties with time zone differences and digital equity.

When asked if their church or organization was aware of the WCC response to the pandemic, 62% said “yes.” This group of respondents appreciated how the WCC provided accompaniment, prayer and information.

Prayer resources and online prayer services were considered helpful and inspiring. They were referred to as useful in local contexts and motivating, e.g., others to do the same. Participants appreciated how the spiritual response brought people together.

The information on the pandemic published by the WCC was considered helpful, relevant and well disseminated. The scientific and theological resources

3 Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (June 2014).

empowered more people to understand the character of the virus. The webinars were appreciated as a way to share experiences, information and lessons learnt. It was suggested that WCC webinars could be strengthened by being more accessible and responsive to the life of the local church.

On strengthening the fellowship

Half of the survey participants offered comments to the question “What do you think would strengthen the WCC as fellowship of churches in the future?” The responses addressed two general themes – the relational character of being a fellowship of churches and the convening role of the WCC.

Most comments referred to the need to deepen the fellowship between the churches through encounters that promote dialogue, accompaniment and solidarity – helping churches to listen to and care for one another. There were many requests to be more attentive to the churches – to listen to their concerns and understand their different contexts. Pilgrim team visits, church visits and participation in church events were named as effective methods of accompanying the churches.

Many respondents named inclusivity and fair representation of all churches, especially smaller churches and minority churches as well as diverse voices as a way to strengthen the fellowship. Other comments affirmed the need to strengthen the involvement of churches that are not members of the WCC such as the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostal churches and other churches.

The most common suggestion for deepening the fellowship was to facilitate greater regional, sub-regional and national engagement of the churches, together with regional ecumenical organizations and national councils. The comment was made for many reasons – to share and build on common experiences, as a strategy for cooperation with ecumenical partners and forums and as an efficient method of bringing churches together (online and in person).

Another frequent theme was the need to strengthen the theological work of the WCC as the foundation for promoting visible unity, maintaining a prophetic voice and encouraging diaconal cooperation. The focus on theological work was named as a way to deepen a common understanding of Christian values, as a way of listening to the churches and as essential for advancing Christian unity.

There were also many comments related to communication and language. Some suggested that communication be more focussed on the fellowship of member churches. Others suggested more rapid responses to the concerns of the churches. There was a general request to make more resources available in languages other than English. Many comments referred to strengthening WCC digital communication with lessons learned during the pandemic.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the pre-assembly programme evaluation team are informed by its review of WCC work over the past nine years, its careful reading of responses to the survey and its observations about the global context. The recommendations reflect the evaluation team's commitment to strengthen the WCC as fellowship, building on lessons learned through the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

The evaluation team affirms that the **Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace** is a strong strategic direction that strengthens the WCC as a fellowship of churches. It recognizes the pilgrimage as a tangible and dynamic expression of a fellowship committed to moving together on a common journey of faith.

1. The evaluation team recommends continuing the pilgrimage as an expression of commitment to visible Christian unity, rooted in Gospel values and engaging the churches' common witness for justice, peace, reconciliation and unity.

The evaluation team affirms the value of a **strategic plan** in the life of the fellowship of member churches, recognizing that during the past nine years it helped promote an integrated approach to the programmatic work of the WCC.

2. The evaluation team recommends developing the strategic plan by rooting it more firmly in the self-understanding of the WCC as fellowship of churches seeking to deepen their experience of Christian unity and strengthen their common witness in the world.
3. In order for the strategic plan to become a stronger resource for governance, programmes and the fellowship, the evaluation team recommends developing the next strategic plan in consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders, i.e., representatives of member churches and ecumenical partners.

The evaluation team observed that **pilgrim team visits** are positive, concrete expressions of accompaniment – visiting the wounds, celebrating the gifts and transforming injustices. They are an effective methodology for mutual encounter and encouragement that makes the concerns and experiences of the churches more visible.

4. The evaluation team recommends continuing pilgrim team visits as an expression of programmatic engagement to deepen the fellowship between and among the member churches.

The evaluation team recognized the potential in developing a more robust approach to **regional relations** to strengthen collaboration and consultation; and to make the issues, concerns and achievements of the member churches more visible.

5. The evaluation team recommends strengthening the regional, sub-regional and national engagement of the fellowship of member churches in collaboration with relevant ecumenical partners.

The evaluation team recognized the importance of **deepening the fellowship** between and among the member churches. It also affirmed the convening role of the WCC – bringing member churches and ecumenical partners together to shape discourse and ensure coherence.

6. The evaluation team recommends strengthening the fellowship by nurturing the engagement between and among member churches with a stronger focus on listening, accompanying and sharing the life and work of the fellowship.

The evaluation team observed that one of the most significant opportunities and challenges for the WCC as a fellowship and its member churches is **digital change**. The team observed significant digital adaptation, but affirmed value of personal encounters for strengthening relationships. Nevertheless, the pandemic provides valuable lessons for the future.

7. The evaluation team recommends continuing digital adaptation to complement WCC work by:
 - Using digital means for convening the fellowship, sharing information, providing ecumenical formation, witnessing together, praying together and promoting advocacy actions;
 - Investing in skills, tools and methodologies that can improve online or hybrid events and programme delivery; and
 - Addressing together as a fellowship the issues of justice related to new communication technologies such as equitable access, manipulation and misinformation that create division and dependencies, and other ethical implications.

WALKING, PRAYING AND WORKING TOGETHER

10th Report of the Joint Working Group of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church

Initiated in 1965 amid the first flush of ecumenical fervor after the Second Vatican Council, the Joint Working Group has fostered mutual understanding and collaboration between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church ever since. In the period since 2013 and the last WCC assembly, the group has witnessed and nurtured closer ties and active programmatic cooperation between the Catholic church and the WCC. In this excerpt from the Foreword and Introduction to its latest report, the moderators summarize that recent evolution, its relationship to pilgrimage, and its recent fruit in two important studies commissioned by the group.

Foreword by the Co-Moderators

Both of us had the privilege of serving together as co-moderators of the Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church (JWG) for two mandates, i.e., from 2007 to 2012 and from 2014 to 2021. We are grateful to both the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), the two parent bodies of the JWG, for their commitment to fostering Christian Unity through the work of this precious instrument of collaboration and for their trust in us. We want to thank especially Cardinal Kurt Koch, the President of the PCPCU, and Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the WCC General Secretary from 2009 to 2020, as well as Reverend Professor Dr Ioan Sauca, the Acting General Secretary from 2020, for their accompaniment and support.

“Receiving one another in the name of Christ” was the motto chosen for the Ninth Report of the JWG that was published in 2013. The quality of relationship that we nurture together through the work of the group is decisive for the results we achieve and the progress towards Christian Unity we desire. In the second mandate, we could build together on friendship and mutual appreciation of knowledge, wisdom and leadership of each other that had grown during our first mandate. We were now “walking, praying and working together” continuing our common journey on our way towards the shared goal of the visible unity of the Church to the glory of God Father, Son and Holy Spirit and in the service of peace and justice for the human family and all creation.

The evaluation of our experiences and learning during the first mandate had led us to change the size and composition of the group. It became a smaller

and more efficient body with much closer links to different dicasteries of the Holy See and the ongoing programmatic work of the WCC. This Tenth Report demonstrates a much more developed cooperation in all areas of work.

The title of this Tenth Report “Walking, Praying and Working Together: An Ecumenical Pilgrimage” was the motto of Pope Francis’ visit to Geneva in June 2018, surely the outstanding highlight of ecumenical cooperation between WCC and RCC during this mandate of the JWG. It captured well the WCC’s emphasis on a pilgrimage of justice and peace following the 2013 Busan assembly and Pope Francis’ conviction that unity can only grow in the walking of Christians together as fellow pilgrims in Christ’s love.

“Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity” is the theme of the forthcoming eleventh assembly in Karlsruhe 2022. We offer this Tenth Report to the assembly and two study documents on “Peacebuilding in Situations of Violence” and “Migrants and Refugees – Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunity” with recommendations for the parent bodies. The study documents are addressing two critical areas of ecumenical cooperation in today’s world. Together, they encourage intensive ecumenical cooperation of all Christians and people of good will with a special emphasis on the contributions that can be made by the WCC and the RCC together. We hope that the report and the documents will be well received by the parent bodies and contribute to strengthen their cooperation into the future.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin
Archbishop Emeritus of Dublin, Ireland

Metropolitan Nifon
Archbishop of Târgoviște, Romani

An Ecumenical Pilgrimage

This is a time of pilgrimage for both RCC and WCC. By walking, praying and working together, fellowship can be deepened on the way. The togetherness that grows on this journey moves beyond the common action the “Lund principle” of 1952 is calling for.¹ It goes even further than “receptive ecumenism,” receiving the gifts that can be shared with each other. It means working together for justice and peace and addressing divisive factors in mutual accountability for the good of all Christian sisters and brothers and, indeed, this world, that is moved by Christ’s love to reconciliation and unity.

Visible unity of the Church remains the goal of the ecumenical endeavour. It is to be explored in doctrinal reflections and dialogues, anticipated in joint action and experienced through participation in common prayer and the spiritual life of each other in helpful and appropriate ways. An important and vital

¹ The Lund Principle states that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately. It was first affirmed during the third Faith and Order Conference in Lund, Sweden, in 1952.

step forward during this mandate was the response of the RCC to the Faith and Order consensus document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV). The PCPCU had shared the document widely and asked bishops' conferences and scholars for their assessment in a broad process of its reception. In this way, the response became a helpful commentary on the original document taking stock of the progress made so far, highlighting open questions and pointing to critical tasks to be further explored in future multilateral and bi-lateral dialogues. Another important document prepared and published by the PCPCU in 2020 was *The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum*, which was received with gratitude not only within the Catholic community but also by other churches.

The ninth report of the JWG offered study documents on reception and the spiritual roots of ecumenism that aimed at fostering more reflective and deeper togetherness on the way. When the JWG plenary decided to focus in this mandate on the themes of “peace-building in situations of conflict” and “migrants and refugees – ecumenical challenges and opportunities,” the assumption was that joint action addressing important contemporary challenges of the world had to be encouraged and nurtured. Cooperation on theological dialogue through Faith and Order with representatives of PCPCU as members of the commission, on mission through the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), and on interreligious dialogue and cooperation through both the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the WCC's team on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation had very well developed in recent years and shown important fruits. Since the demise of the joint Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX) (1968-1980), however, it had been impossible to reach a similar level of cooperation on issues of justice, peace and the care for creation.

This changed significantly during this mandate. Surely, the new composition of the JWG membership was an important step forward and facilitated direct cooperation first with the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples and later the newly formed Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DPIHD). The decisive change, however, came with the Pontificate of Pope Francis. His Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*” and the Encyclicals “*Laudato si*” and “*Fratelli tutti*” paved the way for growing cooperation on justice and peace between DPIHD and the WCC's team on Public Witness and Diakonia and between the WCC's Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) and the Holy See's Secretariat of State in conflict areas such as Iraq and Syria, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and others. There can be no visible unity of the church that ignores the unity of humankind and all creation.

The pilgrimage approach of walking, praying and working together has inspired the JWG during this mandate, encouraging PCPCU and WCC, the two parent bodies, to make the common search for unity concretely visible

through their common journey. Moving forward in this way, the JWG has understood that being together on the way in prayer and praxis is a necessary condition for moving closer to the goal of visible unity. Churches together in receiving and accompanying migrants and refugees, churches together working for peace are not just provisional measures for the interim, the time towards the final goal. Rather, searching for specific ways of cooperation on vital concerns contributes to increasing mutual understanding and a shared vision of faith.

During the last period of this mandate, the Joint Working Group held its meetings via Zoom due to the difficult circumstances caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which has affected the lives of millions of people. As the crisis deepened, the parent bodies shared their ways of adapting and of finding solutions to counteract disillusionment, fear, and instability. Churches contributed immensely to curbing the spread of the coronavirus, not only by promoting solidarity, accountability, wisdom, care and fact-based policies, but also by providing support to schools and hospitals and pastoral care to those suffering from the COVID-19 disease and its consequences, to those at risk of contracting the virus, and to those who lost their dearest family members or friends. Not least, churches brought healing, spiritual nourishment and comfort to the homes of people by streaming their services online, sustaining thereby the spirit of community and belongingness.

The present crisis presents a degree of complexity that makes it vital to strengthen our relationship even more and to intensify the affirmation of Christian values. The challenges generated by the pandemic require a reinforcing of a culture of compassion and solidarity, as well as the promotion of solidarity between human beings. A concrete example of fruitful collaboration between the two parent bodies is the joint document “Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action during Covid-19 and Beyond.” This document sheds light on values such as service, hope, care, and love, reaffirming the co-responsibility and interconnectedness of human beings “as a family linked by one Creator, and created in God’s image.”

As the times ahead are likely to be unprecedented in the number of global shifts that the world might experience, the two parent bodies move forward with faithfulness in a spirit of shared accountability as well as in a joint focus on addressing injustices, contributing to the healing of the wounds of all affected, and developing bridges in our fragmented world. The Churches are facing difficulties in their pastoral ministry, the pandemic affecting the public worship and weakening communion among the members of communities. However, many actions on social justice work and medical assistance were implemented, creating a network of compassion, generosity, and kindness. The Churches become the practical hands of God’s love for all human beings. There is still a lot of work to be done in finding new pastoral approaches and constructive strategies to overcome these challenges. Therefore, the two study texts offered

by the Joint Working Group provide recommendations for better collaboration between different actors and on different levels facing challenges created by migration, conflict situations, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Pursuing its mandate during the pandemic with the help of modern technologies, the JWG was energized and encouraged to fulfil its task and not to give in to ecumenical pessimism and cheap justifications of divisions that contradict the prayer of Christ for his disciples (John 17: 21). In this spirit, the JWG is looking beyond 2021 towards 2025 with the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 that has been and continues to be the common basis of the recognition of the apostolic faith. The Nicene Creed has been a light through the ages, a source of hope and an antidote against hate, violence and despair. 2025 will be an opportunity to affirm this common faith and to discover how much closer the churches can come to each other by walking, praying and working together.

Scope and Content of the Report

The Report focuses on cooperation between the RCC and the WCC. During this mandate, the JWG gave particular attention to strengthening direct cooperation between Holy See dicasteries – the different “departments” of the Vatican – and the programmatic work of the WCC secretariat, together with the member churches and ecumenical partners. By concentrating its efforts in this way, the JWG was fully conscious of the constantly changing contexts that need to be addressed: the ecclesial landscape, with the growth of Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, the deep geopolitical shifts over recent decades, the devastating consequences of climate change and financial crises, conflicts concerning values and personal ethics, violence within and between different religious communities, and the growing need for the accompaniment of Christian communities in conflict-situations.

The RCC and WCC, for instance, are two of the “four pillars” of the Global Christian Forum alongside the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and the World Pentecostal Fellowship (WPF). They are part of the Conference of the Secretaries of Christian World Communions (CWCs). They are working more and more closely together in the various conventions and programmes of the United Nations (UN), despite their different status as observer state and faith-based organization with consultative status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). But the main emphasis has to be on growing relationships of trust and cooperation between the two parent bodies.

The Report consists of three main chapters following this introduction:

Chapter II, Walking, praying and working together, reports on the visit of Pope Francis to the WCC and the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey (June 2018). It was a culminating event of the 70th anniversary of the WCC, directly after

the Central Committee meeting of the WCC that opened with a prayer led by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

This is followed by more information and brief reflections on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, the programmatic focus of the WCC from Busan 2013 to Karlsruhe 2022

Chapter III introduces the mandate of the JWG, its composition and ways of working, highlights the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the JWG in the Centro Pro Unione in Rome in 2015 and presents the work of the JWG from 2014 onwards, with the two study documents that were produced. The two studies with recommendations on peacebuilding in conflict situations and migrants and refugees are both included in the report as appendices. At the end, brief reflections on the future mandate of the JWG are presented for consideration at the beginning of the next mandate.

Chapter IV then gives an overview of the ongoing collaboration between the RCC and the WCC from 2014 to 2021 in different areas of work.

Chapter V presents a list of the JWG members from 2014 to 2021. It is there that we remember with sincere gratitude the contribution of Reverend Robina Winbush of the Presbyterian Church of the USA, who passed away on 12 March 2019 returning from a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine.

REPORT OF THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP BETWEEN THE WCC AND PENTECOSTALS

Introduction

The Joint Consultative Group (JCG) is a platform for discussion, mutual encouragement, understanding and cooperation between Pentecostal churches and member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The report of the JCG reflects the work of the group between 2016 and 2022. It is prepared as a resource for WCC 11th Assembly with recommendations for how to strengthen the dialogue between the WCC fellowship of churches and Pentecostal churches around the world.

Previous WCC assemblies received the reports of the JCG and endorsed the continuation of the group. The Porto Alegre Assembly (2006) recognized “the visible contribution of the Pentecostal churches in the dynamically changing Christian landscape, and the importance to the ecumenical movement of engaging in mutual learning and sustained dialogue with the Pentecostal churches”.¹ Speaking of the Council’s broader church relations, the Busan Assembly (2013) recommended the WCC “explore methodologies for engaging the wider ecumenical movement and international organisations in a pilgrimage of justice and peace”.²

The following report bears witness to the JCG members’ attempt to understand one another better and to learn from their different theological traditions. It is neither an authoritative declaration of the churches involved, nor a confessional agreement on doctrinal issues. It is a resource for anyone who wants learn more about the work of the JCG.

1. The Story of the JCG – Moving in the Spirit

The Harare Assembly (1998) established the Joint Consultative Group between Pentecostals and the World Council of Churches, recognizing the growing need to consolidate existing relations and create new ones; to initiate study on issues of common interest, to explore different forms of participation; and to encourage collaboration.

The first round of consultation, which took place from 2000 to 2005, established a common mandate:

1 Report of the Policy Reference Committee, “God in your grace ... Official Report of the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches”, WCC, Geneva, 2007, p 281.

2 Report of the Programme Guidelines Committee, “Encountering the God of Life, Official Report of the Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches”, WCC, Geneva, 2014, p 246.

- to search for better ways of understanding one another;
- to look for new opportunities for mutual learning and action;
- to share our experience of Christian witness with one another;
- to discuss our challenges with the hope of moving beyond them;
- to share what we will learn with our respective churches;
- leading to our affirmation of the common life in the Spirit.

Building on the relationships and hard-earned trust developed during the first round, a second round of consultation, which took place from 2007 to 2012, studied the marks of the church as affirmed in the Nicene Creed – One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. The study identified considerable common ground on the nature of the church, while providing space to discuss different experiences of being the church.³

A third round of consultation took place from 2016 to 2022 under the leadership of two co-moderators – Rev. Prof. Dr Cecil M. Robeck (Assemblies of God), on behalf of the Pentecostal church members, and Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou (Church of Greece), on behalf of the WCC church members.

During its third round, the JCG sought to deepen its dialogue on the church by addressing discipleship and formation through the lead question “How does the Holy Spirit work in the church to form disciples that transform the world?”

Since it began, the experience of the JCG has affirmed that growing together in Christ requires humility, honesty and openness. The JCG has developed some “best practices” to encourage its conversation:

1. The JCG is comprised of two teams of equal size representing WCC member churches and Pentecostal churches. Each round of the JCG has included both continuing and new members.
2. Sharing faith stories – stories of coming to faith in Christ, of being nurtured in faith and of life in the church – is a methodology for building relationship rooted in understanding one another as followers of Christ. Every JCG meeting opens with sharing.
3. Interdisciplinary methods and shared resources – the JCG uses complementary methodologies that include prayer, bible study, theological presentation and discussion to address central themes and correlates. The JCG spends as much time studying relevant Bible texts as discussing different theological positions.
4. Encounter with local communities – the JCG intentionally meets in locations where it can engage with local communities and churches as a methodology to strengthen its learning, amplify its outcomes and encourage the reception of its work.

3 *Resource Book*, World Council of Churches 10th Assembly, Busan, 2013, WCC, Geneva, 2013, pp 151-163.

5. Broader ecumenical movement – the JCG serves as a “switch board” for sharing ecumenical developments that can help nurture dialogue between WCC member churches and Pentecostal churches. Every JCG meeting includes sharing about the members’ engagements with bi-lateral dialogues and other relevant ecumenical platforms.

2. From Busan to Karlsruhe: Our Pilgrimage Together

The JCG met regularly between 2016 and 2019. In-person meetings were not possible between 2020 and 2022 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2016, the JCG executive met in Geneva, Switzerland to develop an agenda for a third round of consultation seeking to amplify the outcomes of its work and strengthen relations between WCC and Pentecostal churches. The study on discipleship and formation was partly inspired by the invitation of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) to recommit to witnessing to Christ together towards life and the opportunity to offer a unique perspective on discipleship and evangelism.

In 2017, the JCG met in Pasadena, California, USA at Fuller Theological Seminary. The meeting was an opportunity for dialogue with Pentecostal scholars and the leadership of the seminary. It also included visits to the historic locations and churches associated with the Azusa Street revival of 1906-1909, considered by many as the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement.

The discussions in Pasadena explored four aspects of JCG study on discipleship, including 1) discipleship as holistic evangelism, 2) discipleship as a life-long process of growing into Christ, 3) discipleship nurturing faith through the power of the Holy Spirit and 4) the transforming power of the Gospel to bridge the gap between church and secular life.

In 2018, the JCG met in Arusha, Tanzania in connection with the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism under the theme “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship”. The members of the JCG joined the conference as participants, sharing their experience with the broader ecumenical movement and contributing to the development of the “Arusha Call to Discipleship”.

The JCG met for one and a half days after the conference to share insights from the event and to continue reflecting on discipleship and formation. The discussion inspired the JCG to return to the topic of baptism and discipleship, recognizing the importance of baptism as an invitation to follow Christ in discipleship.

In 2019, the JCG met in Switzerland at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, outside Geneva. The meeting included prayer, fellowship and discussion with Bossey students and faculty as well as Sunday worship with different Orthodox communities at the Chambésy Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

As agreed in Arusha, discussions at Bossey focussed on the relationship between baptism and discipleship, looking at common biblical resources from the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and Pauline literature. The JCG also discussed different theological perspectives and the convergence text on Baptism published by Faith and Order in 1982 (BEM).

The JCG was to have met in 2020 in Denver, Colorado, USA at Iliff School of Theology to conclude its discussion and prepare its report to WCC 11th Assembly. Because of the pandemic, the JCG was not able to meet again in person. The executive group resumed working on-line in 2022 to complete the JCG report.

3. Observations from Our Discussions: Learning through the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit and discipleship: what did we share, learn and observe?

Words like discipleship, sanctification and spiritual growth denote the Christian journey into deeper communion with God and service to the world. In each case the presence of the Holy Spirit empowers us to become participants in the Divine nature by grace (2 Peter 1:3-4) and to be equipped for practical and Christ-like service in, through and beyond the church.

The source of discipleship – The JCG celebrated that discipleship in the name of Christ started on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21, 32-33, 38-39) and that the journey to a mature Christian life continues throughout one's lifetime. Pentecost reminds the disciple that God is present in Christ and through the Holy Spirit in communion with others (Acts 2:42).

If the churches want to heed God's call to mission, then a holistic understanding of discipleship is necessary in which the role of the Holy Spirit is essential (Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit works salvation in Christ, who directs us into sanctification for the glory of God, and calls us into service for all of creation (Mark 16:15).

Discipleship happens in communion – There was strong agreement that the work of the Holy Spirit as speaker of truth, as healer and as transformer empowers Christian discipleship (John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:9; Romans 12:1-2; Acts 1:8). The Spirit produces godly fruit through the believer (Galatians 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit makes Christ present (Matthew 18:20) to renew us in the image of God, inspiring us to worship, read and study scripture, share in fellowship and serve. However, in the same way that Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31), we were reminded that no one can claim the Holy Spirit for their

own purpose, rather, with humility, we receive all gifts from the Holy Spirit for service according to the will of God.

In our times of prayer and Bible study we shared as members of the JCG how the Holy Spirit prompted us to serve with the gifts that we have been given. We joyfully agreed that it is the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God that is activating these gifts for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). Through meeting, sharing and learning together, we have realized that we are on the path of discipleship together, regardless of our diverse histories and church affiliations. The love of God that has been put into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) empowers us to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3) and move together as disciples following Christ (John 17:22-23).

Discipleship is contextual – Christ calls us into discipleship *in* our particular time and situation. Hence every Christian should also be willing to be transformed through the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:25). As we learn to listen to each other and seek to be open to the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31; Revelations 3:22) we also begin to speak with one voice about issues that concern our church families.

Discipleship is costly – Christian discipleship has its price because it does not stop at personal transformation. In obedience to the gospel (Luke 14:27), it aims to transform the world in and through Christ-like ways.

Baptism and discipleship: what did we share, learn and observe?

The JCG acknowledged that a discussion of baptism presupposes the need for baptism. All of us agreed that prior to our conversion we live in a “corrupted” or “sinful” state. We need salvation. For some that begins at the point of baptism, the moment when chrismation also takes place – the time and place where what has been received through the Holy Spirit, becomes active in the life of the one that is baptized. For others, salvation may come at another point such as when one believes, realizes that she or he is a sinner, repents, confesses and desires a new life in Christ. It is at this point that the Holy Spirit comes to indwell the believer.

Baptism may be understood as an ordinance – something the believer does out of obedience to God. It may be understood as a sacrament – a means through which or whereby God pours out divine grace upon the person being baptized. One can view baptism as both a sacrament and an ordinance. Many who receive adult baptism think of it in this way. Baptism seems to act as a place or moment of promise, with God promising to forgive sin and give the Holy Spirit. At the same time, either the community or the individual makes promises as well. God never fails to keep His promises.

We listened to one another tell about our experience of baptism:

- Some were baptized as infants, while others were baptized after making a confession of faith.
- Some received extensive catechesis before being baptized, while others received catechesis after being baptized.
- Some were admitted to the Lord's Supper or Eucharist after they were baptized and confirmed, while others were admitted following a confession of faith, but prior to baptism.

We agreed that the Holy Spirit is at work in the world, drawing people to God (John 6:44; John 16:13-15). We spent time discussing the various sequences of Baptism practiced by our respective churches. This discussion led to questions like “when do we receive the Holy Spirit?”

- Some contended that the Spirit comes at the point of baptism, while others stated that the Spirit comes when conversion takes place as evidenced by a confession of faith.

When an infant receives baptism, others become responsible for carrying the memory of that baptism. That responsibility rests with the community of faith. Those who receive baptism later – children, youth or adults who make a confession of faith followed by baptism – will have personal memories of their baptism. The community of faith is part of that baptism and they too carry the memory of the act.

- In both cases, the community plays a role in baptism, demonstrating that baptism is intended to be a communal event, welcoming the candidate into the Christian community.
- In both cases, baptism is part of a spiritual journey or pilgrimage in a life-long process (Isaiah 35:8). Even so, this journey includes or begins with an awakening or call.

Regardless of when baptism takes place during the journey of our spiritual life, it is a testimony or witness that identifies us with Christ. Our formation in Christ is accomplished through a number of rites, rituals, hymns, the study of scripture and discipleship training, all of which are intended to make us better followers of Christ. It is an ongoing process of living life according to the example of Christ and through sanctification we are being perfected in our journey with God. In a sense, baptism is not something to which we submit, it is a beginning that comes to completion when we stand face-to-face before Christ.

One of the WCC members asked, “Which is more important – baptism in water or baptism in the Spirit?” The Pentecostal response was to affirm they are not in competition. It is not a matter of which comes first or which is more

important. Rather Pentecostals distinguish between the two. What is clear, is that when one becomes a Christian, one receives the Holy Spirit (Romans 8.9), leading to a deeper communion with the Triune God. Baptism in water is done in obedience to Christ, and for the sacramental Pentecostals of which there are some, it brings a manifestation of God's grace as well. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is also a foundational experience available in the Christian life that brings power to that life, and an ability to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, making that ministry effective.

Another WCC member recalled that there is connection between baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit that is *metanoia*. Another observed that when we speak about baptism in water, we mean both water and Spirit. It is the new birth. It is the renewal of human nature, the clothing with Christ and becoming a member of the church (Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13). But a member of the Pentecostal team quickly responded, "Baptism in the Spirit is not the same as baptism in water."

At that point, we were reminded that the JCG exists as a platform to learn about each other and to learn from one another. There are things we have in common theologically and there are portions of our mystical life that differ between us and which we do not yet understand in the other.

Certainly, the New Testament favoured the baptism of those who confessed their faith in Jesus, without explicitly excluding infant baptism or prohibiting it. Our discussion on baptism reminded us of the value of the ecumenical study, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (BEM). The breadth of differences expressed within the wider fellowship of WCC member churches also exists between the WCC and Pentecostal members of the JCG. As such, BEM makes it possible for all of us to accept the mutual recognition of baptism, according to our tradition. It is equally important to remember that the practice of baptism and discernment of who is a candidate for baptism developed for many centuries before the infant baptism became a common practice in the church. The JCG concluded its discussion, noting the desire to learn more from one another regarding baptism in the Holy Spirit.

4. Unexpected Fruits: Surprised by the Spirit

Since it began, the JCG has affirmed that patience is a virtue when encouraging WCC member churches and Pentecostal churches to express their understanding of unity in Christ. At each meeting JCG members shared from their wider ecumenical experience, noting progress in relationships, dialogue and cooperation. Some highlights included:

- In 2010 and 2013, the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) and the WCC exchanged invitations to participate in their respective global

events. The tradition continued with the participation of WCC leadership in the Pentecostal World Conference in Brazil (2016) and Canada (2019) as well as the participation of PWF leadership in the WCC central committee meeting in Norway (2016) and Switzerland (2018). The global visibility of WCC and PWF relations helps strengthen dialogue, mutual recognition, understanding and cooperation at national and local levels.

- The bi-lateral dialogues and conversations between Pentecostals and other church families has continued to flourish, i.e. with the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed traditions. The Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue, the oldest such bi-lateral, celebrated 50 years in 2022. The various dialogues and conversations have each helped to broaden ecumenical engagement with Pentecostal churches, making it possible, not only to work together and pray together, but increasingly to act together.
- The Global Christian Forum (GCF) promotes Christian unity and strengthens relations among church leaders from all church families. It is officially supported by four “pillars” entrusted with the facilitation of the GCF – Roman Catholic Church (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity), Pentecostal World Fellowship, World Council of Churches and World Evangelical Alliance. The GCF is the broadest ecumenical forum of its kind and the support of its four pillars encourages similar forums at regional and national levels.
- The Pentecostal World Fellowship, at its meeting in Calgary, Canada (2019), agreed to establish a Christian Unity Commission to facilitate and coordinate PWF involvement in ecumenical activities, including dialogues in which the PWF is represented officially. This offers hope for deeper collaboration in the future between the PWF and the WCC.
- In 2022, the WCC central committee received the Apostolic Faith Mission Church of South Africa as a WCC member church. The church, which was formed by missionaries from the Azusa Street Mission, is one of the oldest Pentecostal churches in the world. It is the first PWF member church to join the WCC. The church was represented in the first two rounds of the JCG.

5. Continuing in the Spirit: Transforming Discipleship (Recommendations)

The JCG celebrates the growing recognition of trust between WCC member churches and Pentecostal churches based on their faithful witness to Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The JCG

encourages the continued involvement of Pentecostal churches in the life and work of the WCC. Because of its encounters with students and faculties, the JCG encourages ecumenical collaboration in theological education and formation to strengthen relations at the local level.

For more than two decades, the WCC has sponsored the JCG with the significant participation of individuals representing Pentecostal churches. Given the signs of growing rapprochement between the WCC and the PWF, the JCG recommends the following:

- R1. The World Council of Churches and the Pentecostal World Fellowship's Christian Unity Commission, as parent bodies, agree to continue the Joint Consultative Group as platform for discussion, mutual encouragement, understanding and cooperation between the member churches of the WCC and the PWF, each appointing a co-moderator and an equal number of members.
- R2. The Joint Consultative Group, in its fourth round, should continue to study the Holy Spirit and Discipleship, with a focus on the importance of Spirit Baptism in our different traditions.
- R3. The Joint Consultative Group, should continue with the "best practices" established by previous groups, including sharing faith stories; interdisciplinary methods that include prayer, Bible study and theological discussion; as well as meeting in locations that provide opportunities for encounter with local churches and communities.
- R4. The Joint Consultative Group should give particular attention to the formation of a new generation in a concerted effort to be an intergenerational platform to promote unity and common witness in Christ.

PART FOUR

Policy Documents



CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

***(Adopted by consensus of the central committee,
June 2022; Rules I and VI pending confirmation
by the 11th assembly)***

At its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 15-18 June 2022, the central committee adopted amendments to the WCC Rules. According to the Rule XX (Amendments) “No alteration in rules I, VI and XX shall come into effect until it has been confirmed by the assembly.”

This document includes the full Rules of the World Council of Churches with Rules I and VI presented in a shaded format that indicates the current version of the text of the Rules presented above the central committee’s proposed amendments, just below, showing new language underlined, and deleted language with strike-through.

The assembly is asked to confirm the changes adopted by the central committee in June 2022 in accordance with Rule XX.

Constitution

I. Basis

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

II. Membership

Churches shall be eligible for membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches who express their agreement with the basis upon which the Council is founded and satisfy such criteria for membership as the assembly or central committee may prescribe. The central committee shall consider applications for membership in accordance with Rule I.

III. Purposes and functions

The World Council of Churches is constituted by the churches to serve the one ecumenical movement. It incorporates the work of the world movements for Faith and Order and Life and Work, the International Missionary Council, and the World Council of Christian Education.

The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.

In seeking *koinonia* in faith and life, witness and service, the churches through the Council will:

- promote the prayerful search for forgiveness and reconciliation in a spirit of mutual accountability, the development of deeper relationships through theological dialogue, and the sharing of human, spiritual and material resources with one another;
- facilitate common witness in each place and in all places, and support each other in their work for mission and evangelism;
- express their commitment to diakonia in serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, promoting one human family in justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation, so that all may experience the fullness of life;
- nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through processes of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context;
- assist each other in their relationships to and with people of other faith communities;
- foster renewal and growth in unity, worship, mission and service.

In order to strengthen the one ecumenical movement, the Council will:

- foster the living fellowship of the member churches and the coherence of the one ecumenical movement;
- nurture relations with and among churches, especially within but also beyond its membership;
- establish and maintain relations with national councils, regional conferences of churches, organizations of Christian world communions and other ecumenical bodies;
- support ecumenical initiatives at regional, national and local levels;
- facilitate the creation of networks among ecumenical organizations;
- work towards maintaining the coherence of the one ecumenical movement in its diverse manifestations.

IV. Authority

The World Council of Churches shall offer counsel and provide opportunity for united action in matters of common interest.

It may take action on behalf of constituent churches only in such matters as one or more of them may commit to it and only on behalf of such churches.

The World Council of Churches shall not legislate for the churches; nor shall it act for them in any manner except as indicated above or as may hereafter be specified by the constituent churches.

V. Organization

The World Council of Churches shall discharge its functions through an assembly, a central committee, an executive committee, and other subordinate bodies as may be established.

1. The assembly

- a. The assembly shall be the supreme legislative body governing the World Council of Churches and shall ordinarily meet at eight-year intervals.
- b. The assembly shall be composed of official representatives of the member churches, known as delegates, elected by the member churches.
- c. The assembly shall be an expression of the living fellowship of member churches, shall strengthen the one ecumenical movement, and shall have the following functions:
 - i. to elect the president or presidents of the World Council of Churches;
 - ii. to elect not more than 145 members of the central committee from among the delegates which the member churches have elected to the assembly;
 - iii. to elect not more than 5 members from among the representatives elected to the assembly by churches which do not fulfil the criteria of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons;
 - iv. to determine the overall policies of the World Council of Churches and to review programmes undertaken to implement policies previously adopted;
 - v. to delegate to the central committee specific functions, except to amend this constitution and to allocate the membership of the central committee granted by this constitution to the assembly exclusively.

2. The central committee

- a. The central committee shall be that governing body of the World Council of Churches with primary responsibility and authority to:
 - i. carry out the vision and policies of the assembly and to determine and develop the strategies to do so;
 - ii. deepen the living fellowship of member churches, and shall include opportunities for fulfilling together the common calling that is the basis of membership;
 - iii. seek to provide coherence and strategic leadership to the one ecumenical movement, and provide opportunities for consultation among Christian churches on issues of mutual concern;
 - iv. be responsible for elaborating institutional and programmatic strategic plans based on the policies adopted by the assembly and for ensuring their implementation;
 - v. exercise the functions of the assembly itself delegated to it by the assembly between its meetings, except the assembly's power to amend this constitution and to allocate or alter the allocation of the membership of central committee.
- b. The central committee shall be composed of the president or presidents of the World Council of Churches and not more than 150 members.
 - i. Not more than 145 members shall be elected by the assembly from among the delegates the member churches have elected to the assembly. Such members shall be distributed among the member churches by the assembly giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the Council, the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council, reasonable geographical and cultural balance, and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council.
 - ii. Not more than 5 members shall be elected by the assembly from among the representatives elected to the assembly by churches which do not fulfil the criteria of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons.
 - iii. A vacancy in the membership of the central committee, occurring between meetings of the assembly, shall be filled by the central committee itself after consultation with the church of which the person previously occupying the position was a member.
- c. The central committee shall have, in addition to the general powers set out in (a) above, the following powers:
 - i. to elect its moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators from among the members of the central committee;

- ii. to elect the executive committee from among the members of the central committee;
 - iii. to elect committees, commissions, and consultative bodies;
 - iv. to initiate and terminate programmes and to set priorities for the work of the Council within the policies adopted by the assembly;
 - v. to elect the general secretary;
 - vi. to elect one or more deputy general secretaries, and to make provision for the appointment of all members of the staff of the Council;
 - vii. to decide membership matters;
 - viii. to adopt the reports of executive committee actions, and to receive the budget and financial reports;
 - ix. to determine and develop the strategies to deliver the goals set by the assembly, including institutional policies for programme and finance and to secure financial support for the Council;
 - x. to plan for the meetings of the assembly, making provision for the conduct of its business, for worship and study, and for common Christian commitment. The central committee shall determine the number of delegates to the assembly and allocate them among the member churches giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the Council; the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council; reasonable geographical and cultural balance; the desired distribution among church officials, parish ministers and lay persons; among men, women and young people; and participation by persons whose special knowledge and experience will be needed;
 - xi. to delegate specific functions to the executive committee, or to other bodies or persons, and to hold them accountable for that delegation.
- d. The central committee can delegate to the executive committee such authority necessary to ensure fiduciary responsibility and accountability for governance of the Council, including monitoring programmes, finance and personnel matters.

3. Rules

The assembly or the central committee may adopt and amend rules not inconsistent with this constitution for the conduct of the business of the World Council of Churches.

4. By-laws

The assembly or the central committee may adopt and amend by-laws not inconsistent with this constitution for the functioning of its committees, consultative bodies and commissions.

5. Quorum

A quorum for the conduct of any business by the assembly or the central committee shall be one-half of its membership.

VI. Other ecumenical Christian organizations

1. Such world confessional bodies and such international ecumenical organizations as may be designated by the central committee may be invited to send representatives to the assembly and to the central committee, in such numbers as the central committee shall determine; however, these representatives shall not have the right to participate when decisions are taken.
2. Such national councils and regional conferences of churches, other Christian councils and missionary councils as may be designated by the central committee may be invited to send representatives to the assembly and to the central committee, in such numbers as the central committee shall determine; however, these representatives shall not have the right to participate when decisions are taken.

VII. Amendments

The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the delegates to the assembly present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been reviewed by the central committee, and notice of it sent to the member churches not less than six months before the meeting of the assembly. The central committee itself, as well as the member churches, shall have the right to propose such amendment.

Rules

I. Membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is comprised of churches which have constituted the Council or which have been admitted into membership and which continue to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches. The term “church” as used in this article could also include an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of churches within a

country or region, or within the same confession, may choose to participate in the World Council of Churches as one member. Churches within the same country or region or within the same confession may apply jointly to belong to the fellowship of the Council, in order to respond to their common calling, to strengthen their joint participation and/or to satisfy the requirement of minimum size (rule I.3.b.iii). Such groupings of churches are encouraged by the World Council of Churches; each individual church within the grouping must satisfy the criteria for membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, except the requirements of size. A church seeking affiliation with a grouping of autonomous churches which is a member of the World Council of Churches must agree with the basis and fulfil the criteria for membership.

The general secretary shall maintain the official lists of member churches that have been accepted to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, noting any special arrangement accepted by the assembly or central committee. Separate lists shall be maintained of member churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches that do or do not participate in decision-making.

1. Application

A church that wishes to join the World Council of Churches shall apply in writing to the general secretary.

2. Processing

The general secretary shall submit all such applications through the executive committee to the central committee together with such information as he or she considers necessary to enable the central committee to make a decision on the application.

3. Criteria

Churches applying to join the World Council of Churches (“applicant churches”) are required first to express agreement with the basis on which the Council is founded and confirm their commitment to the purposes and functions of the Council as defined in articles I and III of the constitution. The basis states: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

Applicant churches should give an account of how their faith and witness relate to these norms and practices:

a. Theological

- i. In its life and witness, the church professes faith in the triune God according to the scriptures, and as this faith is reflected in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

- ii. The church maintains a ministry of proclaiming the gospel and celebrating the sacraments as understood by its doctrines.
 - iii. The church baptizes in the name of the one God, “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” and acknowledges the need to move towards the recognition of the baptism of other churches.
 - iv. The church recognizes the presence and activity of Christ and the Holy Spirit outside its own boundaries and prays for the gift of God’s wisdom to all in the awareness that other member churches also believe in the Holy Trinity and the saving grace of God.
 - v. The church recognizes in the other member churches elements of the true church, even if it does not regard them “as churches in the true and full sense of the word” (Toronto statement).
- b. Organizational
- i. The church must produce evidence of sustained autonomous life and organization.
 - ii. The church must be able to take the decision to apply for formal membership in the World Council of Churches and continue to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches without obtaining the permission of any other body or person.
 - iii. An applicant church must ordinarily have at least fifty thousand members. The central committee, for exceptional reasons, may dispense with this requirement and accept a church that does not fulfil the criteria of size.

iv. ***Current text***

An applicant church with more than 10,000 members but less than 50,000 members that has not been granted membership for exceptional reasons under rule I.3.b.iii, but is otherwise eligible for membership, can be admitted as a member subject to the following conditions: (a) it shall not have the right to participate in decision-making in the assembly, and (b) it may participate with other churches in selecting five representatives to the central committee in accordance with rule IV.4.b.iii. Such church shall be considered as a member church belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches in all other respects.

iv. ***Proposed text***

An applicant church with more than 10,000 members but ~~less~~fewer than 50,000 members that has not been granted membership for exceptional reasons under rule I.3.b.iii, but is otherwise eligible for membership, can be admitted

as a member subject to the following conditions: (a) it shall not have the right to participate in decision-making in the assembly, and (b) it may participate with other churches in ~~selecting~~proposing five representatives to the central committee in accordance with rule IV.4.b.iii. Such church shall be considered as a member church belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches in all other respects.

- v. Churches must recognize the essential interdependence of the member churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, particularly those of the same confession, and should make every effort to practise constructive ecumenical relations with other churches within their country or region. This will normally mean that the church is a member of the national council of churches or similar body and of the regional/sub-regional ecumenical organization.

4. Consultation

Before admitting a church to membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, the appropriate world confessional body or bodies and national council or regional ecumenical organization shall be consulted.

5. Decision on acceptance

The Central Committee shall consider applications for membership according to the consensus model of decision making. The application shall be accepted for a specified interim period of participation in the work of the World Council of Churches and for interaction with the local fellowship of member churches. The member churches of the World Council of Churches shall be consulted during the interim period. The Central Committee shall assess whether a consensus of member churches has developed in favour of the application, in which event the applicant church shall be considered a new member church. If there is no consensus, the Central Committee shall deem the application rejected.

6. Resignation and Suspension

- a. A church which desires to resign its membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches can do so at any time. A church which has resigned but desires to re-join the Council must again apply for membership.
- b. The central committee may suspend the membership of a church: (i) at the church's request; (ii) because the basis of, or the theological criteria for, membership has not been maintained by that church or; (iii) because the church has persistently neglected its responsibilities of membership as described under rule II.

c. ***Current text***

When the central committee suspends the membership of a church the general secretary shall present progress reports to the executive committee until a solution is mutually agreed. Any decision about the membership status of the church shall be taken by the central committee.

c. ***Proposed text***

When the central committee suspends the membership of a church, the general secretary shall ascertain whether the reason for the suspension is resolved, can or cannot be resolved, and shall present progress reports to the executive committee until ~~a solution is mutually agreed~~the process for the suspension is concluded. Any decision about the membership status of the church shall be taken by the central committee.

II. Responsibilities of membership

Membership in the World Council of Churches signifies faithfulness to the basis of the Council, fellowship in the Council, participation in the life and work of the Council and commitment to the ecumenical movement as integral to the mission of the church. Churches which are members of the World Council of Churches are expected to:

1. appoint delegates to the assembly, the major policy-making body of the Council, and participate in council with other member churches, in the ethos of consensus, in shaping the ecumenical vision and the ecumenical agenda;
2. inform the Council of their primary concerns, priorities, activities and constructive criticisms as they may relate to its programmes as well as any matters which they feel need expression of ecumenical solidarity or which merit the attention of the Council and/or churches around the world;
3. communicate the meaning of ecumenical commitment, to foster and encourage ecumenical relations and action at all levels of their church life and to pursue ecumenical fellowship locally, nationally, regionally and internationally;
4. interpret both the broader ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, its nature, purpose and programmes throughout their membership as a normal part of their own reporting to their constituency;

5. encourage participation in World Council of Churches programmes, activities and meetings, including:
 - a. proposing persons who could make a particular contribution to and/or participate in the Council's various committees, meetings and consultations, programmes, publications and staff;
 - b. establishing links between their own programme offices and the appropriate World Council of Churches programme offices; and
 - c. submitting materials for and promoting Council communications resources: books, periodicals and other publications;
6. respond to decisions of the central committee which call for study, action or other follow-up by the member churches as well as respond to requests on matters referred by the central or executive committee or the general secretary for prayer, advice, information or opinion;
7. make an annual contribution to the general budget of the Council: the amount of the contribution shall be agreed upon in consultation between the church and the Council and shall be regularly reviewed;
8. participate in ways commensurate with their resources and in consultation with the Council, in assuming responsibility for the costs of the Council's programmes and for expenses related to travel and accommodation of their representatives to Council events.

The implications of not fulfilling such obligations shall be such as the central committee shall decide.

III. Churches in association with the World Council of Churches

A church that agrees with the basis of the Council may request in writing to be received as a church in association with the World Council of Churches, stating its reasons for requesting this mode of relating with the Council. If the reasons are approved by the central committee, such a church may be accepted to be in association with the World Council of Churches.

Churches in association with the World Council of Churches:

1. can send representative(s) to the assembly and the central committee who can speak with permission of the moderator, but not participate in decision-making;

2. can be invited to participate in the work of the commissions, consultative bodies, reference and advisory groups of the Council as consultants or advisers;
3. have the possibility of participating in the work of the World Council of Churches as described, but will not be identified with decisions taken or statements issued by the Council;
4. shall make an annual contribution to the general budget of the Council; the amount of the contribution shall be agreed upon in consultation between the church and the Council and shall be regularly reviewed; no financial support will ordinarily be made available from the Council to such churches to facilitate their participation.

The general secretary shall maintain a list of churches in association with the Council.

IV. The assembly

1. Composition of the assembly

- a. Persons with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making

The assembly shall be composed of official representatives of the member churches, known as delegates, elected by the member churches, with the right to speak and with the responsibility to participate in decision-making

- i. The central committee shall determine the number of delegates to the assembly well in advance of its meeting.
- ii. The central committee shall determine the percentage of the delegates, not less than 80 percent, who shall be both nominated and elected by the member churches. Each member church shall be entitled to a minimum of one delegate. The central committee shall allocate the other delegates in this group among the member churches giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the World Council of Churches, the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council, and reasonable geographical and cultural balance. The central committee shall recommend the proper distribution within delegations among church officials, parish ministers and lay persons; and among men, women, young people and Indigenous peoples. The central committee may make provision for the election by the member churches of alternate delegates who shall serve

- only in place of such delegates who are unable to attend meetings of the assembly.
- iii. The remaining delegates, not more than 20 percent, shall be elected by certain member churches upon nomination of the central committee as follows:
 - iv. If the moderator or any vice-moderator of the central committee is not elected a delegate within the provisions of paragraph ii. above, the central committee shall nominate such person to the member church of which he or she is a member. Paragraphs v. and vi. below apply to such nominees.
 - v. The central committee shall determine the categories of additional delegates necessary to achieve balance in respect of:
 - a) the varied sizes of churches and confessions;
 - b) the historical significance, future potential or geographical location and cultural background of particular churches, as well as the special importance of united churches;
 - c) the presence of persons whose special knowledge and experience will be necessary to the assembly;
 - d) proportions of women, youth, lay persons and local pastors;
 - e) participation of Indigenous peoples;
 - f) participation of persons with disabilities.
 - vi. The central committee shall invite the member churches to propose the names of persons in the categories so determined whom the churches would be willing to elect, if nominated by the central committee.
 - vii. From the list so compiled, the central committee shall propose the nomination of particular individuals to their respective member church.
 - viii. If that member church elects the said nominee, he or she shall become an additional delegate of that member church.
 - ix. The member churches shall not elect alternate delegates for such delegates.

Member churches are encouraged to consult regionally in the selection of the delegates described in paragraphs ii. and iii. above, provided that every delegate is elected by the church of which he or she is a member in accordance with its own procedures.

- b. Persons with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making

- In addition to the delegates, who alone have the right to participate in decision-making, the following categories of persons may attend meetings of the assembly with the right to speak:
- i. Presidents and moderator or vice-moderator(s): Any president of the Council or moderator or vice-moderator of the central committee who has not been elected delegate by their church.
 - ii. Members of the outgoing central committee: Any member of the outgoing central committee who has not been elected delegate by his or her church.
 - iii. Representatives of churches which do not fulfil the criteria of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons: Each one of these churches may elect one representative.
 - iv. Advisers: The central committee may invite a small number of persons who have a special contribution to make to the deliberations of the assembly or who have participated in the activities of the Council. Before an invitation is extended to an adviser who is a member of a member church, that church shall be consulted.
 - v. Delegated representatives: The central committee may invite persons officially designated as delegated representatives by organizations with which the World Council of Churches maintains relationship.
 - vi. Delegated observers: The central committee may invite persons officially designated as delegated observers by non-member churches.
- c. Persons without the right to speak or to participate in decision-making
- i. Advisors to Member Church Delegations: Persons representing the ecumenical interests and relationships of the member churches who accompany their delegations.
 - ii. The central committee may invite to attend the meetings of the assembly without the right to speak or to participate in decision-making:
 - a) Observers: Persons identified with organizations with which the World Council of Churches maintains relationship which are not represented by delegated representatives or with non-member churches which are not represented by delegated observers.
 - b) Guests: Persons named individually.

2. Assembly leadership

- a. At the first decision session of the assembly, the outgoing central committee shall present its report which must include an accounting of its work since the previous assembly and also shall present its proposals for the moderatorship of the assembly and for the membership of the business committee of the assembly and make any other proposals, including the appointment of other committees, their membership and functions, for the conduct of the business of the assembly as it sees fit.
- b. At the first or second decision session, additional nominations for membership of any committee may be made in writing by any six concurring delegates.
- c. Election shall be by ballot unless the assembly shall otherwise determine.

3. Assembly agenda

The agenda of the assembly shall be proposed by the central committee to the first decision session of the assembly. A delegate may propose changes to the agenda in accordance with rule XIX.6.c. New business or any change may be proposed by the business committee in accordance with rule IV.5.b.

4. Nominations committee of the assembly

- a. At an early decision session of the assembly, the assembly shall elect a nominations committee from the official church delegates to the assembly. The nominations committee shall include balanced representation of the membership of the assembly and representation of the major interests of the World Council of Churches. No person serving on the nominations committee of the assembly shall be eligible for nomination as president of the World Council of Churches or member of the central committee.
- b. The nominations committee shall make nominations for the following, consulting as necessary with the business committee of the assembly:
 - i. the president or presidents of the Council;
 - ii. not more than 145 members of the central committee from among the delegates which the member churches have elected to the assembly;
 - iii. not more than 5 members of the central committee from among the representatives elected to the assembly by the churches which do not fulfil the criteria

- of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons.
- c. In making nominations, the nominations committee shall have regard to the following principles:
 - i. the personal qualifications of the individual for the task for which he or she is to be nominated;
 - ii. fair and adequate confessional representation, recognizing the significance to the fellowship in having a wide representation of confessions;
 - iii. fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
 - iv. fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council.
 - v. as to delegates of churches referenced in IV.4.b.iii above, attention be given to churches from confessions not otherwise represented on the central committee;
 - d. The nominations committee shall satisfy itself as to the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong.
 - e. Not more than seven persons from any one member church shall be nominated as members of the central committee.
 - f. The nominations committee shall secure adequate representation of lay persons, and adequate balance of men, women and young people, so far as the composition of the assembly makes this possible.
 - g. The nominations committee shall present its nominations to the assembly. Alternative nominations may be made in writing by any six delegates from at least three member churches, provided that each such alternative nominee shall be proposed as an alternative to a particular nominee.
 - h. Election shall be by ballot unless the assembly shall otherwise determine.

5. Business committee of the assembly

- a. The business committee of the assembly shall consist of the general secretary, the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the outgoing central committee, the presidents of the World Council of Churches, the co-moderators of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration participating as delegates, the moderator or designated member of the assembly planning committee participating as a delegate, the moderators of assembly hearings and committees

(who may appoint substitutes), plus ten persons nominated from assembly delegates who are not members of the outgoing central committee, who shall be elected in accordance with rule IV.2 If a co-moderator of the permanent committee and/or the moderator of the assembly planning committee are not delegate(s), he/she shall be invited as an adviser to the assembly and its business committee with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

- b. The business committee shall:
 - i. coordinate the day-to-day business of the assembly and may make proposals for rearrangement, modification, addition, deletion or substitution of items included on the agenda. Any such proposal shall be presented to the assembly at the earliest convenient time by a member of the business committee with reasons for the proposed change. After opportunity for discussion on the proposal, the moderator shall put the following question to the assembly: Shall the assembly approve the proposal of the business committee? The assembly shall decide the question by consensus, according to Rule XIX.
 - ii. consider any item of business or change in the agenda proposed to the business committee by a delegate under rule XIX.6.c;
 - iii. determine whether the assembly sits in general, hearing or decision session as defined in rule XIX.2;
 - iv. receive information from and review the reports of other committees in order to consider how best the assembly can act on them.

6. Other committees of the assembly

- a. Any other committee of the assembly shall consist of such members and shall have such authority and responsibilities as are proposed by the central committee in accordance with rule IV.2 or by the business committee after its election and accepted by the assembly.
- b. Any such committee shall, unless the assembly otherwise directs, inform the business committee about its work and shall make its report or recommendations to the assembly.

V. Presidents

1. The assembly shall elect up to eight presidents of the World Council of Churches.
2. The presidents should be persons whose ecumenical experience and standing is widely recognized by the member churches and among the ecumenical partners of the World Council of Churches in their respective regions and ecclesial traditions.
3. By virtue of office, the presidents will be members of the central committee.
4. Presidents may be invited to moderate sessions of the central committee or assembly as provided by the rules.
5. The central committee may invite the presidents to undertake certain tasks or reflections and report back to the central committee.
6. The term of office of a president shall end at the end of the next assembly following his or her election.
7. Should a vacancy occur between assemblies, the central committee may elect a president to fill the unexpired term.
8. A president who has been elected by the assembly or by the central committee to fill a vacancy shall not be eligible for election for a second consecutive term of office.

VI. Central committee

1. Members

- a. The central committee shall consist of the president or presidents of the World Council of Churches together with not more than 150 members elected by the assembly (see constitution, article V.2.b).
- b. ***Current text***

If a regularly elected member of the central committee is unable to attend a meeting, the church to which the absent member belongs shall have the right to send a substitute, provided that the substitute is ordinarily resident in the country where the absent member resides. Such a substitute shall have the right to speak and to participate in decision-making. If a member, or his or her substitute, is absent without excuse for two consecutive meetings, the position shall be declared vacant, and the central committee shall fill the vacancy according to the provisions of article V.2.b.iii of the constitution.

b. ***Proposed text***

If a regularly elected member of the central committee is unable to attend a meeting, the church to which the absent member belongs shall have the right to send a substitute, ~~provided that the substitute is ordinarily resident in the country where the absent member resides.~~ Such a substitute shall have the right to speak and to participate in decision-making. If a member, or his or her substitute, is absent without excuse for two consecutive meetings, the position shall be declared vacant, and the central committee shall fill the vacancy according to the provisions of article V.2.b.iii of the constitution.

c. Members of the central committee, shall:

- i. promote the values of the ecumenical movement;
- ii. advocate for and interpret the work of the World Council of Churches, especially in their respective regions and ecclesial traditions;

iii. ***Current text***

enhance World Council of Churches contact with the leadership of the churches in their regions; and

- iv. assist in assuring the financial stability of the World Council of Churches.

iii. ***Proposed text***

enhance World Council of Churches contact with the leadership of the churches in their regions; ~~and~~

- iv. assist in assuring the financial stability of the World Council of Churches; and

- v. familiarize themselves with the WCC constitution and rules, review documents relevant to the specific areas of work they have undertaken, and enter into the ethos of consensus.

2. Participants

- a. Any member church, not already represented, may send one representative to the meetings of the central committee. Such a representative shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- b. Advisers for the central committee may be invited by the executive committee after consultation with the churches of which they are members. They shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- c. Moderators and vice-moderators of committees, commissions and consultative bodies who are not members of the central committee may attend meetings of the central committee and shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

d. ***Current text***

Regional ecumenical organizations (rule XIV), Christian world communions (rule XV) and Specialized ministries engaged in witness and service (rule XVI) recognized by the central committee shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee, who shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

- e. Associate councils (rule XIII) and international ecumenical organizations (rule XVII) recognized by the central committee may, at the discretion of the central committee, be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee, who shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

d. ***Proposed text***

Associate councils (rule XIII), Regional ecumenical organizations (rule XIV), Christian world communions (rule XV) and Specialized ministries engaged in witness and service (rule XVI) recognized by the central committee shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee, who shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

- e. ~~Associate councils (rule XIII) and~~ International ecumenical organizations (rule XVII) recognized by the central committee may, at the discretion of the ~~central~~executive committee, be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee, who shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

- f. Staff of the World Council of Churches appointed by the central committee as specified under rule XI.3 and 4.a and b. shall have the right to attend the sessions of the central committee unless on any occasion the central committee shall otherwise determine. When present they shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

3. Leadership of the central committee

- a. The central committee shall elect from among its members a moderator (the “moderator”) and a vice-moderator or vice-moderators to serve for such period as it shall determine, normally for terms that coincide with the terms of the central committee from assembly to assembly.
- b. The moderator shall be the chief governance officer of the World Council of Churches and has primary responsibility for assuring the coherence of the work of the central committee and of the executive committee and for assuring that the ethos of consensus characterizes all aspects of the governance of the Council.

c. ***Current text***

The moderator shall have primary responsibility for chairing sessions of the central committee and of the executive committee, sharing this role with the vice-moderator(s). The moderator, in consultation with the vice moderator(s) and the general secretary may delegate responsibility for moderating specific sessions of the central committee and/or executive committee to one of the presidents or to members of the central or executive committee with specific expertise.

- d. The moderator, vice-moderator(s) and general secretary together shall lead the planning of the meetings of the central committee and the executive committee. Together they shall identify issues that belong to the central committee for discernment and decision or further action, or belong to the executive committee. They shall assure that sessions and committees of the central committee have appropriate leadership and resources (information and time) to enter into the process and ethos of consensus discernment, and that the sessions and committees of the executive committee have sufficient resources and expertise to undertake all responsibilities that have been delegated to the executive committee.

c. ***Proposed text***

The moderator shall have primary responsibility for chairing sessions of the central committee and of the executive committee, sharing this role with the vice-moderator(s). The moderator, in consultation with the vice moderator(s) and the general secretary may delegate responsibility for moderating specific sessions of the central committee and/or executive committee to one of the presidents or to members of the central or executive committee with specific expertise and familiarity with and commitment to facilitating the process and ethos of consensus discernment.

- d. The moderator, vice-moderator(s) and general secretary together lead-ership of the central committee together with the general secretary shall plan and lead the meetings of the central committee and the executive committee. Together they shall identify issues that belong to the central committee for discernment and decision or further action, or belong to the executive committee. They shall assure that sessions and committees of the central committee have appropriate leadership and resources (information and time) to enter into the process and ethos of consensus discernment, and that the sessions and committees of the executive committee have sufficient resources and expertise to undertake all responsibilities that have been delegated to the executive committee, and that all documentation for the meeting has been prepared and made available to the members of the relevant governing body in a timely manner.

- e. The moderator and vice-moderator(s) and session moderators shall: (i) encourage the participants in meetings to challenge one another and the member churches to deepen their fellowship and mutual accountability; (ii) ensure that the meetings foster the common understanding and vision of the World Council of Churches; (iii) cultivate the ethos and facilitate the process of consensus discernment, and (iv) help to foster coherence within the ecumenical movement.
- f. The general secretary of the World Council of Churches shall be secretary of the central committee, and shall have the right to participate in all sessions of the central committee, except when discussing a topic related to him or her, but shall not vote or use indicator cards.

4. *Current text*

Meetings

- a. The central committee shall ordinarily meet during or immediately following the assembly during which it was elected (the “organizing meeting”), approximately one year following the assembly, and thereafter at approximately two year intervals. The general secretary shall convene the organizing meeting. The central committee shall be discharged when its report has been received by the subsequent assembly.
- b. The central committee shall determine the dates and places of its meetings and of the assembly.
- c. The executive committee may call an extraordinary meeting of the central committee whenever it deems such a meeting desirable and shall do so upon the request in writing of one-third or more of the members of the central committee.
- d. The general secretary shall take all possible steps to ensure that there is adequate representation present from each of the main confessions and from the main geographical areas of the membership of the World Council of Churches and of the major interests of the Council.

4. *Proposed text*

Meetings

- a. The central committee shall ordinarily meet during or immediately following the assembly during which it was elected (the “organizing meeting”), approximately one year following the assembly, and thereafter biennially at approximately two year intervals. The general secretary shall convene the organizing meeting. The central committee shall be discharged when its report has been received by the subsequent assembly.
- b. The central committee shall determine the dates and places of its meetings and of the assembly. In lieu of or in addition to its ordinary meetings the central committee may decide to convene electronically. In the event it is not possible

for the central committee to meet in person, the executive committee may call for a meeting of the central committee to be held electronically.

c. The executive committee may call an extraordinary meeting of the central committee whenever it deems such a meeting desirable. The executive committee shall call an extraordinary meeting of the central committee upon the request in writing of one-third or more of the members of the central committee. The executive committee shall determine whether the meeting will be in person or electronic, according to the items proposed for the agenda.

d. Notice to the central committee for an in-person extraordinary meeting shall be provided not fewer than ninety (90) days and not more than four (4) months prior to the meeting. Notice to the central committee for an electronic extraordinary meeting shall be provided not fewer than thirty (30) days and not more than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting.

e. The general secretary shall take all possible steps to ensure that there is fair and adequate representation of the membership of the World Council of Churches and of the major interests of the Council in accordance with rule VI.9.In case a quorum will not be secured, the general secretary shall inform the leadership of the central committee for action.

5. Functions

In exercising the powers set forth in the constitution and delegated to it by the assembly, the central committee, on behalf of the membership of the World Council of Churches, shall have the following specific authority and responsibility to govern the work of the Council:

- a. Set the vision and strategic objectives of the World Council of Churches consistent with policies adopted by the assembly, as well as plan and provide for the subsequent assembly and report to the subsequent assembly the actions it has taken during its period of office;
- b. Address emerging issues affecting the life and witness of the churches, including those identified by the assembly, the central committee, commissions and consultative bodies;

c. ***Current text***

Address matters referred to it by member churches and issue statements on any issue or concern with which the Council or its member churches may be confronted, in accordance with rule XIII;

c. ***Proposed text***

Address matters referred to it by member churches and issue statements on any issue or concern with which the Council or its member churches may be confronted, in accordance with rule ~~XIII~~XII;

- d. Decide membership matters;
- e. Set programme strategies and goals;
- f. Ensure the financial stability of the World Council of Churches;
- g. Elect the general secretary of the World Council of Churches;

h. ***Current text***

Receive reports from the general secretary of his or her leadership and management of the Council and hold the general secretary accountable for the work of the staff, that the programmes and activities of the Council have remained consistent with the constitution and the defined self-understanding and ethos of the Council;

h. ***Proposed text***

Receive reports from the general secretary of his or her leadership and management of the Council and hold the general secretary accountable for the work of the staff, ensuring that the programmes and activities of the Council have remained consistent with the constitution, these rules, and the defined self-understanding and ethos of the Council;

- i. Elect the moderator and vice-moderator(s) and executive committee;
- j. Delegate specific governance functions to the executive committee by rule and hold the executive committee accountable;

k. ***Current text***

Provide for the organizational structure to fulfil the responsibilities of the central committee, including committees, sub-committees and working groups as necessary;

k. ***Proposed text***

Provide for the organizational structure to fulfil the responsibilities of the central committee, including committees, ~~sub-committees~~, ad hoc committees, reference, advisory and working groups, as necessary;

- l. Set policy guidelines for all aspects of the Council, including but not limited to, staff, programmes and relationships;

m. ***Current text***

Elect commissions and consultative bodies and approve their bylaws, and incorporate into its life their ongoing work, including but not limited to:

- i. Commission on Faith and Order;
 - ii. Commission on World Mission and Evangelism;
 - iii. Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation;
 - iv. The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs;
 - v. ECHOS Commission on Youth and the Ecumenical Movement.
- n. Adopt rules or bylaws consistent with the Constitution to govern its work;
 - o. Delegate to its executive committee such authority necessary to ensure fiduciary responsibility and accountability for governance of the Council, including monitoring programmes, finance and personnel matters;

- p. Take such other actions or delegate such other specific tasks to other bodies or persons necessary to fulfil the responsibilities and exercise the authority established by the Constitution of the World Council of Churches and to deliver the broad goals and policies set by the assembly;
- q. Report to the assembly the actions and decisions it has taken during its period of office and; it shall be discharged when its report has been received.
- m. ***Proposed text***
 - Elect commissions ~~and consultative bodies~~ and approve their bylaws, and elect WCC representatives to the joint consultative bodies, incorporate into its life their ongoing work, including but not limited to:
 - i. Commission on Faith and Order;
 - ii. Commission on World Mission and Evangelism;
 - iii. Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation;
 - iv. The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs;
 - v. ~~ECHOS Commission on Youth~~ Young People in and the Ecumenical Movement Commission;
 - vi. Commission on Health and Healing.
 - n. Establish reference groups to accompany the work of major programmes or ecumenical initiatives of the Council, elect their members and approve their mandates, budgets and terms.
 - no. Adopt rules or bylaws consistent with the Constitution and these rules to govern its work;
 - op. Delegate to its executive committee such authority necessary to ensure fiduciary responsibility and accountability for governance of the Council, including monitoring programmes, finance and personnel matters;
 - pq. Take such other actions or delegate such other specific tasks to other bodies or persons necessary to fulfil the responsibilities and exercise the authority established by the Constitution of the World Council of Churches and to deliver the broad goals and policies set by the assembly;
 - qr. Report to the assembly the actions and decisions it has taken during its period of office ~~and~~; it shall be discharged when its report has been received.

- 6. Election and term of the Executive Committee
 - a. There shall be two election processes for the executive committee between assemblies.

- b. During the organizing meeting, the central committee shall elect the first executive committee comprising twenty members, which executive committee shall serve for the period of the first four years following the assembly (the “first executive committee”).
- c. During the meeting of the central committee that immediately precedes the end of the four-year term of the first executive committee, the central committee shall elect an executive committee of twenty members to serve until the report of the central committee has been received by the next assembly (the “second executive committee”).
- d. ***Current text***
No member shall serve more than two terms on the executive committee.
- e. Vacancies on the executive committee shall be filled by elections during the next meeting of the central committee.
- d. ***Proposed text***
No elected member shall serve more than ~~two~~ three four-year terms=periods on the executive committee.
- e. Vacancies on the executive committee shall be filled provisionally by the executive committee itself with another member of the central committee. The vacancy shall be filled by election during the subsequent meeting of the central committee.

7. Committees of the central committee

- a. The central committee shall elect standing committees as described in rule X.
- b. The central committee may elect as needed at each meeting and for the duration of the meeting, ad hoc committees to advise the central committee on any questions arising which call for special consideration or action by the central committee.
- c. Committees of the central committee shall work during the meeting of the central committee, shall be supported by World Council of Churches staff working in related areas, and shall proposed recommendations for decision to the central committee.
- d. ***Current text***
The central committee may form ad hoc committees to undertake specific mandates of remits to be completed within a specific timeline outside of the meeting of the central committee. The composition of such ad hoc committees shall be proposed to the central committee by the governance and nominations committee in consultation with the general secretary.

d. ***Proposed text***

The central committee may ~~form~~ compose ad hoc committees ~~or~~ working groups to undertake specific mandates ~~of~~ or remit to be completed within a specific timeline outside of the meeting of the central committee. ~~The composition of such ad hoc committees shall be proposed to the central committee by the governance and nominations committee in consultation with the general secretary.~~

- e. Participants in the central committee (rule VI.2) may be assigned to one committee.

8. ***Proposed text***

Reference Groups and Advisory Groups

- a. Reference groups to accompany the work of major programmes or ecumenical initiatives of the Council may be proposed by the central committee or by the executive committee, or by the general secretary. The respective governing body shall elect persons to reference groups and shall approve their mandates, budgets and terms.
- b. The general secretary may propose advisory groups to advise the general secretary on matters internal to the WCC staff, specific projects, or to stimulate discussion on emerging issues. The composition, mandate, term and budget for such advisory groups shall be approved by the executive committee.

8. ***Current text***

Guiding policies on representation

- a. The formation of all committees, commissions, working groups and joint consultative bodies shall have regard to the following principles:

9. ***Proposed text***

Guiding policies on representation

- a. The formation of all committees, commissions, joint consultative bodies, ad hoc committees, reference, advisory and working groups and shall have regard to the following principles:
- i. the personal expertise of the individual for the task for which he or she is to be nominated;
 - ii. fair and adequate confessional representation;
 - iii. fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
 - iv. fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the World Council of Churches;
 - v. the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong;

vi. ***Current text***

fair and adequate representation of lay persons, indigenous peoples, and differently-abled people, and balance of men, women and young people.

vi. ***Proposed text***

fair and adequate representation of lay and ordained persons, Indigenous peoples, and differently-abled people persons with disabilities, and balance of men, women and young people.

b. All nominations will reflect the target balances adopted by central committee for the most recent assembly.

c. In addition to the foregoing, with respect to the election of members of committees, commissions and consultative bodies, the central committee shall consider the representative character of the combined membership of all such committees in relation to the member churches, giving due regard to the broadest feasible representation of member churches.

VII. Nominations committee of the organizing meeting of the central committee

1. In its first meeting during or immediately after the assembly (the “organizing meeting”), the central committee shall elect a nominations committee which shall:
 - a. Nominate persons from those elected as members of the central committee for moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee;
 - b. Nominate persons from those elected as members of the central committee to membership of the executive committee; and
 - c. Nominate two additional persons from those elected as members of the central committee to serve as moderator of the programme committee of the central committee and as moderator of the finance policy committee of the central committee.
2. The names of persons to serve on the nominations committee of the organizing meeting shall be proposed by the general secretary, following consultation with the co-moderators of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration, to the first session of the organizing meeting, and shall include, insofar as possible, balanced representation of the membership of the central committee and representation of the major interests of the World Council of Churches.
3. No person serving on the nominations committee of the organizing meeting shall be eligible for nomination to the positions of moderator, vice moderator(s) of the central committee, members of the executive committee,

moderators of the programme and finance policy committees of the central committee. Persons named to serve on this committee shall be advised of the limitations of this rule prior to their accepting to serve on this committee.

4. In making nominations, the nominations committee shall have regard to principles set out in rule IV.4 and/or VI.9 and shall consider the specific skills and profiles necessary to undertake the responsibilities of moderator and vice moderator(s) of the central committee, moderators of the programme and finance policy committees and members of the executive committee.
5. The nominations committee shall present its nominations to the next session of the organizing meeting of the central committee. Any three members of the central committee may make an alternative nomination, provided that each such alternative nominee shall be proposed as an alternative to a particular nominee.
6. Election shall be by ballot unless the central committee shall otherwise determine.
7. Following the election of the moderator and vice moderator(s), the moderators of the programme and finance policy committees and of the executive committee, the nominations committee of the organizing meeting shall be discharged.

VIII. Executive committee

1. Governance authority

- a. The executive committee shall be entrusted with and made accountable for specific governance authority and responsibility of the World Council of Churches as delegated by the central committee, with authority to establish limits and guidelines within which management and staff of the Council shall implement the policies and programmes of the Council.
- b. The executive committee shall be accountable to the central committee, and shall present to each central committee meeting a report of its work. The central committee shall consider such a report and take such action in regard to it as it thinks fit.

2. Meetings

- a. The executive committee ordinarily shall meet twice annually. The executive committee shall determine the dates and places of its meetings and may decide to convene in person or electronically.

- b. The leadership of the central committee may call an extraordinary meeting of the executive committee by electronic communications whenever they deem such a meeting necessary. Notice to the executive committee for an extraordinary meeting shall be provided not fewer than ten (10) days prior to the meeting, and not more than twenty-one (21) days.

3. Composition of executive committee

- a. The executive committee shall be composed of the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee, twenty other members of the central committee and the moderators of programme committee and the finance policy committee of the central committee.
- b. The moderator, vice moderator(s) and general secretary shall invite to the meetings of the executive committee advisors, including from among ecumenical partners. The advisors shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- c. The moderator, vice moderator(s) and general secretary are to ensure that the meeting of the executive committee has sufficient resources available to accomplish its work, always having in mind the need for preserving a due balance of the confessions and of the geographical areas and cultural backgrounds, and of the major interests of the World Council of Churches.
- d. If a member of the executive committee is unable to attend, he/she has the right – provided that the moderator is consulted prior to the meeting – to send a member of the central committee as a substitute. Such a substitute shall – as far as possible – be of the same region and church family, and shall have the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making.

4. Leadership of the executive committee

- a. The moderator of the central committee shall also be the moderator of the executive committee.
- b. The general secretary of the World Council of Churches shall be the secretary of the executive committee and shall participate in all sessions of the executive committee, except those sessions discussing issues relating to him or her, but shall not vote or use indicator cards.

5. Functions

- a. In exercising the powers delegated to it by the central committee, the executive committee assumes fiduciary responsibility for the governance of the World Council of Churches and shall have the following specific authority and responsibility:

- i. Ensure implementation of the strategic objectives set by the central committee;
- ii. Oversee the finances of the World Council of Churches, ensuring its financial stability, overseeing the investments, encouraging income development, approving the budget, and if necessary, imposing limitations on expenditures; provided that the executive committee upon approval of the annual financial report and accounts, shall send the annual financial report and accounts and budget to members of the central committee and the member churches;
- iii. Open or close any subsidiary legal entities of the World Council of Churches;
- iv. Monitor resource management, assuring that the human, physical and financial resources the World Council of Churches needs are available and properly employed;
- v. Monitor programmes and activities of the World Council of Churches, and, when necessary, direct that activities are initiated or terminated;
- vi. Issue statements on any issue or concern with which the World Council of Churches or its member churches may be confronted, in accordance with rule XII;
- vii. Recommend to the central committee the mandate and size of commissions and joint consultative bodies to resource the major areas of work of the World Council of Churches;
- viii. Appoint staff in accordance with rule XI;
- ix. Establish and monitor personnel policies and staff rules;
- x. Ensure the integrity of the operations of the World Council of Churches in compliance with Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches, applicable laws, regulations, and best practices;
- xi. Manage risk, assessing risks to the institution (including financial risk) and ensure that strategies are in place to handle risk;
- xii. Organize itself into committees, sub-committees and working groups;
- xiii. In between meetings of the central committee, nominate persons for committees, commissions, joint consultative bodies and working groups;
- xiv. Establish reference groups to accompany the work of major programmes or ecumenical initiatives of the Council, elect their members and approve their mandates, budgets and terms.

- xv. Approve the composition, mandate, terms of and budget for advisory groups;
 - xvi. Delegate authority for specific time-bound matters to the moderator and vice moderator(s) and general secretary.
- b. If twenty members of the central committee have concerns arising out of either the financial statements, or the budget, they shall make known their concerns to the General Secretary and the Executive Committee in writing, within 45 days of the sending of the financial statements and the budget. In that event, with regard to any concern related to the financial statements, the executive committee shall be required to respond to that concern. With regard to any concern related to the budget, the executive committee shall reconsider that item. The executive committee's decision on reconsideration shall be final.

6. Sub-Committees of the executive committee

- a. The executive committee shall appoint sub-committees, which shall meet during meetings of the executive committee, and which shall advise the executive committee in exercising its authority and responsibility. Unless otherwise specified, the executive committee shall designate a moderator for each sub-committee. The sub-committee(s) may include one or more advisors, who may speak but not participate in decision-making. The sub-committees shall include the following:
- i. Programme sub-committee, which shall be moderated by the moderator of the central committee's programme committee and shall assist the executive committee in
 - a) ensuring implementation of the strategic programmatic objectives set by the central committee;
 - b) initiating and terminating projects and activities;
 - c) monitoring and overseeing the ongoing programs, projects and activities, including the task of the allocation of resources;
 - d) providing for and making recommendations for regular evaluation of programmes, projects and activities in light of strategic objectives set by the central committee.
 - ii. Finance sub-committee, which shall be moderated by the moderator of the central committee's finance policy committee, and shall assist the executive committee by
 - a) recommending the annual appointment of the elected auditor;
 - b) considering and recommending to the audit committee, the appropriate scope of the audit;

- c) recommending for approval the annual budget for the following financial year, and the capital expenditure budget;
- d) recommending for approval the framework budget for the year after the following financial year;
- e) monitoring the implementation of the income and fund-raising strategy;
- f) monitoring adherence to the approved budget, and recommending corrective actions if necessary;
- g) making proposals for long-term financial goals and strategy for consideration by the finance policy committee;
- h) considering and recommending accounting policies for adoption;
- i) monitoring adherence to policies issued by central committee, including those governing general reserves and investments;
- j) ensuring the proposed loans, guarantees, pledges and any other unusual transactions are presented for approval by executive committee;
- k) ensuring compliance with laws and regulations concerning financial transactions, including the requirement to maintain a system of internal controls according to international standards; and
- l) receive the report of the statutory elected auditor and recommend approval of the financial statements.

The executive committee shall ensure that the finance sub-committee has sufficient expertise to accomplish its mandate and may appoint an advisor to the sub-committee. The executive committee may delegate to the leadership of the finance sub-committee, composed of the moderator and two additional sub-committee members, the authority to authorise and approve for issue the financial statements following recommendation of the audit committee. The leadership of the finance sub-committee may act on financial matters as specifically authorised by the executive committee between meetings, reporting back to the executive committee.

- iii. Personnel, Staffing and Nominations sub-committee, which shall assist the executive committee in:
 - a) As to personnel matters, undertaking oversight of human resources policy and strategy, ensuring the World Council of Churches follows best practice in

its treatment, development and deployment of all staff, with specific attention to the following:

- 1) Recruitment and retention policy including years of service, policy for redundancy and redeployment
 - 2) The code of ethics
 - 3) Staff appraisal and continuing professional development
 - 4) Whistle-blowing policy
 - 5) Grievance and disciplinary policies
 - 6) Support for staff in implementing changes in staffing policy, particular when significant structural change is envisioned
 - 7) Staff rules.
- b) As to staffing matters, preparing decisions for the appointment of staff according to rule XI;
- c) As to nominations matters:
- 1) Recording and processing changes in the membership of the central committee and its committees;
 - 2) Preparing the recommendations of the executive committee to the central committee with regard to the mandate and size of commissions, and joint consultative bodies and reference groups.
- d) As to governance matters, recording and processing proposals for the amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches made in accordance with article VII of the constitution and rule XX.
- iv. Public Issues sub-committee shall assist the executive committee in preparing statements and/or minutes.
- b. Audit Committee. Its terms of reference are approved by the central committee. Elected by the executive committee, it reports directly to the executive committee.

IX. Permanent committee on consensus and collaboration

1. At its first full meeting after an assembly, the central committee shall elect from among its members the membership of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration (the “permanent committee”), consisting of fourteen members, of whom half shall be Orthodox.

2. The Orthodox members of the nominations committee of the central committee, in consultation with all Orthodox members of the central committee, shall nominate the seven Orthodox members, and the other members of the nominations committee of the central committee shall nominate the remaining seven. The central committee as a whole shall elect the permanent committee. For election of the permanent committee, the provisions of rule VII.5. shall not apply: no counter nominations shall be accepted from the floor.
3. Of the overall membership at least half shall be members of the executive committee. Proxies may substitute for absent members. Advisers may be invited from member churches. Observers may be invited from non-member churches, or on occasion from churches in association with the World Council of Churches.
4. Two co-moderators shall be elected by the membership of the permanent committee, one by its Orthodox members, and one by the other members. Any vacancy in the permanent committee will be filled through the same process as the election of its members.
5. The term of the members of the outgoing permanent committee shall conclude upon election of replacement members following an assembly. The permanent committee shall be considered a committee of the assembly and shall advise the business committee of the assembly.
6. The permanent committee will have responsibility for:
 - a. continuing the authority, mandate, concerns and dynamic of the Special Commission (mandated by the eighth assembly, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1998);
 - b. giving advice and making recommendations to governing bodies during and between assemblies in order to contribute to the formation of consensus on matters proposed for the agenda;
 - c. facilitating improved participation of the Orthodox in the entire life and work of the Council;
 - d. offering counsel and providing opportunity for action in matters of common interest;
 - e. giving attention to matters of ecclesiology.
7. The permanent committee will report to the central committee and to the executive committee.

X. Standing committees of the central committee

1. Standing committees shall be understood to be those permanent committees defined in this rule. Standing committees are to accomplish the work required of their mandates during meetings of the central committee.

2. At the first decision session of the second meeting of the central committee, the central committee shall receive from the executive committee a proposal for appointments to standing committees of the central committee, and shall elect members of standing committees of the central committee. With the exception of moderators of the programme and finance policy committees who were elected at the organizing meeting of the central committee (rule VII), the executive committee shall propose moderators of standing committees, considering the specific skills and profiles necessary to undertake the responsibilities of serving as moderator.
 - a. The committees shall include, but not be limited to:
 - i. Governance and Nominations Committee
 - ii. Programme Committee
 - iii. Finance Policy Committee
 - iv. Policy Reference Committee
 - v. Public Issues Committee
 - vi. Communications Committee
 - b. Members of the central committee shall each be proposed for one standing committee of the central committee, with due regard being paid to the specific expertise and interests of the member and overall balances within the committee.
 - c. Participants in the central committee (rule VI.2) may also be assigned to participate in the work of one standing committee.

3. The Governance and Nominations Committee will have responsibility for:
 - a. Assisting the central committee to monitor the organisational structure, including committees, sub-committees, commissions, consultative bodies and working groups in accordance with the Constitution and Rules;
 - b. Preparing nominations for the election of the committees of the central committee, commissions, consultative bodies and reference groups;
 - c. Monitoring the adoption of rules and bylaws consistent with the Constitution to govern the work of the Council;
 - d. Receiving and processing any proposals for the amendments of the Constitution and Rules;

- e. Receiving and processing replacements or substitutions in the membership of the central and the executive committees for action by the central committee.

4. Programme Committee

- a. The central committee shall elect from among its members the moderator and the twenty-three members of the programme committee together with up to eight advisors.
- b. The programme committee will have responsibility for:
 - i. Considering in particular the theological inter-relationship of World Council of Churches' programmes and the implication of programmes and activities for the relationships among member churches and with ecumenical partners;
 - ii. Assisting the central committee, by considering various inputs, clarifying options and devising a process to determine and develop the strategies that will deliver the broad outcomes set by the assembly. At the second meeting of central committee this will involve helping central committee engage with proposals for the eight-year strategy;
 - iii. Assisting the central committee to hear, with respect to programmatic work, the views and hopes of the churches; respond to key issues identified by commissions; and review, reshape and develop the goals of programme work in the light of changing circumstances and needs;
 - iv. Reviewing the executive committee's report on program work, and bringing to the central committee recommendations for action;
 - v. Ensuring adequate plans are in place for the mid-term and pre-assembly programme evaluation.

5. Finance Policy Committee will have responsibility for recommending policies related to:

- a. The membership contributions scheme and campaign, general reserves and investments;
- b. Long term financial goals and the income and fund-raising strategy to achieve them, consistent with the vision and strategic objectives of the World Council of Churches;
- c. Significant issues concerning financial reporting, internal controls, accountability and compliance with laws and regulations, income generating projects, based upon reports from the finance sub-committee of the executive committee.

6. The Policy Reference Committee will have responsibility for:
 - a. Assessing relationships among member churches and with ecumenical partners, and suggesting appropriate actions to the central committee;
 - b. Assisting the central committee to take note of and analyse ecclesial and ecumenical developments;
 - c. Assisting the central committee in the preparation of policy guidelines for relationships;
 - d. Considering membership matters and bringing to the central committee recommendations for action.

7. The Public Issues Committee will have responsibility for:
 - a. Assisting the central committee in the preparation of policy guidelines for international affairs;
 - b. Analysing emerging issues in international affairs affecting the life and witness of the member churches, including those identified by the assembly, commissions and consultative bodies;
 - c. Preparing and proposing public statements and/or minutes for action by the central committee, according to procedures adopted by the central committee.
 - d. Receiving and analysing proposals from members of the central committee for public statements and/or minutes;

8. The Communications Committee will have responsibility for:
 - a. Recommending to the central committee policy guidelines regarding the communications and publications of the World Council of Churches;
 - b. Monitoring the communications strategy of the Council, evaluating communications effectiveness, and making recommendations toward the short term and long term strategic goals and thematic foci for communicating the mission and work of the World Council of Churches;
 - c. Evaluating and encouraging the development and coherence of WCC communication efforts of the general secretariat, programmes and governing bodies;
 - d. Assessing and encouraging member church participation in communicating the mission and work of the World Council of Churches;
 - e. Ensuring that adequate plans are in place for strategic collaboration between the Council and ecumenical organizations, other faith-based communications agencies, and regional networks for communicating thematic foci of the Council and for communicating the mission and work of the World Council of Churches.

XI. Staff

1. a. A general secretary shall be elected by the central committee in accordance with rule XIX.10.a.iii and the procedures adopted by the central committee for the search for and election of the general secretary.
 - b. When the position of general secretary unexpectedly becomes vacant, between two meetings of the central committee, the executive committee shall provisionally appoint a general secretary who shall serve until the election of a new general secretary by the central committee, and shall initiate the search process for a new general secretary.
2. The general secretary shall lead the work of the World Council of Churches and shall serve as its chief executive officer, including final responsibility for work of the Council and its staff.
3. In addition to the general secretary, the central committee shall elect one or more deputy general secretaries. In consultation with the executive committee, the general secretary shall nominate his or her candidate(s) for the open position(s) and the central committee shall vote to elect the nomination in accordance with rule XIX.10.a.iii. The normal term of appointment for the deputy general secretary or secretaries shall be five years, with the possibility of renewal.
4. The general secretary shall provide for the appointment of or appoint staff to conduct the continuing operations of the Council.
 - a. For staff leadership positions of direct responsibility for major programme or management areas of the Council, and those to whom are directly delegated responsibilities of the general secretary, the general secretary shall propose persons to fill such positions, and the executive committee shall make the appointment(s).
 - b. At the beginning of the tenure of a new general secretary and at the time of any significant programmatic or structural reorganization, the general secretary and the executive committee together shall determine which specific staff positions come under this provision. Appointments to these positions shall be reported to the central committee.
 - c. The general secretary shall appoint other programme executive staff, and report those staff appointments to the executive committee.
 - d. The general secretary shall appoint specialized, administrative and house staff.
5. The normal terms of appointment for the general secretary shall be five years, unless some other period is stated in the resolution making the appointment, with the possibility of a one additional appointment.

6. Retirement shall normally be that designated by Swiss law, but in no case shall it be later than the end of the year in which a staff member reaches the age of sixty-eight.
7. The general secretary shall ensure that the following policies regarding the staff of the World Council of Churches are implemented for all staff levels, and composition of staff related to these policies shall be reported to the executive committee:
 - a. The primary consideration in the recruitment and appointment of staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.
 - b. Due account shall be taken of the importance of recruiting staff on as broad and fair a confessional and geographical basis as possible.
 - c. All posts shall be open equally to men and women and selection of personnel shall be made without distinction as to race and gender.
 - d. Staff members shall demonstrate commitment to the aims and spirit of the World Council of Churches and shall serve the whole Council.
 - e. Applicants from member churches shall demonstrate support of their application from the leadership of the member church.
 - f. Every effort shall be taken to have staff and leadership inclusive of both men and women and balanced according to region and confession.
 - g. Decisions regarding staff shall be consistent with WCC priorities, with human resources policies, periodic assessments, and exit protocols managed with concern for the person as well in compliance with local law.

XII. Public statements

1. In the performance of its functions, the World Council of Churches through its assembly or through its central committee may issue statements on any situation or concern with which the Council or its constituent churches may be confronted.
2. While such statements may have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgment or concern of so widely representative a Christian body, yet their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom, and the publishing of such statements shall not be held to imply that the Council as such has, or can have, any constitutional authority over the constituent churches or right to speak for them.
3. Any commission may recommend statements to the assembly or to the central committee for its consideration and action.

4. When, in the judgment of a commission, a statement should be issued before approval of the assembly or central committee can be obtained, the commission may do so provided the statement relates to matters within its own field of concern and action, has the approval of the moderator of the central committee and the general secretary, and the commission makes clear that neither the World Council of Churches nor any of its member churches is committed by the statement.
5. Between meetings of the central committee, when in their judgment the situation requires, a statement may be issued, provided that such statements are not contrary to the established policy of the Council, by:
 - a. the executive committee when meeting apart from the sessions of the central committee; or
 - b. the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee and the general secretary acting together; or
 - c. the moderator of the central committee or the general secretary on his or her own authority respectively.

XIII. Associate councils

1. Any national Christian council, national council of churches or national ecumenical council, established for purposes of ecumenical fellowship and activity, may be recognized by the central committee as an associate council, provided:
 - a. the applicant council, knowing the basis upon which the World Council of Churches is founded, expresses its desire to cooperate with the Council towards the achievement of one or more of the functions and purposes of this Council; and
 - b. the member churches of the World Council of Churches in the area have been consulted prior to the action.
2. Each associate council:
 - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly;
 - b. shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
 - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the Council shall inform each associate council regarding important ecumenical developments and consult it regarding proposed Council programmes in its country.

4. In consultation with the associate councils, the central committee shall establish and review from time to time guidelines regarding the relationships between the World Council of Churches and national councils of churches.

XIV. Regional ecumenical organizations

1. The World Council of Churches recognizes regional ecumenical organizations as essential partners in the ecumenical movement.
2. Such regional ecumenical organizations as may be designated by the central committee:
 - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly;
 - b. shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
 - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the Council shall inform each of these regional ecumenical organizations regarding important ecumenical developments and consult it regarding proposed World Council of Churches programmes in its region.
4. The central committee, together with the regional ecumenical organizations, shall establish and review as appropriate guiding principles for relationships and cooperation between the World Council of Churches and regional ecumenical organizations, including the means whereby programmatic responsibilities could be shared among them.

XV. Christian world communions

1. The World Council of Churches recognizes the role of Christian world communions or world confessional bodies in the ecumenical movement.
2. Such Christian world communions as may be designated by the central committee and which express their desire to this effect:
 - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly; and
 - b. shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
 - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. The central committee shall establish and review as appropriate guidelines for relationships and cooperation with Christian world communions.

XVI. Specialized ministries engaged in witness and service

1. Specialized ministries are those church-based, church-related or ecumenical offices and organizations and alliances or associations thereof within the family of World Council of Churches member churches, serving the ecumenical movement particularly in the areas of mission, diakonia, relief, development and advocacy.

Any specialized ministry committed to ecumenical witness and service may be recognized by the central committee as an ecumenical organization with which the World Council of Churches has working relationship, provided:

- a. the organization, knowing the basis upon which the World Council of Churches is founded, expresses its willingness to relate to and cooperate with it on those terms; and
 - b. the member church or churches with whom the specialized ministry is related do not formally oppose this form of relationship.
2. Each specialized ministry thus recognised:
 - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly;
 - b. shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
 - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
 3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the Council may inform each of these specialized ministries regarding important ecumenical developments and consult with it regarding proposed World Council of Churches programmes in its area of commitment and expertise.
 4. In consultation with specialized ministries, the central committee shall establish and review from time to time guidelines regarding the relationships between the World Council of Churches and specialized ministries.

XVII. International ecumenical organizations

1. Ecumenical organizations other than those mentioned under rules XIII, XIV, XV, and XVI may be recognized by the central committee as organizations with which the World Council of Churches has working relationships, provided:
 - a. the organization is international in nature (global, regional or sub-regional) and its objectives are consistent with the functions and purposes of the Council; and

- b. the organization, knowing the basis upon which the World Council of Churches is founded, expresses its desire to relate to and cooperate with it.
2. On the basis of reciprocity, each international ecumenical organization:
 - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly; and
 - b. shall be provided with copies of general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.

XVIII. Legal provisions

1. The duration of the World Council of Churches is unlimited.
2. The legal headquarters of the Council shall be at Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland. It is registered in Geneva as an association according to art. 60ff. of the Swiss civil code. Regional offices may be organized in different parts of the world by decision of the central committee.
3. The World Council of Churches is legally represented by its executive committee or by such persons as may be empowered by the executive committee to represent it.
4. The World Council of Churches shall be legally bound by the joint signatures of two of the following persons: the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee, the general secretary, the deputy general secretary or secretaries. The moderator of the central committee (or a vice-moderator acting together with the general secretary or a deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches) shall have power to authorise other persons, chosen by them, as registered signatories to act on behalf of the World Council of Churches in fields circumscribed in the power of attorney.
5. The Council shall obtain the means necessary for the pursuance of its work, from the contributions of its member churches, and from donations, grants and bequests, as well as from income generated from its properties, and other assets.
6. The Council shall not pursue commercial functions but it shall have the right to act as an agency of interchurch aid, to publish literature in connection with its aims, and to use its properties and other assets for the purposes of generating income to support its work. It is not entitled to distribute any surplus income by way of profit or bonus among its members.

7. Members of the governing bodies of the Council or of the assembly shall have no personal liability with regard to the obligations or commitments of the Council. The commitments entered upon by the Council are guaranteed solely by its own assets.
8. Official correspondence from the Council to member churches or members of governing bodies ordinarily shall be by standard post to the address of record. When the member church or member of governing bodies has provided an electronic address, official correspondence may also be transmitted by electronic means, and shall have the same legal significance as correspondence by post.
9. Electronic means — teleconference, video-conference and similar technologies — may be used for consultation and decision-making, by the central and executive committees and their standing and sub-committees, as well as all committees, commissions, consultative bodies, reference and advisory groups, guided by principles of consensus, and subject to rule XIX.11.
10. Decisions can be taken in between regular ordinary meetings of the governing bodies, when determined necessary by the leadership of the central committee, by postal or electronic means voting, subject to Rule XIX. 12.

XIX. Conduct of meetings

1. General

- a. These provisions for conduct of meetings shall apply to meetings of the assembly, the central committee, the executive committee and all other bodies of the World Council of Churches. During an assembly, the titles “president, moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee” shall refer to the persons holding those offices in the outgoing central committee. During the term of a central committee such titles shall refer to the current presidents and leadership of that central committee. Where a section of this rule refers to the assembly it shall be understood to refer also to the body in session, with the necessary changes having been made. In the case of the assembly business committee, the leadership of the central committee shall be understood to have the corresponding responsibility.
- b. “Delegate” shall mean an official representative of a member church to an assembly with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making (rule IV.1.a). For meetings of the central committee, “delegate” shall mean a member of the central committee or that member’s substitute (rule VI.1.b), with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making.

- c. “Participant” shall include delegates as well as persons invited to the assembly or a meeting of the central committee as persons with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making (rule IV.1.b and VI.2).

2. Categories of sessions

The assembly shall sit in one of the following categories of sessions: general, hearing or decision. The business committee shall determine the category of session appropriate for different parts of the agenda.

- a. General session

General sessions shall be reserved for ceremonial occasions, public acts of witness and formal addresses. Only matters proposed by the central committee or by the business committee shall be included in general sessions. No decisions shall be made during general sessions.

- b. Hearing session

Hearing sessions shall be designated for plenary presentations, discussion, dialogue, and exchange of ideas as a resource for developing understanding, deepening fellowship among member churches and coming to a common mind on matters on the agenda. A wide range of perspectives shall be encouraged during hearing sessions. No decisions shall be made during hearing sessions, other than to move to a decision session, if deemed necessary or to deal with a point of order or procedural proposals.

- c. Decision session

Decision sessions shall be designated for matters requiring a decision, including:

- i. adoption of the agenda;
- ii. proposal for change in the agenda;
- iii. appointments and elections;
- iv. reception or adoption of reports or recommendations;
- v. actions to be taken on recommendations or proposals of committees or commissions, or arising out of hearing sessions;
- vi. adoption of accounts and financial audits; and
- vii. amendment of constitution or rules.

3. Moderating sessions

- a. A moderator for each session of the assembly shall be designated before an assembly by the outgoing central committee, and during an assembly by the business committee, as follows:
 - i. in general sessions one of the presidents or the moderator of the central committee shall preside;
 - ii. in hearing sessions one of the presidents, the moderator or a vice-moderator of the central committee, or a delegate with

- specific expertise in the subject matter of the hearing, shall preside;
- iii. in decision sessions the moderator or a vice-moderator of the central committee or delegate to the assembly who was a member of the outgoing central committee shall preside.
- b. The role of session moderators shall be:
 - i. to preside in a manner that assists the meeting to be open to discerning the will of God and ensures that the needs and purposes of the Council are met in the way business is carried out;
 - ii. to convene the session, announcing the category of session;
 - iii. to facilitate and encourage discussion and dialogue for the exchange and development of ideas, to cultivate the ethos of consensus, and to assist the meeting to come to a common mind;
 - iv. during decision sessions, to test any emerging agreement on a particular point and whether the meeting is ready to move to a decision by consensus;
 - v. in the event the category of session is to change during a session, to announce the change in category, providing a break in the session to mark the change in category; and
 - vi. to close the session.
- c. The moderator shall consult with the recorder for the session to ensure that the developing consensus is accurately noted and any changed wording promptly made available to the meeting.
- d. All moderators, recorders and rapporteurs shall undertake specific training in conducting meetings based upon the consensus model of decision-making, as described in these rules and the accompanying guidelines.

4. Moderator of the assembly

The moderator of the assembly shall announce the opening, suspension and the adjournment of the assembly.

5. Official minutes, records and reports

- a. The business committee shall appoint recorders from among delegates for each decision session. Their role shall be to follow the discussion of a decision session, to record the language of the emerging consensus, including final language of decisions taken, and to assist the moderator of the session in discerning an emerging consensus using best available technology. Recorders shall also assist the moderator in ensuring that the final agreed wording of a proposal is made available to delegates before a decision is made.

- b. The business committee shall appoint rapporteurs for each hearing session and for committee meetings for which official minutes are not maintained, to prepare a report of the meeting including major themes and specific proposals. A rapporteur appointed for a committee meeting shall function as a recorder of that meeting, and shall be supported by World Council of Churches staff working in related areas.
- c. The business committee shall appoint minute-takers to record the official minutes of general, hearing and decision sessions of an assembly or any meeting for which minutes must be kept, and may include a record of the discussion and motions, and shall report the decisions. The minutes will normally incorporate by reference any report of the meeting. The minutes shall be signed by the moderator and the minute-taker for the session and shall be sent to the participants of the meeting. For all minutes other than minutes of an assembly, if there is no objection within six months from the sending of the minutes, the minutes shall be considered to be accepted. The first full central committee meeting following the organizing meeting shall confirm the minutes of the assembly.
- d. Decision sessions shall produce official minutes, a record and/or report.
- e. If, after the close of a meeting, a member church declares that it cannot support a decision of the meeting, the member church may submit its objection in writing and have its position recorded in the minutes or report of a subsequent meeting. The decision itself shall not be rescinded by this action.

6. Agenda

- a. Matters may be included on the agenda of a meeting according to the procedures indicated below. Normally, matters included on an agenda will be based upon reports, recommendations or proposals that previously have been fully considered and have the consensus support of the proposing group or committee.
 - i. Assembly agenda
The agenda of the assembly shall be proposed by the central committee to the first decision session of the assembly for approval. A delegate may propose changes to the agenda in accordance with this rule, section c. New business or any change may be proposed by the business committee in accordance with rule IV.5.b.
 - ii. Central Committee agenda

- The agenda of the central committee shall be proposed by the executive committee at the first decision session of the central committee meeting for approval.
- iii. Executive Committee agenda
The agenda of the executive committee shall be proposed by the leadership of the central committee at the first decision session of the executive committee meeting for approval.
 - iv. Agenda of standing committees
Agendas shall be proposed by the leadership of the central committee and published for all standing committees and shall be approved at the committee's first session.
- b. The business committee shall ensure that the moderator is advised before each session, and if appropriate during breaks within a session, as to the conduct of the business and the priority of various agenda items.
 - c. A delegate may propose to the business committee an item of business to be included on, or any change in, the agenda. If after consideration the business committee has not agreed to the proposal, the delegate may appeal the decision to the moderator of the assembly in writing. The moderator shall at a convenient time inform the assembly of the proposal, and a member of the business committee shall explain the reasons for this refusal. The delegate may give reasons for proposing it. The moderator shall then without further debate put the following question: Shall the assembly accept this proposal? If the assembly agrees to accept the proposal, the business committee as soon as possible shall bring proposals for the inclusion of the matter or the change in the agenda.
 - d. Matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding: Where a matter being raised is considered by a delegate to go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of his or her church, the delegate may request that it not be submitted for decision. The moderator shall seek the advice of the business committee in consultation with this delegate and other members of the same church or confession present at the session. If agreed that the matter does in fact go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of the delegate's church, the moderator shall announce that the matter will be removed from the agenda of the decision session and may be considered in a hearing session. The materials and minutes of the discussion shall be sent to the member churches for their study and comment.
 - e. Agendas shall be proposed, amended and/or adopted in accordance with this rule, and rules IV.3, IV.5, and VI.3.e.

7. Speaking

- a. In hearing sessions, participants wishing to speak either may submit to the moderator a written request or may queue, but may speak only when called by the moderator.
- b. In decision sessions of the assembly or central committee, only delegates may speak. Delegates wishing to speak during in person meetings either may submit to the moderator a written request or may queue, and during electronic meetings may use the electronic equivalent for queuing, but may speak only when called by the moderator.
- c. In sessions of committees and advisory bodies where both hearing and decision may take place, participants who are not delegates have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- d. The moderator shall decide who shall speak, ensuring that a fair distribution of opinions is heard, and may take advice on the order of speakers from a small sub-committee of the business committee. If time allows and others are not left unheard, the moderator may permit speakers to intervene more than once.
- e. When called by the moderator, a speaker shall speak from a microphone, first stating his or her name, church, country, and role at the meeting, and shall address all remarks to the moderator.
- f. Remarks will normally be limited to three minutes; however, the moderator may use discretion in allowing extra time if there is a difficulty in language or interpretation or if the issues being discussed are unusually complex.
- g. Procedural proposals – hearing or decision sessions: Provided that a speaker is not interrupted, a delegate may ask for clarification of the pending matter or may raise suggestions about procedure. The moderator immediately shall provide clarification or respond to the suggestion for change of procedure.
- h. Points of order – hearing or decision sessions: This provision is available to question whether procedures being followed are in accordance with these rules, to object to offensive language, to make a point of personal explanation, or to request that a meeting move to closed session. Points of order may be raised by a participant at any time, even by interrupting another speaker. A participant gains the attention of the moderator by standing and calling, “point of order!” The moderator shall ask the participant to state the point of order and then (without discussion) shall rule on it immediately.
- i. If any delegate disagrees with the moderator’s decision on a procedural proposal or point of order, the delegate may appeal against it. In this case the moderator will put this question, without discussion, to the meeting: “Does the meeting concur with the decision of the

moderator?” The delegates present shall decide the question according to the decision-making procedures then being employed.

8. Reaching consensus: seeking the common mind of the meeting

- a. Consensus shall be understood as seeking the common mind of the meeting without resort to a formal vote, in a process of genuine dialogue that is respectful, mutually supportive and empowering, whilst prayerfully seeking to discern God’s will.
- b. Decisions will normally be by consensus, unless otherwise specified by the rules.
- c. A consensus decision on a particular matter shall be recorded when one of the following occurs:
 - i. all delegates are in agreement (unanimity); or
 - ii. most are in agreement and those who disagree are satisfied that the discussion has been both full and fair and do not object that the proposal expresses the general mind of the meeting.
- d. A consensus decision shall mean that there is agreement about the outcome of a discussion. This may mean agreement to accept a proposal or a variation of a proposal; it also may mean agreement about another outcome, including agreement to reject a proposal, to postpone a matter, that no decision can be reached, or that there are various opinions that may be held. When consensus has been reached that various opinions can be held concerning a matter, those various opinions shall be recorded in the final wording of the minutes and the report and the record of the meeting.

9. Decision-making by consensus

- a. A proposal or recommendation considered in a decision session may be affirmed, modified or rejected. Delegates may suggest modifications, and the moderator may allow discussion on more than one modification at a time. Reaching a common mind may require a series of steps, if there is a variety of opinions being expressed. As discussion proceeds, the moderator may ask the meeting to affirm what is held in common before encouraging discussion on those aspects of a proposal about which more diverse opinions have been voiced.
- b. To assist the moderator in discerning the mind of the meeting and to move efficiently towards consensus, the recorder of the session shall maintain a record of the discussion. Delegates may be provided with indicator cards to facilitate participation; consensus indicator cards shall not be used for voting.
- c. A delegate or the moderator may suggest that the matter under discussion be referred for further work to an appropriate group holding

- a range of points of view. This suggestion itself shall be tested to discern the mind of the meeting. If agreed, the business committee shall schedule consideration of the matter for a later session.
- d. When it seems that the meeting is close to agreement on an outcome, the moderator shall ensure that the wording of the proposal (or the proposal as varied during the course of the discussion) is clear to all delegates, and then test whether there is consensus on that outcome. If all are agreed consistent with rule XIX.8.c.i, the moderator shall declare that consensus has been reached and the decision made. If the meeting is not unanimous, the moderator shall invite those who hold a minority view to explain their reasons if they wish and to indicate whether they can agree with a decision pursuant to rule XIX.8.c.ii. If so, consensus shall be declared.
 - e. If, after every effort has been made to reach consensus, agreement cannot be reached and it is the opinion of the business committee, or, in the case of meetings of the central or executive committees, the leadership of the central committee, that a decision must be made before the meeting concludes, the moderator shall ask the business committee, or, in the case of meetings of the central or executive committees, the leadership of the central committee, to formulate a proposal for how the matter may be considered again in a new form. At the later decision session where this new approach is considered, the meeting itself shall decide whether a decision must be made at this meeting, and, if so, shall proceed on any one of the following courses, which may be followed sequentially:
 - i. to work further towards consensus on the proposal in its new form;
 - ii. to work to reach agreement among most delegates with some delegates recording an objection, in which event a meeting shall record acceptance of the proposal, providing that each delegate who does not agree is satisfied with that outcome and has the right to have his or her viewpoint recorded in the minutes, in the report, and in the record of the meeting; or
 - iii. to move into voting procedures to decide the matter (rule XIX.10).
 - f. When a meeting discusses by consensus procedures a matter for which decision must be reached at that meeting and there is no ready agreement in accordance with rule XIX.9.e.i or ii, the moderator may offer a procedural proposal: “That the meeting resolve the proposal now by vote”. Except for matters described in rule XIX.6.d, “matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding”, the moderator shall announce that a vote to decide this change of procedure shall be taken. Delegates shall indicate by voting whether they agree that the matter shall be

decided by a vote. If 85 percent of delegates present vote in favour of moving the matter to a voting process, the matter shall so move. If fewer than 85 percent of delegates present vote in favour of moving the matter to a voting process, the matter shall not so move, and the meeting shall decide, again by vote of 85 percent of delegates present, whether discussion should continue to achieve consensus or whether discussion should be discontinued.

10. Decision-making by vote

- a. Some matters require decision by vote, rather than by consensus. The following matters require decision by vote:
 - i. amendments to the constitution (two-thirds majority of the assembly);
 - ii. confirmation by the assembly of amendments proposed by the central committee to rules I, VI, and XX (two-thirds majority of the assembly);
 - iii. elections (simple majority with specific procedures for election of the general secretary);
 - iv. selection of assembly venue (simple majority);
 - v. adoption of yearly accounts, financial audit reports and appointment of the auditors (simple majority).
- b. For matters that have been moved from consensus procedures to decision-making by vote in accordance with rule XIX.9.e.iii or rule XIX.9.f, and for matters reserved to a voting procedure according to subsection a. of this section, the following procedures shall be followed:
 - i. All motions must be moved and seconded by a delegate, and the mover has the right to speak first.
 - ii. In discussion following the seconding of a motion, no delegate may speak more than once, except that the delegate who moved the motion may answer objections at the end of the discussion.
 - iii. Any delegate may move an amendment, and if a seconder supports it, the amendment shall be considered simultaneously with the original proposal.
 - iv. When discussion is concluded, including the right of the mover to reply (XIX.10.b.ii.), the moderator shall call for the vote by show of hands in the case of meetings held in person, and by the equivalent electronic indication in the event of electronic meetings, and shall put any amendment first. If approved, it will be incorporated in the original proposal, which will then be put to the vote in the same manner, without further discussion.

- v. If the mover seeks to withdraw a motion or amendment during the discussion, the moderator will seek the consent of the meeting for the withdrawal.
- c. A delegate may move to close the discussion, but in doing so shall not interrupt a speaker. If seconded, the moderator shall call for a vote on this motion immediately without discussion. If two-thirds of the meeting agree, the voting process will then begin. If the motion fails, discussion will proceed, but the same motion to close discussion may be moved again as the discussion continues, but not by the delegate who moved it the first time.
- d. Voting shall be by show of hands in the case of meetings held in person, and by the equivalent electronic indication in the event of electronic meetings and the moderator shall ask first for those in favour, then for those against, and finally for those who wish to abstain from voting. The moderator shall announce the result of the vote immediately.
- e. If the moderator is in doubt, or for any other reason decides to do so, or if a delegate requests it, a vote on the matter shall be taken immediately by count of a show of hands in the case of meetings held in person, and by the equivalent electronic indication in the event of electronic meetings. The moderator may call tellers to count those voting and abstaining. A delegate may ask that voting be by secret ballot, written or electronic if secrecy can be secured, and, if seconded, and if a majority of delegates present and voting agree, a secret ballot shall be taken. The moderator shall announce the result of any count or secret ballot.
- f. A majority of the delegates present, including those who choose to abstain from voting, shall determine a matter being decided by vote unless a higher proportion is required by the constitution or these rules. If the vote results in a tie, the matter shall be regarded as defeated.
- g. If the moderator wishes to participate in the discussion, he or she shall relinquish the position of moderator of the session to another presiding officer until the matter has been resolved.
- h. A moderator entitled to vote as a delegate may do so, but may not cast the decisive vote in the event of a tie.
- i. Any two delegates who voted with the majority for a previously decided matter may request that the business committee or, in the case of meetings of the central or executive committees, the leadership of the central committee, propose reconsideration of the matter. The business committee or the leadership of the central committee, shall bring the proposal to the next decision session and may express an opinion as to whether the matter should be reconsidered. Reconsideration shall take place only if two-thirds of delegates present agree.

- j. Anyone voting with a minority or abstaining from voting may have his or her opinion recorded in the minutes, in the report, and/or the record of the meeting.

11. Electronic meetings

- a. Preference shall be given to meeting in person for meetings that have significant aspects of strengthening and deepening the fellowship, such as WCC governing bodies, commissions and consultative groups;
- b. Electronic means, such as teleconference, video-conference and other technologies, may be used in lieu of in person meetings, for consultation and decision-making, when a quorum is present and the following conditions have been met:
 - i. notice of the meeting has been duly provided to all participants;
 - ii. the designated technology feasibly allows consultation among the number of participants in the meeting, and for the subject matter to be discussed;
 - iii. all participants have access to the designated technology; and
 - iv. all participants have access to the documentation for the meeting in advance of the meeting.
- c. Principles of consensus shall guide all such meetings;
- d. Minutes of electronic meetings may draw only from material that has been introduced into the audible stream of the meeting.

12. Postal and Remote Electronic Decisions

- a. The central committee may, in extraordinary circumstances, decide on matters reserved for decision in accordance with rule XIX.10 by postal or remote electronic decision. “Extraordinary circumstances” shall be understood to be unforeseen situations that occur preventing the central committee from meeting in person without undue risk, in the judgment of the executive committee, or meeting electronically, or, when meeting electronically and the meeting moves to voting in accordance with rule XIX.10.b, and the decision to be taken concerns matters that must be taken for the good order of the Council;
- b. The executive committee may, by consensus, agree during a meeting to decide a matter in between its meetings, according to designated processes and timelines;
- c. Such matters may be decided by postal or remote electronic vote decision, provided:
 - i. The proposal for such decision with supporting documentation shall be communicated to the respective governing body, including, in the case of the central committee, an explanation of the extraordinary circumstance and significance of the matter that requires decision outside of a meeting;

- ii. A date and time by which the decision must be registered shall be established, no sooner than ten (10) days nor later than twenty-one (21) days following the initial request for decision in the case of the executive committee, and no sooner than thirty (30) days nor later than forty-five (45) days following the initial request for decision in the case of the central committee;
- iii. At the same time that the question is sent for decision, an electronic platform, accessible to all, shall be established for a specified time as a hearing period, for discussion, questions and answers, to be accessed prior to decision-making. Points of order and points of procedure must be posted to the electronic platform within seventy-two (72) hours of the opening of the hearing period, and must be decided by the moderator within seventy-two (72) hours thereafter. Following the conclusion of the time designated as the hearing period, during the remaining days of the period designated in Rule XIX.12.c.ii, decisions shall be registered through the platform. No amendments may be put to proposals for postal or remote electronic decision;
- iv. In the case of a question put to the central committee by the executive committee, at the end of the time designated for the hearing period, the leadership of the central committee, having heard the discussion, may suspend the process and return the question to the executive committee for reformulation or may withdraw the question;
- v. The decisions registered shall be accessible only to scrutineers designated by the leadership of the central committee from among the executive committee;
- vi. A proposal will be considered approved under this rule when at least seventy-five (75%) percent of the respective governing body has responded and two-thirds (2/3) of those responding register a decision in favour of the proposal. If fewer than seventy-five (75%) percent respond, the proposal may not be decided through electronic means, all decisions received shall be disregarded, and the matter shall be included on the agenda of the next ordinary meeting of the executive committee;
- vii. A report of the result of the decision shall be sent electronically within seven (7) days of the close of the decision period, and shall be reported to the executive committee during its next ordinary meeting;
- viii. This rule may not be interpreted to negate the provisions Rule VI.4.c.

13. Languages

The working languages in use in the World Council of Churches are English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The general secretary shall make reasonable effort to provide interpretation for any one of those languages into the others and shall endeavour to provide written translation of the specific wording of proposals. A participant may speak in another language only if he or she provides for interpretation into one of the working languages. The general secretary shall provide all possible assistance to any participant requiring an interpreter.

XX. Amendments

Amendments to these rules may be proposed at any session of the assembly or at any session of the central committee by any member and shall be decided according to the procedures in rule XIX.9; if the meeting shifts from consensus to voting, then the procedures in rule XIX.10 will apply. In this case, the proposed change must receive a two-thirds majority of those present to be adopted. No alteration in rules I, VI and XX shall come into effect until it has been confirmed by the assembly. Notice of a proposal to make any amendment shall be given in writing at least twenty-four hours before the session of the assembly or central committee at which it is to be considered.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

The rule for the conduct of meetings (rule XIX), and these guidelines, are worded as applying to a meeting of the assembly of the World Council of Churches.

They are to be used similarly in meetings of all governing and consultative bodies of the World Council of Churches.

1. Consensus procedures

In the interval between the 1998 Harare assembly and Porto Alegre in 2006, the central committee accepted the recommendation of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, to adopt a consensus model of decision-making as an alternative to the parliamentary model. More precisely the central committee in 2005 adopted amendments to its rule for the conduct of meetings.

The rules of the World Council of Churches, including revised rule XIX, “Conduct of Meetings”, provide the authority for how meetings of all World Council of Churches bodies are expected to function. These guidelines are offered as a supplementary resource to help participants appreciate the potential of consensus procedures, as well as to explain some other features of the World Council of Churches.

2. Theological basis

The World Council of Churches is called to bear witness to unity in a world which is marked by tensions, antagonisms, conflicts, wars and rumours of wars (cf. Matt. 24:6). In this situation the Council can bear witness not only by its programmes and resolutions, but also by the way it does its business. It can shape its rules and procedures in such a way as to express a faith “made effective in love” (Gal. 5:6). This means that member churches, as well as representatives of those churches, will treat each other with respect and will seek to build one another up in love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-6, 14:12).

Some churches around the world, and some parts of the Council itself, have found that making decisions by consensus is a better way of reflecting the nature of the church as described in the New Testament than is the “parliamentary” approach. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, St Paul speaks of parts of the body needing each other. A fully functioning body integrates the gifts of all its members. Similarly, any ecumenical body will function best when it makes optimum use of the abilities, history, experience, commitment and spiritual tradition of all the members.

Consensus procedures allow more room for consultation, exploration, questioning and prayerful reflection, with less rigidity than formal voting procedures. By promoting collaboration rather than adversarial debate, consensus procedures help the assembly (or a commission or committee) to seek the mind of Christ together. Rather than striving to succeed in debate, participants are encouraged to submit to one another and to seek to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

The consensus model for decision-making also encourages prayerful listening to one another and growth in understanding between ecclesial traditions. At the same time it requires discipline on the part of participants and moderators. There must also be rules. But the aim is to arrive at a common mind rather than simply the will of the majority. When consensus is declared, all who have participated can confidently affirm: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28).

3. Building community

Developing consensus outcomes requires a culture in which there is willingness mutually to seek God’s will in humility and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because the World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches with a common basis in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour,¹ each time an assembly gathers there is fresh opportunity to affirm and express the rich relationship of being a community in Christ. Through those appointed to represent them, the member churches “seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of God.”² This assumes an awareness and appreciation of the contribution fellow participants bring to the meeting. As we seek to discern God’s will on issues (often starting from very different viewpoints), we acknowledge that each has unique God-given gifts and insights, and that all contributions are worthy of respect and consideration.

An assembly draws together people from many different countries, cultures and church traditions. It takes time to build the trust and relationships that form real *koινωνia*. As we acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and listen for the word of God in daily prayer and Bible study together, the bonds of community are strengthened. Our diversity and unity in Jesus Christ is celebrated also as we grow to understand each other better while eating, working, relaxing, talking and praying together in more informal ways throughout the life of the assembly. Gradually a climate of trust is able to be developed.

1. WCC constitution article 1.

2. *Ibid.*

4. Small groups

Each member of an assembly is part of a small “home” Bible study group throughout the time of the meeting, providing valuable opportunity within that small unit of the whole to experience *koinonia*, through:

- forming fellowship bonds which are necessary for the care and support of each other throughout the time of the assembly;
- feeling safe, in a context where concerns and confidences can be shared, where prayer requests and probing questions can be raised; and
- finding that theological differences can be enriching and that prior stereotyping is irrelevant as friendships form.

In the course of plenary sessions, another type of small group may be used. From time to time this may be helpful for a brief period of discussion, perhaps in table groups (which is possible during central committee meetings) or among three or four neighbours of the same language preference are seated close together in a plenary session. Complex issues can become clearer after a brief sharing time, and fresh approaches to a seemingly impossible dilemma may develop into a creative solution when the plenary resumes.

5. Categories of session

At the beginning of each session, the moderator announces whether it is to be a general, a hearing or a decision session. On occasions it may be necessary to move from one category to another within the same sitting of the assembly. Where this occurs, the moderator may announce a brief pause in proceedings for a time of prayerful reflection or the singing of a song.

a) General session

General sessions are the formal, ceremonial occasions. No discussion or decision occurs, and the content is pre-determined by the central committee or the business committee.

b) Hearing session

In a hearing session, information about reports or proposals is presented. All participants (delegates plus others who have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making) may contribute in a hearing session when recognized by the moderator. The moderator encourages participants to explore a wide range of perspectives through question and comment, so that the meeting is

fully resourced about possible options before a way forward is discerned by the assembly.

This may mean, if time allows and others are not left unheard, that participants are given the opportunity to speak more than once in the course of the discussion. Participants signify to the moderator their desire to speak by standing at one of the microphones until called by the moderator to contribute or by written request via a steward.

A moderator may call upon those who have queued to speak or those who have submitted written requests. Participants who had submitted written requests to speak may join those queuing for a turn to speak. A moderator may use the final portion of a hearing session to return to previously submitted written requests to speak.

No decisions are taken in a hearing session, except to deal with a point of order or procedural proposal if one arises, or to change to a decision session if it is agreed to finalize a particular matter in that same sitting.

c) Decision session

In a decision session, only delegates may speak. (Delegates will have been resourced in their decision-making responsibility by other participants when the issue was presented in an earlier hearing session.) Contributions are expected to develop a proposal progressively, each speaker's taking heed of insights from other contributors in discerning the common mind of the meeting about the way forward for the assembly.

Because changes to an original proposal can occur during the discussion, care needs to be taken that the agreed wording at all stages is clear to everybody, and that time for interpretation is allowed as necessary. The session recorder³ has an important part in assisting the moderator in this role.

For the few agenda items where the rules specify that voting procedures are to be used, the rules provide an outline of how that is regulated.⁴ On rare occasions in a decision session when a consensus outcome cannot be reached, the meeting may choose to decide an urgent polarized issue by formal voting procedures also.⁵

3. Person appointed by the business committee to follow the discussion of a decision session, to record the languages of the emerging consensus, including final language of decisions taken, and to assist the moderator of the session in discerning an emerging consensus. Recorders shall also assist the moderator in ensuring that the final agreed wording of a proposal is translated and available to delegates before a decision is made. Normally a delegate will be appointed recorder. Rule XIX.5.

4. Rule XIX.10.

5. Rule XIX.9.e, 9.f.

6. Role of moderators

A number of different people share the work of moderating sessions throughout the assembly meeting. Moderators are designated prior to the assembly by the outgoing central committee, and if necessary during an assembly by the business committee.⁶ Each moderator is expected to have been trained in consensus procedures and to be familiar with the ethos and functioning of the World Council of Churches.

The responsibilities of a moderator are:

- to preside in a manner that assists the assembly to be open to discerning the will of God;
- to encourage the meeting to move towards a common mind; and
- to ensure that the needs and purposes of the Council are met in the way business is carried out.

In so doing, a moderator is expected:

- to facilitate the exchange and development of ideas, encouraging trust and integrity in contributions;
- to ensure respect and support for all who participate;
- to seek indications of the delegates' response to each speech, and reflect back the mood of the meeting as it becomes apparent;
- to summarize the discussion from time to time, assisting the assembly to focus the move towards a consensus outcome;
- to encourage creative modifications of a proposal which take heed of insights expressed by earlier speakers;
- to invite participants, as occasion demands, to spend a few minutes in conversation with near neighbours;
- to test emerging agreement in decision sessions, to ascertain if the meeting is ready to move to a decision by consensus.

A moderator's role as a non-partisan facilitator is crucial to the flow of the meeting towards a consensus outcome. To that end, the moderator:

- convenes the session, announcing which category of session it is;
- announces any change in session category which may occur during a session, and may provide a brief break in the sitting at that time for reflective prayer or the singing of a song;

6. Rule XIX.3.

- encourages a fair range of views in selecting speakers from those whose desire to contribute has been indicated either in writing or by queuing at the microphone;
- liaises frequently with the recorder throughout the session, ensuring the wording of any agreed variation to a proposal is available to participants in an appropriately clear form;
- does not participate in deliberations (unless arrangements are made to relinquish the role of moderator while the particular matter is being decided);
- is entitled to a personal vote as a delegate of her/his own church in formal voting procedures, but not to a deciding vote where the outcome of a count is tied; and
- closes the session.

7. Setting the agenda

a) Programme agenda

The broad outcomes for the programmatic activities of the World Council of Churches are set by the assembly, upon recommendation of the assembly programme guidelines committee. After the assembly, the central committee, assisted by its programme committee, engages to determine and develop the strategies that will deliver these outcomes, setting programme strategies and goals. In between two assemblies, the programme committee assists the central committee to hear, with respect to programme work, the views and hopes of the churches, respond to key issues identified by commissions, and review, reshape and develop the goals of programme work in light of changing circumstances and needs. The executive committee ensures the implementation of the strategic programmatic objectives set by the central committee.

An additional advisory body to the central committee and its executive committee is the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration (resulting from the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC). It helps between assembly meetings in guiding the process of programme agenda setting and in monitoring the overall balance of the work of the Council, and during assemblies advises the business committee.

b) Business agenda

The business agenda of this assembly meeting is proposed by the central committee (through its assembly planning committee) to the first decision session of the assembly. A delegate may suggest an item of business through the business

committee, which has the responsibility during the assembly of monitoring when agenda changes should be brought to a plenary for approval.

The governing bodies each have responsibility for specifically identified areas of governance, including, but not limited to:

- **Assembly:** reception of the accounts and report of the outgoing central committee; election of presidents; election of central committee members; revision of the constitution and confirmation of certain rules changes; determination of overall policies, including programme policies;
- **Central committee:** election of the leadership of the central committee (moderator, vice-moderators, general secretary); election of executive committee; appointment of commissions and advisory groups; elaboration of institutional policies and strategic plans for programme and finance; initiation and termination of programmes.
- **Executive committee:** ensuring implementation of strategic objectives set by the central committee; overseeing finances, institutional risk and resource management; monitoring programmes and activities; staff appointments.

Normally, the leadership of the central committee and the executive committee monitor the setting of the business agenda of an assembly or the central committee, ensuring that an annotated agenda with supporting documents is made available well ahead of the meeting. Some smaller agenda items may be included on the agenda of a sub-committee right from the start, rather than waiting for listing in a plenary before being referred to the sub-committee for more detailed consideration. To ensure widespread awareness of matters being considered, all participants will be issued annotated agendas of the different reference or sub-committees. Hence those not involved with a particular sub-committee, who have any concerns or insights on a particular agenda item, can share them with the sub-committee before the matter comes back to the plenary for decision-making.

How individual members of governing bodies introduce a matter to the business agenda of an assembly is addressed in the sub-section: “How to raise concerns” under “Role of delegates and participants” in section 8.

8. Role of delegates and participants

a) How to contribute

When a participant wishes to contribute in a plenary session, she/he indicates this to the moderator and waits to be called. This can be done either by queuing

at a microphone when the moderator so invites or by submitting a written request (name, church, country and essence of contribution) via a steward.

When called to speak, all remarks are addressed to the moderator. A participant states her/his name, church, country, language preference, and (in a hearing session) whether she/he is a delegate or other participant. If one of the working languages of the Council is used, simultaneous interpretation will be provided. If participants speak in another language, it is their responsibility to provide interpretation.

Remarks are limited to three minutes to enable as many contributions as possible within one session. Speakers should have a clear idea beforehand of what they will say, with the main points crystallized to as few words as possible.

b) How to raise concerns

Any participant may raise concerns outside of sessions with a member of the business committee. Concerns may include the appropriateness of a proposal, its priority in the agenda or the manner in which it is to be addressed, or suggestions for additions to the proposed agenda.⁷

During a hearing session, procedural suggestions about how an issue is handled can be raised if necessary in the course of the discussion (consensus procedures are used for hearing sessions).

During a decision session, a delegate:

- may raise questions about procedure;
- may challenge the result of a vote if there is doubt about the outcome: a counted vote is then taken immediately;
- may request a secret written ballot, such request needing to be seconded and agreed by a two-thirds majority before proceeding;
- may appeal against a moderator's ruling on a point of order; the moderator will put to the meeting without discussion the question of whether delegates concur with the moderator's ruling, and it is decided by either consensus or voting procedures (according to which are in place at the time).

In either a hearing session or a decision session, if a delegate considers that a matter under discussion goes against the ecclesiological self-understanding⁸ of her/his church, there is a process for bringing that concern to the attention of the assembly.⁹

7. Rule XIX.6.a, 6.c.

8. The self-understanding of a church on matters of faith, doctrine and ethics.

9. Section 12: safety valves; rule XIX.6.d.

c) How to listen and respond (ethics of participation)

Consensus procedures assume all are listening for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as each speaker contributes. So participants try to build creatively on the insights of earlier contributions as much as possible, always keeping in mind the goal of discerning a way forward for the assembly on which the meeting can agree.

It is assumed that all contributions are made with integrity and conviction, and so all speakers are treated with respect even where their understanding is quite different from one's own. Growth in participants' awareness of the richness and diversity of the Christian church is always the outcome of World Council of Churches gatherings, whatever specific decisions are taken on particular matters.

Because a consensus outcome usually arises from progressive development of a proposal during the course of hearing and decision sessions, there is no place for proxy or absentee votes when the mind of the meeting is being discerned (or when a formal vote is taken). Only those present and participating can be part of the communal discernment which develops, about God's will for the way forward at this time.

Similarly, where a participant has chosen not to attend a designated sub-committee that has been part of the process of considering a particular report or issue, it is generally inappropriate for her/him to raise objection to the outcome, or to record a minority opinion, when the report is presented in a subsequent plenary session. The place for the objection to be heard would have been in the smaller committee forum, where a different conclusion might have been reached in listening to others' contributions.

In central committee where a substitute for a delegate is allowed in certain circumstances, it is the responsibility of the delegate to fully brief the person taking her/his place.

d) How to report afterwards (advocacy for decisions of assembly)

Participating in a World Council of Churches assembly is a rare privilege. It is the responsibility of participants to ensure that the fruits of the experience are made known back in their home churches. This means advocacy for the resolutions of the assembly, even when in some particular instances the outcome might not have been the participant's first preference for wording.

And of course the rich ecumenical encounters will colour participants' total involvement in the life of their home church for years to come!

9. Making decisions – consensus¹⁰

a) Understanding consensus

Consensus is a process of seeking the common mind of the meeting without resort to a formal vote, engaging in genuine dialogue that is respectful, mutually supportive and empowering whilst prayerfully seeking to discern God's will.

A consensus outcome is declared when one of the following occurs:

- all those entitled to make decisions are in agreement about an outcome (unanimity); or
- most are in agreement and the few for whom it is not their first preference nonetheless accept they have been fairly heard and could live with that outcome, and so agree to consensus being recorded as the mind of the meeting.

Agreement about an outcome is not limited merely to approving the wording of a proposal. That *may* be what is agreed. But it may be that consensus is reached about another outcome, including such possibilities as agreeing to reject a proposal, or to refer a matter for further work, or to affirm that a variety of positions may be held by Christian churches on this issue.

There are no formal amendments in consensus procedures. Speakers may suggest variations to the wording of a proposal as discussion proceeds, and incremental changes can be agreed by the meeting as a possible outcome progressively becomes apparent. Consensus procedures assume all are eager to listen for insights from others that may help in the search to discern God's will for the way forward. Hence there will be an attitude of respectful anticipation, as all delegates work towards the common goal.

b) Indicator cards

In a big gathering, hearing all contributions and being aware of how delegates are responding to the ideas expressed by each speaker may be difficult. Indicator cards can assist in this process in both hearing and decision sessions. Blue and orange cards are provided for each delegate's use.¹¹ After a speaker finishes his or her remarks, the moderator gauges the proportion of those supportive of that point of view by calling for delegates to hold a card discreetly at chest level – orange to indicate warmth towards an idea or acceptance of it, blue to show coolness or disapproval. By reporting to the meeting what is visible in response each time, the moderator is able to help the meeting understand

10. See appendix A: flow chart of consensus procedures.

11. These colours are chosen because even those who are colour blind can distinguish between orange and blue.

what aspects need more exploration, and thus gradually move forward to an outcome acceptable to all.

Indicator cards may also be used to show the moderator that a delegate considers it is time to move on – a speaker may be getting repetitious or irrelevant, or the points may have been well made already by other speakers. In this case, a delegate may hold the two coloured cards crossed in front of the chest as a silent indication to the moderator that prolonging debate does not seem helpful. If the number of crossed cards indicates that many delegates are of the same mind, the moderator may ask the speaker to conclude, or invite one with a different perspective to contribute next, or check whether the meeting is ready to move to recording a consensus decision.

c) Small conversation groups

Breaking into small conversation groups is one way of enabling fuller participation - just turning to near neighbours of the same language preference in a plenary setting for a few moments of sharing ideas. Often an apparent deadlock can be relieved by such a technique, and when the plenary resumes, fresh insights may have emerged which lead to a creative way for an outcome to be achieved.

d) Checking for consensus

As discussion proceeds, it may become clear there are basic principles the meeting is able to affirm immediately, before the continuing search for a common mind on more diverse aspects of the proposal. The moderator can state what seems to be an underlying agreement, and then check with the meeting with such a question as: “Do we have consensus on this aspect at this stage?” Delegates are invited to show indicator cards, and the moderator is able to see if:

- all are in agreement (orange), in which case the consensus agreement is recorded, and continuing discussion can focus on the more contentious aspects;
- there is still a mixed response (many of both orange and blue), in which case more discussion on the whole issue is clearly needed; or
- only one or two are unable to agree at this point (mostly orange, one or two blue), in which case the moderator’s next questions can check whether those few feel their point of view has been heard, and whether they can accept the position reached by the others and agree to a consensus outcome being recorded, even though the wording is not their first preference.

e) When consensus seems elusive

After a reasonable attempt to achieve an agreed outcome, if it seems a consensus outcome is still elusive and the meeting is polarized with more than one potential outcome, one of a number of possibilities is available to the meeting (perhaps guided by the moderator), including:

- agreeing to refer the matter to a select working group to report back to a later session (ensuring the group's membership includes people from each of the firmly held positions);
- agreeing to refer the matter to another body or to member churches for more work, and not considering it further at this assembly;
- agreeing to affirm that there are various opinions Christian churches may hold;
- agreeing that the matter be no longer considered.

f) In reaching any of these conclusions, certain questions should be asked, such as:

- “Must a decision on this matter be made today?” If no, the matter should be deferred to a later session (tomorrow, next week, or some other time). Further seasoning by a committee and informal discussion among those with strong views will often bring the meeting to a different level of agreement at a later session. If yes (and this is quite rare), the attention of the meeting must shift from approving or not approving the proposal at hand to finding other ways of meeting the pressing or time-critical need. Interim solutions can sometimes be found while the meeting searches for consensus on the original question.
- “Can this proposal be acted upon, on the understanding that some members (or member churches) cannot support it?” If no, the proposal should be deferred for further work, as above. If yes, the effect is that those persons, or member churches, or parts of the Council, being of a dissenting opinion, nevertheless allow a policy or programme to go forward without endorsing it. This is sometimes called “standing aside”. In social and political issues it may sometimes be appropriate for some member churches or some committee or commission of the World Council of Churches to speak without committing the Council as a whole to one point of view.
- “Have we asked the right question?” When agreement on the issue, as posed, is not possible, this should not be regarded as failure.

Sometimes a different question will yield a consensus. Sometimes it is helpful to ask, “What can we say together?” The meeting may not be of one mind on a particular statement on a difficult issue, but may find great value in articulating its various perspectives and the fruits of its discussion. There may be foundational principles on which we all agree. A clear articulation of these, followed by a description of the diverse conclusions that Christians of good conscience have reached, can be a powerful product of a discussion.

g) When a decision must be taken NOW

If in the opinion of the general secretary or the moderator or vice moderator(s) of the central committee or the business committee it is vital for a decision to be made before the meeting concludes and yet the meeting is nowhere near a consensus outcome, the rules provide a process for the business committee to re-formulate the proposal.¹² When the reworded proposal is then brought back to a later session, it is the responsibility of the meeting to decide (by consensus procedures) whether it agrees a decision must be made at this meeting, and whether it is prepared to continue working towards a consensus outcome on the reformulated proposal. If a decision must be made immediately, but opinion remains divided about what that decision should be, the meeting can agree by at least an eighty-five (85) percent majority to decide the matter by formal voting procedures.

10. Making decisions—formal voting procedures

a) Exceptions to using consensus

It is expected that all decisions of the WCC will be made by consensus, except for:¹³

- changes to the constitution;
- elections;
- selection of an assembly venue; and
- adoption of yearly accounts, financial audit reports and appointment of the auditors.

Each of these matters will initially be presented in a hearing session, where questions and discussion using consensus procedures may occur. At the start of the decision session where the matter will be decided, the moderator announces that the method to be used is voting by show of hands or cards. Simplified rules

12. Rule XIX.9.e.

13. Rule XIX.10.a.

for formal voting procedures¹⁴ are then employed for determining the matter, in which:

- all motions must be moved and seconded by a delegate;
- the mover has the right to speak first;
- an amendment may be introduced and if seconded it will be considered along with the motion;
- no one may speak more than once except that the mover may answer objections immediately before the vote is taken;
- withdrawal of a motion requires the permission of the meeting;
- any delegate may move to close the discussion, waiting for a call from the moderator before so doing;
- voting is by show of hands or cards, those in favour first, those against next and then those abstaining;
- anyone voting with the minority or abstaining may have his or her opinion recorded in the minutes, the report of the meeting and the session record;
- there is provision for reconsideration of an earlier decision of the meeting;
- points of order and procedural proposals may be raised;
- approval requires two-thirds of those present to be in favour (unless otherwise specified or agreed by the meeting).

b) Moving from consensus to formal vote

Very rarely it may be necessary to resort to formal voting procedures when it is imperative that an outcome be decided immediately and it has not been possible to reach consensus. The process for moving from consensus to formal voting procedures requires the moderator to announce that a vote to decide this change will be taken, eighty-five (85) percent of delegates present being needed to agree to do so.¹⁵

11. Procedural proposals and points of order

a) Procedural proposals

Any delegate in the course of either a hearing session or a decision session, or any participant in the course of a hearing session, may ask for clarification of the pending matter or may raise suggestions about procedure which can be

14. Rule XIX.10.; appendix B: flow chart for formal voting procedures.

15. Rule XIX.9.f.

considered by the meeting and decided immediately. A delegate seeking to do so may not interrupt a speaker but must wait for the call of the moderator.

b) Points of order

Points of order may be raised by any participant during either hearing or decision sessions at any time, even by interrupting another speaker. A participant gains the attention of the moderator with the words, “point of order!” The moderator asks the participant to state the point of order and then (without debate):

- rules on it immediately; or
- asks the assembly to decide the matter.

Points of order which may be raised are:

- to question whether procedures being followed are in accordance with the rules which allow for a personal explanation if a subsequent speaker grossly misrepresents his/her remarks;
- to raise objection if remarks are thought to be offensive or derogatory;
- to request that the meeting move to a closed session until the matter under discussion is decided (closed session requires that all but delegates leave the session).

c) If the moderator’s ruling on a point of order or a procedural proposal is challenged, the challenger may speak and the moderator reply before the delegates present decide the question either by consensus or by two-thirds majority vote, according to the decision-making procedures then being employed.

12. Safety valves

Seeking the common mind of a meeting about the way forward needs some safeguards. No delegate or member church need feel pressured into an unacceptable position. All opinions are valued and on the occasions when, after careful consideration and listening, a minority cannot accept what has become the general mind of the meeting, there is reassurance in the following provisions.

a) Consensus outcome on what?

A consensus outcome may be reached that a variety of stances are appropriate for member churches to hold on a particular issue, and so the wording of the agreed resolution notes and affirms those differing perspectives.

b) Definition of consensus—not only unanimity

The definition of consensus is not confined to unanimity. It also includes the situation where most are in agreement and those few who cannot completely agree are satisfied that their point of view has been heard, that the discussion has been both full and fair, and that their church is not compromised in having a consensus outcome recorded on this matter.

c) Recording minority opinions

After every effort to discern a consensus outcome, occasionally a decision cannot be reached even though it is necessary to finalize the matter immediately. Among the possible outcomes for such a scenario is the provision for accepting the discernment of most delegates with some few others recording a different point of view. This can occur when those who cannot agree with the majority are yet satisfied with the outcome and exercise the right to record their opinion opposing the resolution in the minutes and to have their viewpoint noted in the record of the session.

d) Ecclesiological self-understanding¹⁶

Where a matter being raised is considered by a delegate to go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of his or her church, the delegate may request that it not be submitted for decision. The moderator shall seek the advice of the business committee in consultation with this delegate and other members of the same church or confession present at the session. If agreed that the matter does in fact go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of the delegate's church, the moderator shall announce that the matter will be removed from the agenda of the decision session and may be considered in a hearing session. The materials and minutes of the discussion shall be sent to the member churches for their study and comment.

e) A member church may act after the assembly

If after the close of an assembly a member church finds it cannot support a decision of the assembly, there is provision for that to be officially recorded.¹⁷

16. Rule XIX.6.d.

17. Rule XIX.5.e.

13. Language

Normally there are five working languages of the assembly – English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. Participants may contribute in another language if they can provide interpretation into one of these. The business committee will assist such participants to be able to contribute as fully as possible.

14. Election process

a) Assembly committees

During the first decision session of the assembly, the business committee will present nominations for election of the membership of all assembly committees (including the nominations committee). Committees begin their work immediately.

b) Central committee

- Prior to the assembly, member churches are invited to nominate candidates for the central committee from amongst assembly delegates. Consultation between churches in each region is encouraged, such that a name supported by more than one church will carry more weight for the nominations committee.
- During the assembly, regional meetings provide opportunity for discussion about particular nominations.
- Principles guiding the work of the nominations committee:¹⁸
 - the personal qualifications of the individual for the task for which she/he is being nominated;
 - fair and adequate confessional representation;
 - fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
 - fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council;
 - the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong;
 - not more than seven persons from any one member church;
 - adequate representation of lay persons and an adequate balance of men, women and young people.
- Early in the life of the assembly, the nominations committee presents a first proposal on the anticipated profile of the central committee (without names) for consideration and approval by the assembly.
- Subsequently, a first reading of nominations is presented in a hearing session, during which discussion about the list in general is

18. Rule IV.4.c,d,e,and f.

encouraged. No proposed changes to names will be considered in this session.

- Delegates may bring proposals for changes to specific nominations to the nominations committee outside of the plenary meeting. Any proposal needs to be in writing, must be signed by six delegates from at least three member churches, and must propose an alternative nominee as an alternative to a particular nominee. Alternative nominations need to offer a replacement with the same demographic profile (region, gender, age, etc.), unless the replacement nominee will improve the balances sought.
- When the second reading of the list of nominations is brought to a decision session, the nominations committee gives an account of the proposals suggested for changes to the slate of names, and any variations resulting from them. If the assembly is not ready to approve the list, further time is given for out-of-session proposals as described above, and the list is brought to a subsequent decision session for the election.

c) Presidents

Prior to an assembly, staff will seek advice from regional ecumenical organizations and pre-assembly regional meetings about appropriate names to be considered by the nominations committee, in preparing nominations for the eight presidents of the World Council of Churches.

d) Voting

Elections are determined by formal voting procedures.

1. General

- a. These provisions for conduct of meetings shall apply to meetings of the assembly, the central committee, the executive committee and all other bodies of the World Council of Churches. During an assembly, the titles “president, moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee” shall refer to the persons holding those offices in the outgoing central committee. During the term of a central committee such titles shall refer to the current presidents and leadership of that central committee.
- b. “Delegate” shall mean an official representative of a member church to an assembly with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making (rule IV.1.a). For meetings of the central committee, “delegate” shall mean a member of the central committee

or that member's substitute (rule VI.1.b), with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making.

- c. "Participant" shall include delegates as well as persons invited to the assembly or a meeting of the central committee as persons with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making (rule IV.1.b and VI.2).

2. Categories of sessions

The assembly shall sit in one of the following categories of sessions: general, hearing or decision. The business committee shall determine the category of session appropriate for different parts of the agenda.

a. *General session*

General sessions shall be reserved for ceremonial occasions, public acts of witness and formal addresses. Only matters proposed by the central committee or by the business committee shall be included in general sessions. No decisions shall be made during general sessions.

b. *Hearing session*

Hearing sessions shall be designated for plenary presentations, discussion, dialogue, and exchange of ideas as a resource for developing understanding, deepening fellowship among member churches and coming to a common mind on matters on the agenda. A wide range of perspectives shall be encouraged during hearing sessions. No decisions shall be made during hearing sessions, other than to move to a decision session, if deemed necessary or to deal with a point of order or procedural proposals.

c. *Decision session*

Decision sessions shall be designated for matters requiring a decision, including:

- i. adoption of the agenda;
- ii. proposal for change in the agenda;
- iii. appointments and elections;
- iv. reception or adoption of reports or recommendations;
- v. actions to be taken on recommendations or proposals of committees or commissions, or arising out of hearing sessions;
- vi. adoption of accounts and financial audits; and
- vii. amendment of constitution or rules.

3. Moderating sessions

- a. A moderator for each session of the assembly shall be designated before an assembly by the outgoing central committee, and during an assembly by the business committee, as follows:
 - i. in general sessions one of the presidents or the moderator of the central committee shall preside;

- ii. in hearing sessions one of the presidents, the moderator or a vice-moderator of the central committee, or a delegate with specific expertise in the subject matter of the hearing, shall preside;
 - iii. in decision sessions the moderator or a vice-moderator of the central committee or delegate to the assembly who was a member of the outgoing central committee shall preside.
- b. The role of session moderators shall be:
 - i. to convene the session, including announcing the category of session;
 - ii. to facilitate and encourage discussion and dialogue, for the exchange and development of ideas, and to assist the meeting to come to a common mind;
 - iii. during decision sessions, to test any emerging agreement on a particular point and whether the meeting is ready to move to a decision by consensus;
 - iv. in the event the category of session is to change during a session, to announce the change in category, providing a break in the session to mark the change in category; and
 - v. to close the session.
- c. The moderator shall consult with the recorder for the session to ensure that the developing consensus is accurately noted and any changed wording promptly made available to the meeting.
- d. All moderators shall undertake specific training in conducting meetings based upon the consensus model of decision-making, as described in these rules and the accompanying guidelines.

4. Moderator of the assembly

The moderator of the assembly shall announce the opening, suspension and the adjournment of the assembly.

5. Official minutes, records and reports

- a. The business committee shall appoint recorders from among delegates for each decision session. Their role shall be to follow the discussion of a decision session, to record the language of the emerging consensus, including final language of decisions taken, and to assist the moderator of the session in discerning an emerging consensus. Recorders shall also assist the moderator in ensuring that the final agreed wording of a proposal is translated and available to delegates before a decision is made.
- b. The business committee shall appoint rapporteurs for each hearing session and for committee meetings for which official minutes are not maintained, to prepare a report of the meeting including major

- themes and specific proposals. A rapporteur appointed for a committee meeting shall function as a recorder of that meeting.
- c. The business committee shall appoint minute-takers to record the official minutes of general, hearing and decision sessions of an assembly or any meeting for which formal minutes must be kept, and shall include a record of the discussion, motions and decisions. The minutes will normally incorporate by reference any report of the meeting. The minutes shall be signed by the moderator and the minute-taker for the session and shall be sent to the participants of the meeting. For all minutes other than minutes of an assembly, if there is no objection within six months from the sending of the minutes, the minutes shall be considered to be accepted. The first full central committee meeting following an assembly shall confirm the minutes of the assembly.
 - d. Decision sessions shall produce official minutes, a record and/or report.
 - e. If, after the close of a meeting, a member church declares that it cannot support a decision of the meeting, the member church may submit its objection in writing and have its position recorded in the minutes or report of a subsequent meeting. The decision itself shall not be rescinded by this action.

6. Agenda

- a. Matters may be included on the agenda of a meeting according to rule IV.3 and procedures established by the business and programme committees, and any other committee established by central committee for that purpose. Normally, matters included on an agenda will be based upon reports, recommendations or proposals that previously have been fully considered and have the consensus support of the proposing group or committee.
- b. The business committee shall ensure that the moderator is advised before each session, and if appropriate during breaks within a session, as to the conduct of the business and the priority of various agenda items.
- c. A delegate may propose to the business committee an item of business to be included on, or any change in, the agenda. If after consideration the business committee has not agreed to the proposal, the delegate may appeal the decision to the moderator of the assembly in writing. The moderator shall at a convenient time inform the assembly of the proposal, and a member of the business committee shall explain the reasons for this refusal. The delegate may give reasons for proposing it. The moderator shall then without further debate put the following question: Shall the assembly accept this proposal? If the assembly agrees to accept the proposal, the business committee as soon as possible shall

- bring proposals for the inclusion of the matter or the change in the agenda.
- d. Matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding: Where a matter being raised is considered by a delegate to go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of his or her church, the delegate may request that it not be submitted for decision. The moderator shall seek the advice of the business committee in consultation with this delegate and other members of the same church or confession present at the session. If agreed that the matter does in fact go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of the delegate's church, the moderator shall announce that the matter will be removed from the agenda of the decision session and may be considered in a hearing session. The materials and minutes of the discussion shall be sent to the member churches for their study and comment.
 - e. Subject to the provisions of this rule, the agenda shall be proposed, amended and/or adopted in accordance with rule IV.3, IV.5, and VI.3.d.

7. Speaking

- a. In hearing sessions, participants wishing to speak either may submit to the moderator a written request or may queue at the microphones when the moderator so invites, but may speak only when called by the moderator.
- b. In decision sessions of the assembly or central committee, only delegates may speak. Delegates wishing to speak either may submit to the moderator a written request or may queue at the microphones when the moderator so invites, but may speak only when called by the moderator.
- c. In sessions of committees and advisory bodies where both hearing and decision may take place, participants who are not delegates have the right to speak but not to take part in decision-making.
- d. The moderator shall decide who shall speak, ensuring that a fair distribution of opinions is heard, and may take advice on the order of speakers from a small sub-committee of the business committee. If time allows and others are not left unheard, the moderator may permit speakers to intervene more than once.
- e. When called by the moderator, a speaker shall speak from a microphone, first stating his or her name, church, country, and role at the meeting, and shall address all remarks to the moderator.
- f. Remarks will normally be limited to three minutes; however, the moderator may use discretion in allowing extra time if there is a difficulty in language or interpretation or if the issues being discussed are unusually complex.

- g. Procedural proposals – hearing or decision sessions: Provided that a speaker is not interrupted, a delegate may ask for clarification of the pending matter or may raise suggestions about procedure. The moderator immediately shall provide clarification or respond to the suggestion for change of procedure.
- h. Points of order – hearing or decision sessions: This provision is available to question whether procedures being followed are in accordance with these rules, to object to offensive language, to make a point of personal explanation, or to request that a meeting move to closed session. Points of order may be raised by a participant at any time, even by interrupting another speaker. A participant gains the attention of the moderator by standing and calling, “point of order!” The moderator shall ask the participant to state the point of order and then (without discussion) shall rule on it immediately.
- i. If any delegate disagrees with the moderator’s decision on a procedural proposal or point of order, the delegate may appeal against it. In this case the moderator will put this question, without discussion, to the meeting: “Does the meeting concur with the decision of the moderator?” The delegates present shall decide the question according to the decision-making procedures then being employed.

8. Reaching consensus: seeking the common mind of the meeting

- a. Consensus shall be understood as seeking the common mind of the meeting without resort to a formal vote, in a process of genuine dialogue that is respectful, mutually supportive and empowering, whilst prayerfully seeking to discern God’s will.
- b. Decisions will normally be by consensus, unless otherwise specified by the rules.
- c. A consensus decision on a particular matter shall be recorded when one of the following occurs:
 - i. all delegates are in agreement (unanimity); or
 - ii. most are in agreement and those who disagree are satisfied that the discussion has been both full and fair and do not object that the proposal expresses the general mind of the meeting.
- d. A consensus decision shall mean that there is agreement about the outcome of a discussion. This may mean agreement to accept a proposal or a variation of a proposal; it also may mean agreement about another outcome, including agreement to reject a proposal, to postpone a matter, that no decision can be reached, or that there are various opinions that may be held. When consensus has been reached that various opinions can be held concerning a matter, those various opinions shall be recorded in the final wording of the minutes and the report and the record of the meeting.

9. Decision-making by consensus

- a. A proposal or recommendation considered in a decision session may be affirmed, modified or rejected. Delegates may suggest modifications, and the moderator may allow discussion on more than one modification at a time. Reaching a common mind may require a series of steps, if there is a variety of opinions being expressed. As discussion proceeds, the moderator may ask the meeting to affirm what is held in common before encouraging discussion on those aspects of a proposal about which more diverse opinions have been voiced.
- b. To assist the moderator in discerning the mind of the meeting and to move efficiently towards consensus, the recorder of the session shall maintain a record of the discussion. Delegates may be provided with indicator cards to facilitate participation.
- c. A delegate or the moderator may suggest that the matter under discussion be referred for further work to an appropriate group holding a range of points of view. This suggestion itself shall be tested to discern the mind of the meeting. If agreed, the business committee shall schedule consideration of the matter for a later session.
- d. When it seems that the meeting is close to agreement on an outcome, the moderator shall ensure that the wording of the proposal (or the proposal as varied during the course of the discussion) is clear to all delegates, and then test whether there is consensus on that outcome. If all are agreed consistent with rule XIX.8.c.i, the moderator shall declare that consensus has been reached and the decision made. If the meeting is not unanimous, the moderator shall invite those who hold a minority view to explain their reasons if they wish and to indicate whether they can agree with a decision pursuant to rule XIX.8.c.ii. If so, consensus shall be declared.
- e. If, after every effort has been made to reach consensus, agreement cannot be reached and it is the opinion of a member of the leadership of the central committee or the business committee that a decision must be made before the meeting concludes, the moderator shall ask the business committee to formulate a proposal for how the matter may be considered again in a new form. At the later decision session where this new approach is considered, the meeting itself shall decide whether a decision must be made at this meeting, and, if so, shall proceed on any one of the following courses, which may be followed sequentially:
 - i. to work further towards consensus on the proposal in its new form;
 - ii. to work to reach agreement among most delegates with some delegates recording an objection, in which event a meeting shall record acceptance of the proposal, providing that each delegate

- who does not agree is satisfied with that outcome and has the right to have his or her viewpoint recorded in the minutes, in the report, and in the record of the meeting; or
- iii. to move into voting procedures to decide the matter (rule XIX.10).
- f. When a meeting discusses by consensus procedures a matter for which decision must be reached at that meeting and there is no ready agreement in accordance with rule XIX.9.e.i or ii, the moderator may offer a procedural proposal: “That the meeting resolve the proposal now by vote”. Except for matters described in rule XIX.6.d, “matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding”, the moderator shall announce that a vote to decide this change of procedure shall be taken. Delegates shall indicate by voting whether they agree that the matter shall be decided by a vote. If 85 percent of delegates present vote in favour of moving the matter to a voting process, the matter shall so move. If fewer than 85 percent of delegates present vote in favour of moving the matter to a voting process, the matter shall not so move, and the meeting shall decide, again by vote of 85 percent of delegates present, whether discussion should continue to achieve consensus or whether discussion should be discontinued.

10. Decision-making by vote

- a. Some matters require decision by vote, rather than by consensus. These include:
 - i. constitutional changes (two-thirds majority);
 - ii. elections (simple majority with specific procedures for election of the general secretary);
 - iii. selection of assembly venue (simple majority);
 - iv. adoption of yearly accounts, financial audit reports and appointment of the auditors (simple majority).
- b. For matters that have been moved from consensus procedures to decision-making by vote in accordance with rule XIX.9.e.iii or rule XIX.9.f, and for matters reserved to a voting procedure according to subsection a. of this section, the following procedures shall be followed:
 - i. All motions must be moved and seconded by a delegate, and the mover has the right to speak first.
 - ii. In discussion following the seconding of a motion, no delegate may speak more than once, except that the delegate who moved the motion may answer objections at the end of the discussion.
 - iii. Any delegate may move an amendment, and if a seconder supports it, the amendment shall be considered simultaneously with the original proposal.

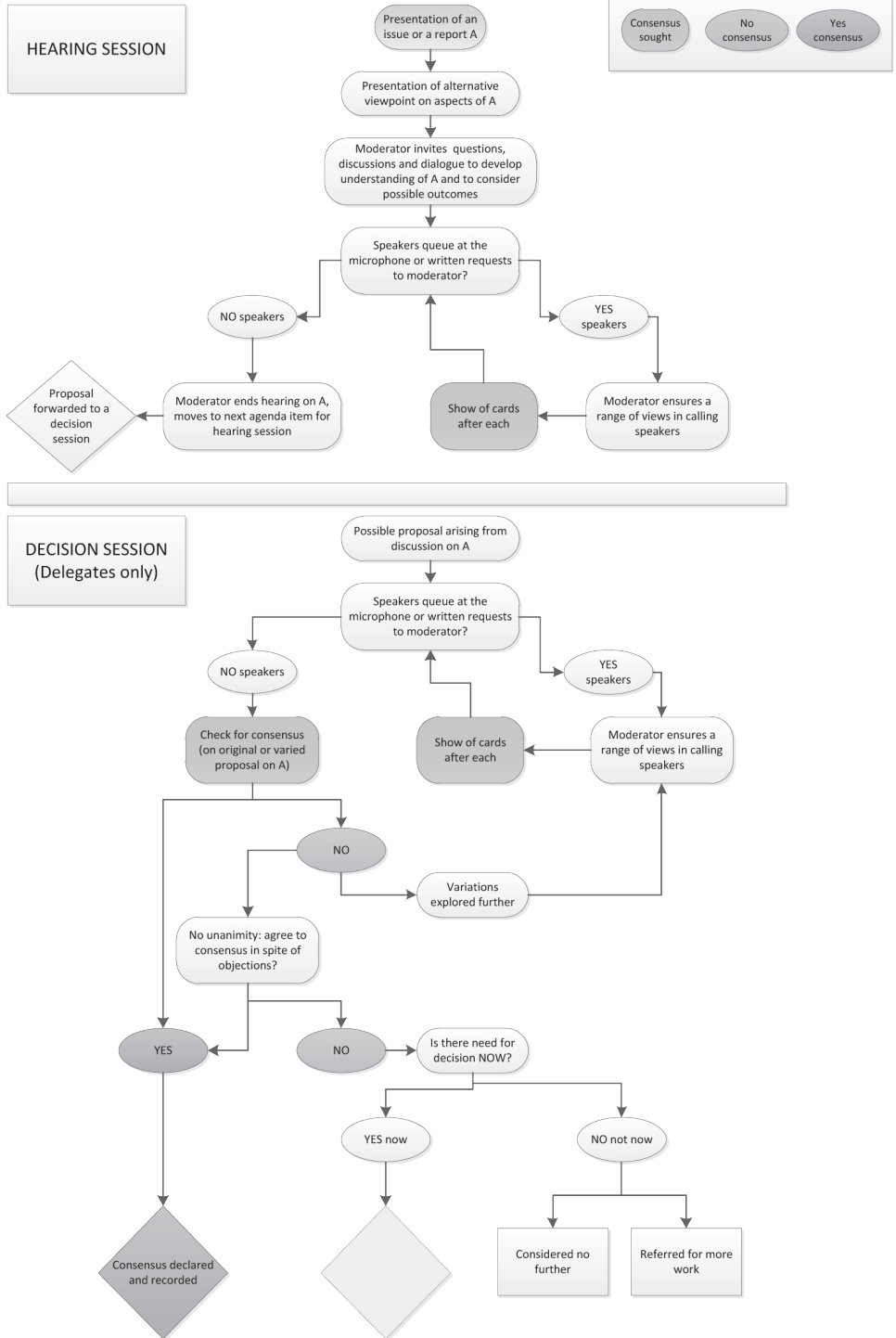
- iv. When discussion is concluded, including the right of the mover to reply (XIX.10.b.ii.), the moderator shall call for the vote and shall put any amendment first. If approved, it will be incorporated in the original proposal, which will then be put to the vote without further discussion.
- v. If the mover seeks to withdraw a motion or amendment during the discussion, the moderator will seek the consent of the meeting for the withdrawal.
- c. A delegate may move to close the discussion, but in doing so shall not interrupt a speaker. If seconded, the moderator shall call for a vote on this motion immediately without discussion. If two-thirds of the meeting agree, the voting process will then begin. If the motion fails, discussion will proceed, but the same motion to close discussion may be moved again as the discussion continues, but not by the delegate who moved it the first time.
- d. Voting shall be by show of hands or indicator cards and the moderator shall ask first for those in favour, then for those against, and finally for those who wish to abstain from voting. The moderator shall announce the result of the vote immediately.
- e. If the moderator is in doubt, or for any other reason decides to do so, or if a delegate requests it, a vote on the matter shall be taken immediately by count of a show of hands or indicator cards. The moderator may call tellers to count those voting and abstaining. A delegate may ask that voting be by secret written ballot, and if seconded and if a majority of delegates present and voting agree, a secret written ballot shall be taken. The moderator shall announce the result of any count or secret written ballot.
- f. A majority of the delegates present, including those who choose to abstain from voting, shall determine a matter being decided by vote unless a higher proportion is required by the constitution or these rules. If the vote results in a tie, the matter shall be regarded as defeated.
- g. If the moderator wishes to participate in the discussion, he or she shall relinquish the position of moderator of the session to another member of the leadership of the central committee until the matter has been resolved.
- h. A moderator entitled to vote as a delegate may do so, but may not cast the decisive vote in the event of a tie.
- i. Any two delegates who voted with the majority for a previously approved matter may request that the business committee propose reconsideration of the matter. The business committee shall bring the proposal to the next decision session and may express an opinion as to whether the matter should be reconsidered. Reconsideration shall take place only if two-thirds of delegates present agree.

- j. Anyone voting with a minority or abstaining from voting may have his or her opinion recorded in the minutes, in the report, and/or the record of the meeting.

11. Languages

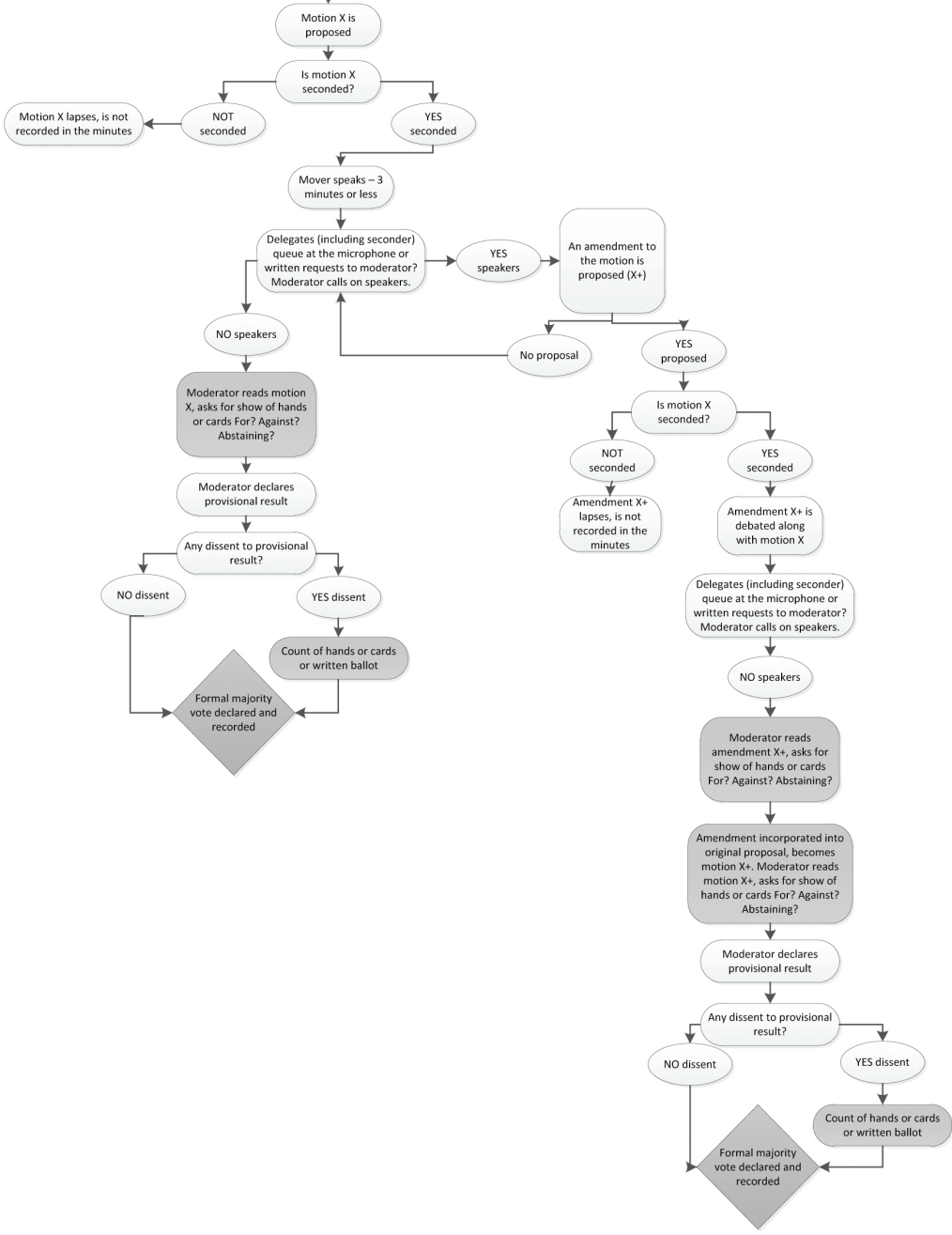
The working languages in use in the World Council of Churches are English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The general secretary shall make reasonable effort to provide interpretation for any one of those languages into the others and shall endeavour to provide written translation of the specific wording of proposals. A participant may speak in another language only if he or she provides for interpretation into one of the working languages. The general secretary shall provide all possible assistance to any participant requiring an interpreter.

Flowchart of Consensus Procedures



HEARING SESSION
 (issue has been previously discussed using consensus procedures)

DECISION SESSION
 (for constitution changes, elections, selection of assembly venue, adoption of financial statements OR when consensus seems impossible and agreement to decide by vote)



WHEN SOLIDARITY IS BROKEN: A PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Christian Community and Solidarity

The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (Isa. 32:17)

Christians affirm the basic dignity of all humankind, created in the image of God. In ecumenical gatherings, an environment of welcome and hospitality encourages the full and equal participation of all. The WCC strives to bring together a community based on the values of solidarity and mutual concern that challenges all forms of violence and harassment. The WCC is committed to raise awareness about sexual harassment in order to prevent it from occurring and to provide a safe space free from intimidation for all participants. When human sin breaks the trust in this community, Christians are called to be present for one another, especially for those who struggle for their safety, dignity and rights. God calls us into right relations with one another – to show care and respect for each human being.

Cultural diversity

Our cultural diversity adds to the strength of our community and is something to be cherished and celebrated. As we encounter one another's differences we should be careful not to assume that our way of being and behaving is comfortable for everyone else. Sometimes our differences of age, gender, culture, spirituality, religion, ability, language, caste, ethnicity and class make it a challenge to understand and communicate effectively with one another. How can each person be encouraged to take seriously his or her own responsibility to act with care in the multi-dimensional, cross-cultural interactions of the ecumenical world? What may be considered normal friendliness and sociability to one person can be misinterpreted in a culturally mixed group and even between individuals of the same culture or background. This is why we must take extra care and sensitivity with one another in an ecumenical environment. Finding appropriate expressions of the friendship and warmth felt for others in a positive, non-threatening way is a challenge faced by the ecumenical community.

Violence and power

Harassment is an intolerable manifestation of unequal power relations between people. Sexual harassment often also includes discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race or class, causing stress or humiliation to the person being harassed. This may happen in situations where dominance and abuse of power result in a lack of respect for and mistreatment of people as sexual objects. This ultimately demeans and destroys the dignity of a person. Sexual harassment is most often experienced by women from men. So harassment is not an isolated incident or individual problem. Rather it is a problem stemming from wider patterns and dynamics of power in our societies. Harassment can also occur between people of the same gender and sometimes involves women harassing men.

The Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace carries forward the commitment of churches around the world to overcome the institutional and personal violence that women experience. Sexual harassment has been identified as the most common expression of this violence. Incidents of sexual harassment and assault at church and ecumenical meetings have engaged the churches and the ecumenical movement in seeking responsible action and policy. Many churches, organizations and governments have introduced institutional or legislative remedies to protect those who experience the dehumanizing effects of violence and sexual harassment.

The purpose of these guidelines is to set a positive foundation upon which to build Christian community marked by solidarity, despite the brokenness in our midst. These guidelines are intended to encourage men to reflect on their attitudes towards women and those who are privileged on the basis of race, class, gender, social status, position of leadership and age to reflect on the spirit of justice and community that the ecumenical movement upholds.

They are also intended to encourage individuals to assert their dignity and contribute to the renewal of community. How can each of us, in our worship, work and meetings, help to create a reconciled, respectful community, conducive to the full humanity of all?

What is sexual harassment and assault?

On a continuum of severity, harassment ranges from whistles in the street and obscene phone calls to sexual assault. Sexual assault includes rape, sexual intercourse without consent, and sexual contact without consent.

Several kinds of behaviour with a sexual connotation, if unsolicited and unwanted and especially if repetitive, can be forms of sexual harassment. Examples are: suggestive looks or comments, teasing or telling of jokes with

sexual content, letters, calls or materials of a sexual nature, imposed touching or closeness, pressure for dates or activities with a sexual overtone, or offers to use influence in return for sexual favours.

The feelings of the person experiencing any unwelcome behaviour are what is important. This depends on each individual and the context. In the end, harassment is not what someone necessarily intends to do but how his or her actions impact another's person's feelings and well-being.

Some steps to prevent and deal with sexual harassment

- Be clear with yourself and others about your personal boundaries – what sort of closeness with others feels comfortable or appropriate for you?
- Refuse any inappropriate gesture or contact.
- Respect other people's personal boundaries. If you are not sure ask first (i.e. would it be okay if I gave you a hug?).
- If you experience harassment, make it clear that the behaviour is unwelcome. You can say "no" with a look, words or gestures.
- Harassment is never the fault of the person being harassed. By its nature, harassment is unwanted attention or behaviour. It is not consensual.
- If harassment persists, and you are in a public place, make your protests louder so that the public notices the harasser.
- Trust your intuition and feelings if someone's behaviour makes you feel uncomfortable. People who experience harassment sometimes try to rationalize or deny what is really going on.
- Talk about it with people you trust, so that the name of the harasser and the kind of objectionable things done are known. This is important so that others are not subjected to the same treatment. Silence may only provoke more harassment.
- In serious cases where legal or other follow-up action is necessary, a verbal and written record of events will be helpful.
- If you see or hear of someone being harassed, don't keep silent. You could approach the person being harassed to see how you can help. Tell the person doing the harassing that their actions or words are inappropriate and make everyone feel uncomfortable. If the case is severe call for help.
- If you have experienced harassment, the solidarity care team can provide a safe space to talk about the situation and your feelings. They can also support you with whatever follow-up measures might be appropriate when you return home (i.e. local centre against sexual harassment and assault or support group through a local church).

Concluding statement

The churches and the World Council of Churches are called to develop a truly inclusive community free of violence and injustice. Sexual harassment and all forms of violence will not be tolerated or condoned. Offenders will be held responsible for their behaviour and are subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The location and members of the solidarity care team will be announced at the assembly.

Assembly participants should also note that they will be required to sign the WCC Assembly Code of Conduct, available at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-assembly-code-of-conduct>

PART FIVE

Pre-Assembly Reflections and Resources from the Programmes



PRE-ASSEMBLY REFLECTIONS AND RESOURCES FROM THE PROGRAMMES

As stated in the Preface to this volume, the World Council of Churches, its programmes, commissions, pre-assemblies and partners have, since the last assembly, produced a wealth of important reports, studies, and statements germane to the discussions and deliberations slated for the assembly in Karlsruhe. While, because of their length, timing, or ready availability elsewhere, not all such documents could be included in this volume, readers will find links here to online versions of them or on the assembly resources webpage at [oikoumene.org](https://www.oikoumene.org). Among them are:

- **Report of the Inter-Orthodox Pre-Assembly Consultation.** *Fifty participants, including delegates from twenty Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches, along with observers and consultants, gathered in Cyprus from May 10-15, 2022, for an Inter-Orthodox Pre-Assembly Consultation. Participants reflected on the state of Orthodox unity, the theological resonance of the assembly theme with Orthodox tradition and thought, the ontological basis for human dignity and unity, and how Orthodox churches and the whole ecumenical family can bear witness in a time of armed conflicts, climate change, and other challenges. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/report-of-the-inter-orthodox-pre-assembly-consultation>*
- **Specialized Ministries Pre-Assembly Message to the WCC 11th Assembly.** *The representatives of Specialized Ministries, organizations connected to member churches of the World Council of Churches serving the one ecumenical movement in the areas of mission, diakonia, relief and advocacy, gathered online for a pre-assembly 9 and 10 March 2022. Centring their deliberations on three critical issues confronting humanity and creation: overcoming racism, discrimination, and xenophobia; the rise of populism; and the climate emergency, the pre-assembly recognized this moment as an opportunity for transformational change. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/specialized-ministries-pre-assembly-message-to-the-wcc-11th-assembly>*
- **Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Companionship.** *Following the launch of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace at the 10th Assembly in 2013, the pilgrimage has offered a programmatic perspective for the whole of the global ecumenical fellowship. This resource document explores the experiences gained in the pilgrimage in which four common themes emerged: (1) truth and trauma, (2) land and displacement, (3) gender justice, and (4) racial justice. It explores theological*

reflections emerging from these experiences and proposes an ecumenical theology of companionship as a response. The development of such an ecumenical theology of companionship can help to give expression and orientation to the ethos, as well as the responsibility and mission, of those who go on pilgrimage. Download from the Globethics website.

- **Called to Transformation: Ecumenical *Diakonia*.** *A fulsome resource document for the churches and diaconal agencies, meant to encourage the WCC fellowship in its ongoing call to discipleship together, “Called to Transformation” reframes the churches’ diaconal ministries, recalling their biblical and theological roots, tracing contemporary trends, and forging a language and conceptual framework that can bridge the work of the churches with other, secular or governmental or international service agencies. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/ecumenical-diakonia>*
- **Conversations on the Pilgrim Way: Invitation to Journey Together on Matters of Human Sexuality.** *Conversations on the Pilgrim Way invites member churches and other ecumenical instruments to journey together to address matters of human sexuality. The aim of the document is to inspire and promote conversations for those interested within and among the churches. Offered as a resource document to inform efforts by the churches to understand and address matters of sexuality, this in-depth study aims to share information on different aspects of human sexuality as experienced in the WCC fellowship, present reflections on different sources of foundation for discernment on issues of human sexuality, outline common theological principles for understanding human sexuality, identify the signs of the times in how sexual and gender-based violence is experienced, and provide examples of establishing safe spaces of dialogue for conversations on human sexuality. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/conversations-on-the-pilgrim-way>*
- **Come and See: A Theological Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.** *Faith and Order Paper Number 224. The foundational motif and guiding metaphor for the life and work of the gathered ecumenical fellowship—and the work of the WCC—during this period has been the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The pilgrimage motif brings together a rich spiritual practice of Christian tradition—pilgrimage—with a strong mandate for ecumenical engagement with the world’s problems and its quest for lasting peace and true justice. Bringing these two, sometimes divergent or even competing vectors together, the WCC Faith and Order Commission explored pilgrimage in its biblical roots, deep heritage in the traditions, and present resonance to fashion a theology of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/come-and-see>*

- **Arusha Call to Discipleship.** *The World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism met in Arusha, Tanzania, from 8 to 13 March 2018 and there issued this concluding message about discipleship in the context of Christian mission and evangelism. The message captures the spirit and direction of the conference and reframes mission and evangelism in terms of transformative Christian discipleship.* <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/the-arusha-call-to-discipleship>
- **Gift of Being: Called to Be a Church of All and for All.** *A seminal theological exploration, Gift of Being, approved by the WCC central committee in 2016, moved discussion of disability and the churches beyond simply considerations of inclusion to probe the whole meaning of what it means to be a person, the value of life itself, and universal implications of human limitation and vulnerability.* <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/the-gift-of-being>
- **Walking, Praying and Working Together: 10th Report of the Joint Working Group of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church.** *Initiated in 1965 amid the first flush of ecumenical fervour after the Second Vatican Council, the Joint Working Group has fostered mutual understanding and collaboration between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church ever since. In the period since 2013 and the last WCC assembly, the group has witnessed and nurtured closer ties and active programmatic cooperation between the Catholic Church and the WCC. In its latest report (excerpted earlier in this volume), the group explains that recent evolution, its relationship to pilgrimage, and its fruit in two important studies commissioned by the group.* <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/walking-praying-and-working-together>
- **Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action during COVID-19 and Beyond.** *In August 2020, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) released a joint document, "Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity." Its purpose is to encourage churches and Christian organizations to reflect on the importance of interreligious solidarity in a world wounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. The document offers a Christian basis for interreligious solidarity that can inspire and confirm the impulse to serve a world wounded not only by COVID-19 but also by many other wounds.* https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/serving_a_wounded_world
- **The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace series.** *Co-published with Globethics.net and available from the WCC website at <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications> or the Globethics website at <https://www.globethics.net/pjp-series>, the PJP Series of volumes explores theological topics, issues, and relevant regional realities and includes these titles:*

- *The Africa We Pray For: On a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*
 - *Transformative Spiritualities for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*
 - *Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Companionship: A Study Document for the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*
 - *Seek Peace and Pursue It: Reflections on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in Europe*
 - *Hate Speech and Whiteness: Theological Reflections on the Journey toward Racial Justice*
 - *Ecumenical Call to Just Peace: Holistic Approaches to Peace-building in the Context of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*
- **What Are the Churches Saying about *The Church*?** *A major feature of this period has been ongoing reception of the landmark convergence text The Church: Towards a Common Vision (2013). This report was developed by the WCC Commission on Faith and Order and published in 2021 as part of an ongoing conversation by churches about the Church. Following the publication of the two volumes of Churches Respond to The Church: Towards a Common Vision, this text provides an accessible summary of the key findings of a process that took years of intense and hope-filled listening. A broad array and rich discussion in the full text and its companion publications present some highlights and impressions of what those who have listened have discerned in what they heard, as well as proposals from the churches for further development of shared ecclesiology. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/what-are-the-churches-saying-about-the-church>*
- **Kairos for Creation: Confessing Hope for the Earth (Wuppertal Call).** *In June 2019 an ecumenical conference of 52 participants from 22 countries and many confessional and faith traditions took place in Wuppertal, Germany. The four-day gathering, “Together Towards Eco-Theologies, Ethics of Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Churches,” recognized that although God has not abandoned our planet, “the Earth seems no longer able to heal itself.” Symptoms of the crisis are evident for all to see in the building blocks of life: water, earth, air and fire, and also climate-induced forced migration. The Wuppertal Call registers the urgent cries of the planet through personal stories of people in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Oceania. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/kairos-for-creation-confessing-hope-for-the-earth>*
- **Strengthening Christian Commitment to Human Dignity and Human Rights.** *Exploring the foundational affirmation of human dignity, the 12 April 2022 message from the conference on Christian Perspectives on Human Dignity and Human Rights, which was organized jointly by the WCC, UEM (Communion of Churches in three continents) and EKD (one of the hosting churches for the WCC 11th Assembly), is part of a study process that started in 2019. 47*

participants from 22 countries gathered in Wuppertal, Germany, and online from 9 to 12 April 2022. Download from the Globethics website

- **Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism.** *Addressing a phenomenon that is both ancient and strikingly contemporary, this is the message from the conference “Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration,” organized jointly by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (Vatican City) and the World Council of Churches (Geneva), in collaboration with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Vatican City), Rome, 18 - 20 September 2018. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/message-from-the-conference-xenophobia-racism-and-populist-nationalism-in-the-context-of-global-migration>*
- **Gender Justice Principles.** *The World Council of Churches central committee, during its February 2022 meeting, approved this set of Gender Justice Principles that clearly define the WCC’s own approach to gender justice. Developed by a Gender Advisory Group working since August 2018, the principles should be seen in the context of WCC’s Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, which emphasizes a journey of learning and witness both within our organizations and in our mission and witness as churches. As stated in Principle 10: “We acknowledge that while all are not at the same point on the journey, we seek to accompany and mentor each other through mutuality, love, and respect.” <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/gender-justice-principles-with-code-of-conduct>*
- **Churches’ Commitment to Children: Churches Uniting for Children in the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.** *“Churches’ Commitments to Children,” initiated in 2017, is an open invitation to the WCC member churches and partners. It is also a living resource which will be further developed over time through the WCC based on member churches’ responses and experiences. This initiative is a response to the message formulated at the 10th Assembly of the WCC held in Busan, Korea, in November 2013, to address the needs of children as an integral part of the ecumenical commitment to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/churches-commitments-to-children>*
- **Ecumenical Global Health Strategy.** *Developed in 2017, this overarching ecumenical strategy evokes the church’s millennia of healing ministries and visions continued deep involvement by the churches and their agencies in the many facets—medical, pastoral, diaconal—of healthcare and promotion of health and wholeness for all humanity. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/ecumenical-global-health-strategy>*

- **A New Communication Paper for the 21st Century: A Vision of Digital Justice.** *The profound and wide-ranging issues raised by the rapid rise and pervasive presence of digital media affect people everywhere and pose challenges not merely of access but also of justice, equity, democratic values, and truth. These issues, and the role of the churches in addressing them, are carefully formulated and directly addressed in this paper and will feature in discussions and deliberations at the 11th Assembly.* <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/a-new-communications-paper-for-the-21st-century-a-vision-of-digital-justice>
- **Love and Witness: Proclaiming the Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ in a Religiously Plural World.** *Faith and Order Paper No. 230, approved in 2017, includes an invitation to ponder the role of peace as the Church journeys in a world of many religions. It fleshes out more fully the insights of Come and See with regard to peace and religious plurality, asking what our many traditions can say together about the encounter with other religions as we journey toward visible unity – engagement that is a necessary part of the Church’s pilgrim way. How does the pilgrim church journey in the midst of religious plurality in ways that bring joy, peace, and reconciliation to the world? What are the implications of these reflections for the search for Christian unity?* <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/love-and-witness>
- **Cultivate and Care: An Ecumenical Theology of Justice for Creation.** *Faith and Order Paper No. 226. The alarming rate of climate change demands that the churches’ journey toward visible unity must include a sustained dialogue with a theology for justice for and within creation and seek ways to put the fruits of that dialogue into practice. This theological document seeks to demonstrate how a committed response to the environmental devastation of our time can be motivated by Christian faith in God the creator, redeemer, and sanctifier.* <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/cultivate-and-care>
- **Who Do We Say That We Are? Christian Identity in a Multi-Religious World.** *Perhaps more than ever, in our globalized context, we meet persons of other faiths and religious traditions. When empathetic, such meetings can be revealing about their lives and commitments. Yet how do they change our own identity and illuminate our own faith? In light of interreligious encounters, who do we say that we are? This brief work, distilled from lengthy and broad theological consultation facilitated by the World Council of Churches, suggests ways in which our faith is deepened and exciting new vistas opened on traditional Christian faith commitments through interreligious dialogue and engagement. Our sincere engagements with the other can lead to a growing grasp of our own faith identity and, indeed, a more profound encounter with the mystery of God.* <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/who-do-we-say-that-we-are>

WCC 11TH ASSEMBLY TIMETABLE

Opening Day: Wednesday, 31 August 2022

08:30 – 10:00	Accreditation	
10:00 – 11:00 (60min)	Orientation Plenary	Gartenhalle
11:00 – 11:30 (30min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
11:30 – 13:00 (90min)	Opening Plenary	Gartenhalle
13:00 – 14:30 (90min)	Lunch	Festplatz
14:30 – 16:00 (90min)	Moderator and General Secretary Reports	Gartenhalle
16:00 – 17:00 (60min)	German Welcome Session	Gartenhalle
17:00 – 17:30 (30min)	Break	Prayer Tent
17:30 – 19:00 (90min)	Opening Prayer	Prayer Tent
19:00 – 20:30 (90min)	Dinner	Festplatz
20:30 – 21:00 (30min)	Movement to Marktplatz	Marketplatz
21:00 – 22:30 (60min)	Marktplatz Entertainment	Marketplatz

Thursday, 1 September 2022

07:00–08:15	Business Committee (every day)	
08:30-09:15 (45min)	Morning Prayer	Prayer Tent
09:15-09:45 (30min)	Movement	
09:45-11:15 (90min)	Thematic Plenary 1	Schwarzwaldhalle
11:15-12:00 (45min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
12:00-13:15 (75min)	Home Groups 1	Different Venues
12:00-13:15 (75min)	Plenary Bible Study 1	Schwarzwaldhalle
13:15-15:00 (105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-16:30 (90 min)	Business Plenary 1	Gartenhalle
16:30-17:00 (30 min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
17:00-18:15 (75min)	Ecumenical Conversations 1	Various Venues
18:15-18:30 (15min)	Movement	
18:30-19:00 (30min)	Evening Prayer	Prayer Tent
19:00-19:15 (15min)	Movement	
19:15-20:45 (90 min)	Confessional Meetings	Various Venues
20:45-22:15 (90 min)	Dinner	Festplatz

Friday, 2 September 2022

08:30-09:15	(45min)	Morning Prayer	Prayer Tent
09:15-09:45	(30min)	Movement	
09:45-11:15	(90min)	Thematic Plenary 2	Schwarzwaldhalle
11:15-12:00	(45min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Home Groups 2	Venue
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Plenary Bible Study 2	Schwarzwaldhalle
13:15-15:00	(105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-16:30	(90 min)	Business Plenary 2	Gartenhalle
16:30-17:00	(30 min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
17:00-18:15	(75min)	Ecumenical Conversations 2	Various Venues
18:15-18:30	(15min)	Movement	
18:30-19:00	(30min)	Evening Prayer	Prayer Tent
19:00-19:15	(15min)	Movement	
19:15-20:45	(90 min)	Regional Meetings	Festplatz
20:45-22:15	(90 min)	Dinner	Festplatz

Saturday, 3 September 2022

08:30-09:15	(45min)	Morning Prayer	Prayer Tent
09:15-09:45	(30min)	Movement	
09:45-19:00	(All Day)	Weekend Pilgrimage	Various Venues
09:45-11:15	(90min)	Assembly Committees	Pavilion
11:15-12:00	(45min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Assembly Committees	Pavilion
13:15-15:00	(105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-16:30	(90 min)	Assembly Committees	Pavilion
16:30-17:00	(30 min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
17:00-18:15	(75min)	Assembly Committees	Pavilion
18:15-18:30	(15min)	Movement	
18:30-19:00	(30min)	Evening Prayer	Prayer Tent
19:00-19:15	(15min)	Movement	
19:15-20:45	(90 min)	Dinner	Festplatz
20:45-22:30	(90 min)	Light Show at Castle	Schloss

Sunday, 4 September 2022

08:30-13:15		Sunday Church Services	Karlsruhe
13:00-19:00		Weekend Pilgrimage	Various Venues
13:15-15:00	(105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-16:30	(90 min)	Assembly Committees	Pavilion
16:30-17:00	(30 min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
17:00-18:15	(75min)	Assembly Committees	Pavilion
19:00-20:00	(60 min)	Dinner	Festplatz
20:00-22:30	(150min)	Host Church Evening	Schwarzwaldhalle

Monday, 5 September 2022

08:30-09:15	(45min)	Morning Prayer	Prayer Tent
09:15-09:45	(30min)	Movement	
09:45-11:15	(90min)	Thematic Plenary 3	Schwarzwaldhalle
11:15-12:00	(45min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Home Groups 3	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Plenary Bible Study 3	Schwarzwaldhalle
13:15-15:00	(105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-16:30	(90 min)	Business Plenary 3	Gartenhalle
16:30-17:00	(30 min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
17:00-18:15	(75min)	Ecumenical Conversations 3	Various Venues
18:15-18:30	(15min)	Movement	
18:30-19:00	(30min)	Evening Prayer	Prayer Tent
19:00-21:45	(105min)	Dinner	Festplatz

Tuesday, 6 September 2022

08:30-09:15	(45min)	Morning Prayer	Prayer Tent
09:15-09:45	(30min)	Movement	
09:45-11:15	(90min)	Thematic Plenary 4	Schwarzwaldhalle
11:15-12:00	(45min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Home Groups 4	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Plenary Bible Study 4	Schwarzwaldhalle
13:15-15:00	(105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-16:30	(90 min)	Business Plenary 4	Gartenhalle

(Cont'd.) Tuesday, 6 September 2022

16:30-17:00	(30 min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
17:00-18:15	(75min)	Ecumenical Conversations 4	Various Venues
18:15-18:30	(15min)	Movement	
18:30-19:00	(30min)	Evening Prayer	Prayer Tent
19:00-21:45	(105min)	Dinner	Festplatz

Wednesday, 7 September 2022

08:30-09:15	(45min)	Morning Prayer	Prayer Tent
09:15-09:45	(30min)	Movement	
09:45-11:15	(90min)	Thematic Plenary 5	Schwarzwaldhalle
11:15-12:00	(45min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Home Groups 5	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Plenary Bible Study 5	Schwarzwaldhalle
13:15-15:00	(105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-16:30	(90 min)	Business Plenary 5	Gartenhalle
16:30-17:00	(30 min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
17:00-18:15	(75min)	Business Plenary 6	Gartenhalle
18:15-18:30	(15min)	Movement	
18:30-19:00	(30min)	Evening Prayer	Prayer Tent
19:00-21:45	(105min)	Dinner	Festplatz

Thursday, 8 September 2022

08:30-11:00	(150min)	Morning Prayer & Closing Plenary	Gartenhalle
11:00-12:00	(60min)	Coffee Break	Various Venues
12:00-13:15	(75min)	Closing Prayer	Prayer Tent
13:15-15:00	(105min)	Lunch	Festplatz
15:00-18:00	(180min)	Central Committee	Gartenhalle