



Christ's love
moves the world
to reconciliation
and unity

World Council of Churches
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PRE-EYG

FOR INFORMATION

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Message from the Ecumenical Youth Gathering

“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ... Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot would say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body.”

1 Corinthians 12v 12 and 14-15 (NRSV)

Within the Body of Christ there is diversity, through the gifts given to each member of the Body. To allow the Church to function to the fullest of its potential, we uphold these gifts. As one Body, we recognize not only how we are diverse, but also how the gifts we cultivate bring us together. However, at times, there are evil forces, struggles, and people that wound its members, leaving trauma and scars. We do not all have the same wounds, but recognize the wounds of the Body as a whole and lift up these wounds through joined prayer. Jesus Christ is able to transform these wounds into a tapestry of unique encounters, stories, and resilience. We lift up in prayer and invite all Christians to act for and with our siblings, humankind and all creation, who are suffering:

We may not be aware of every wound in the world today, still we strive for tomorrow, carrying them in our prayers. The examples of our laments below are the injustices that were voiced during the Ecumenical Youth Gathering.

- *We lament that we cannot express all the countries lifted up during the Ecumenical Youth Gathering, in which we understand there is suffering and sorrow, because of the concern for the security and protection of participants.*
- We lament the killings, the violence and brutality against human beings and crimes against humanity especially women, children and girls, in times of war, from foreign oppressors in countries such as Ukraine and Palestine.
- We lament the forced silence and unjust imprisonments of people fighting for self-determination in their countries, such as West Papua Kanaky (New Caledonia), Maohi Nui (French Polynesia), Belarus; and the ongoing red-tagging and extra-judicial killings in the Philippines.
- We lament the forced displacements of people and nations due to climate crisis, wars and violent conflicts and oppression such as in the Middle East, many Pacific Islands, most African countries, and Latin America.
- We lament the hegemonic system imposed on many countries, and unilateral and unjust blockades that some countries have over others, such as Cuba, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.
- We lament the degradation and destruction of mother nature, including the oceans, for profit and human consumption, and the persecution of environmental activists who speak up.
- We lament the influence of green washing in our Christian communities that instrumentalizes the issues of climate crisis for profit.
- We lament the use of green colonialism to land-grab ancestral domains of Indigenous peoples, such as the Sámi peoples and the Maasai peoples for new “green technologies”.

- We lament the forced removal and displacement of Indigenous peoples from their lands, and the loss of traditions and identity that can teach us all how to better live on our earth through respect and knowing when enough is enough.
- We lament on religious intolerance and the persecution of people of faith around the world such as Nigeria, Iraq, Sudan, and Syria.
- We lament the dehumanization of humankind through human trafficking, forced migration, child labor, sexual exploitation, death penalty, impunity, the destruction of cultures and languages through ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- We lament the institutionalization and perpetuation of systemic racism through impact of neo-colonialism, imperialism, modern slavery, socio-economic inequalities, and the claiming of Indigenous lands.
- We lament the discriminatory treatment, exclusion, silencing, and stigmatization of the LGBTQIA+ community in our church communities and the society.
- We lament the gender based violence perpetuated by the patriarchal society and the millions of young women and girls whose human rights are denied and violated due to discriminatory gender norms.
- We lament our churches that do not recognize women's voices and participation in God's testimony, such as in biblical stories and today.
- We lament how people with disabilities are made invisible and inaudible in our churches and communities due to discriminatory attitude, policy and negligence to facilities for disabilities and the disabled human right for liberty.
- We lament the isolation and labeling of people in our communities because of poor mental health and mental illness.
- We lament forced unjust systems of poverty, with limited opportunities for education, economic opportunities, access to basic healthcare, and the denial of other basic human needs and rights.
- We lament the wounds inflicted by the church on its young members throughout history and the silence and complacency of the church to respond today.

We recognize, confess, and pray for justice, forgiveness and reconciliation of the wounds the Church as a Body has inflicted and continues to inflict in the world. We believe and affirm that the healing of wounds is a process, a journey, and a path. This requires a community grounded in the love of Christ with the knowledge of His Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection as the greatest gift to raise up all human beings from their deepest wounds and transform it into divine strength, making the Body whole.

Today, we as young people ask the Church to take the path of healing wounds. This path starts at this Assembly and requires participation in authentic encounters, together with openness for diversity and acceptance of differences.

We, as young people, are gifts to the church and society as part of the Body of Christ. Today, we advocate for the use of these gifts in our churches.. We invite all young people and the WCC Assembly as a whole to walk the talk–act now. We urge each other to use our prophetic voices to call out injustices, for all the wounds in the world, especially those in which churches have co-participated. Together, let us walk on the path of using our gifts, healing wounds, and transforming injustices:

- By giving an active and meaningful space for equal representation of young people in all processes of the World Council of Churches.
- By establishing a permanent youth desk focused on advocacy and reconciliation towards unity.
- By demanding the active listening of the cries of the young people, especially those in oppressed communities and those fighting for the pressing matter of climate justice. To stand with them, to work towards restoration and love, with a deep knowledge of the pains of the past.

As young people, we need to point out that we are a present for the present days. We are here, as stewards, theological students, advisors, delegates, participants, and observers. We are around 400 young people, full of gifts and overflowed by God's Spirit. We are grateful for the opportunity and the space we have at the Ecumenical Youth Gathering to grow together and be inspired by one another. However, this does not

reflect the same at the 11th Assembly. In fact, only 93 out of 750 voting delegates with decision-making rights are young people. That is only about 12 percent.

Therefore, we urge the Assembly to recognise our presence and acknowledge our voices today and not only tomorrow. We urge the member churches to respect and intentionally reflect their commitment to young people at the decision-making spaces through fair and equal representation of young people in their delegation to the Assembly. Additionally, we urge this 11th Assembly to elect a fair and adequate representation of young people to the Central Committee.

To lead us into this path, we start with a prayer:

May God help us use our unique gifts to be unified in our diversity.

May Christ's love transform our discipleship to fight injustices that are creating these wounds.

May the Holy Spirit guide us to be agents of reconciliation and peace.

Amen.