



World Council of Churches

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Revd Dr John Bradbury
Executive President
Rev. Dr Mario Fischer
General Secretary
**Communion of Protestant Churches in
Europe**
Severin-Schreiber-Gasse 3
1180 Vienna
Austria

Geneva, 16 March 2023

Dear Dr Bradbury, dear Dr Fischer

On behalf of the World Council of Churches (WCC), I am writing to convey our very best wishes to the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) on the 50th anniversary of the Leuenberg Agreement finalised on 16th March 1973, which brought Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches into pulpit and table fellowship.

This agreement serves the theological foundation of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe, through which your signatory churches have committed themselves to common witness and service in Europe, and to work together to come closer to each other.

We rejoice with you that since 1973, the Leuenberg Agreement has been signed by 104 churches, including six in Latin America, and seven European Methodist churches belong to the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe as a result of a joint declaration between the CPCE and the European Methodist Council.

We join with you in celebrating the anniversary of this agreement, which declared that the mutual condemnations from the Reformation era between Lutheran and Reformed no longer applied to the present day doctrinal positions of the signatory churches.

Through this agreement, the signatory churches recognize each other's baptism and ordination, and are able to celebrate the Lord's Supper together. This agreement been an important impetus in many parts of Europe for bringing Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches together, and has been followed by other regional and national agreements between Lutheran and Reformed churches in many parts of the world.

In reaching this agreement, your predecessors developed the vision of Kirchengemeinschaft (church fellowship or ecclesial fellowship) through which confessionally distinct churches declare themselves to be in full communion with each other. This has been an important step in our common quest for 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.

I am particularly pleased to be able to offer our greetings, since, at the request of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the WCC took responsibility for convening the final series of meetings at Leuenberg near Basel that led to the agreement in 1973. In this a significant role was played by the then director of the WCC's secretariat for Faith and Order, the late Dr Lukas Vischer, and one of my predecessors as WCC general secretary, Dr Konrad Raiser, who in the early 1970s was a study secretary in the secretariat for Faith and Order.

We therefore share with you as you mark this anniversary, and offer you our profound greetings in Christ, on whom the church is founded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pillay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches