

**OFFICIAL REPORT  
OF THE 10TH ASSEMBLY**

# Encountering the God of Life

**EDITED BY ERLINDA N. SENTURIAS  
AND THEODORE A. GILL, JR.**



**World Council  
of Churches**

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**World Council  
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Publications

## ENCOUNTERING THE GOD OF LIFE

Report of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches

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# FOREWORD

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*“God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”*

This concise prayer provided the theme for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), held in Busan, Republic of Korea, during late October and early November 2013. Through the planning of the assembly, its implementation and the analysis of its implications for our future, the prayer has provided a focus and an inspiration.

We travel in the presence of God, creator of life and source of unity, on our common path toward the promised kingdom, the holy city, new heavens and a new earth where the prophets’ visions of justice and peace shall be realized. God not only leads us on our way but accompanies us, so that the journey itself becomes a means of encountering God and undergoing formation as neighbours to all and humble stewards of God’s love.

In Busan we examined the tasks facing the World Council of Churches, our relationships in the world, our potential and our dreams, and we came to speak more and more of “the pilgrimage of justice and peace” in describing this journey on which the God of life is leading us. In one of our concluding actions, the delegates adopted the Message of the 10th Assembly, with its bold invitation to churches and the world:

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.

## **An assemblage of reports**

This volume is the tenth in a series of “official reports” from WCC Assemblies, encompassing those held in Amsterdam (1948), Evanston (1954), New Delhi (1961), Uppsala (1968), Nairobi (1975), Vancouver (1983), Canberra (1991), Harare (1998), Porto Alegre (2006) and now Busan (2013). But within each such report there are a series of presentations and reports, drafted by committees, conversation groups, church leaders, featured speakers and other participants in both the assembly itself and in pre-assembly convocations. In addition, we find broad samplings of formal greetings and messages from individuals and organizations throughout the inhabited earth.

We are especially grateful to Dr Erlinda Senturias of the Philippines, who generously agreed to provide a very personal perspective on the 10th Assembly. A medical

doctor by training and profession, she has served the ecumenical movement in a number of capacities, including service from 1989 to 1997 in the WCC office on Health and Healing; she returned to the Philippines to serve as president of South Christian College in Midsayap, Cotabato. While writing her contribution to this report, Dr Senturias was named by President Benigno Aquino III to the newly-established Human Rights Victims' Claims Board. Her dedication to completing her commentary on Busan while shouldering this new responsibility is admirable.

The many voices that speak to us from the following pages are remarkably diverse, displaying multiple facets of the ecumenical reality. From the opening sermon by Patriarch Karekin II to the closing homily of Father Michael Lapsley, we find a wealth of interpretations of the assembly theme. Authors old and young, male and female, from a host of communities and peoples, are represented in the listing of contents and as sources of the affirmations and challenges expressed, or example, in the extended notes on Ecumenical Conversations at the assembly.

## **A new day for the ecumenical movement**

After nearly a decade of innovation, the consensus model of decision-making continued to mature at the Busan Assembly, moving from the earlier, tentative experimentation with unfamiliar procedures to the threshold of a shared culture based on spiritual discernment through dialogue and mutual concern. Although this approach began largely in response to the 2002 recommendations of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, I have come to see its import as a way forward, toward a broader and deeper participation in our common pilgrimage. God is teaching us more about what it means to be the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church just as old dividing barriers are being lowered.

In the list of greetings and messages addressed to the 10th Assembly, we find a more inclusive and promising representation of traditions than at any previous such meeting. What we have been learning about consensus-building and spiritual discernment among churches already in membership may provide the opportunity we seek to find other ways to move, on a number of fronts, toward unity.

Youth was well represented in the corridors of Busan – both among delegates and in clusters of volunteers, co-opted staff, visitors and students engaged in coursework for the academic programmes of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) and the Korean Ecumenical Theological Institute (KETI). Young people were fully engaged, as reflected in this report and in publications growing out of the theological institutes and in the plethora of material – text, audio and video – readily available through such treasuries as YouTube, the 10th Assembly website ([www.wcc2013.info](http://www.wcc2013.info)) and the WCC site ([www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)). The availability of such information on the Internet and assorted social media provides a whole new range of access to daily developments within the ecumenical movement.

## Special acknowledgments

The appendices to this report contain lists of those many people and institutions whose efforts in God's service helped to maintain the work and witness of the 10th Assembly in Busan. I call the reader's attention especially to

The churches and ecumenical partners in Korea who played host to this first WCC assembly held in East Asia, and especially the Korean Host Committee and the Korean staff and volunteers under the leadership of Rev. Dr Kim Sam Whan, chairperson of the Korean Host Committee

The Assembly Planning Committee under the leadership of Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima

The Assembly Worship Planning Committee under the moderation of the Rev. Canon Nangula Kathindi

The Assembly Staff Team, led by Douglas Chial

The management and staff of the BEXCO conference centre and of Lee Convention

The assembly team of WCC staff, co-opted staff, stewards and volunteers

The WCC communication team, augmented by an impressive array of Korean communicators, publishing news of the assembly through a variety of media

The WCC language service and their collaborators

The publications team of the World Council of Churches who helped prepare this report.

To each of the members of these groups I express sincere thanks, on my own behalf and that of the World Council of Churches. And I am grateful to you, the reader, for your commitment to being led by the God of life on this pilgrimage of justice and peace.

*Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit*

General secretary, World Council of Churches



# **THE 10TH WCC ASSEMBLY**



# INTRODUCING THE 10TH ASSEMBLY: AN INTERPRETATION

*Erlinda Nable Senturias*

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## The Nature of a WCC Assembly

Every World Council of Churches (WCC) assembly is a unique event, a historic milestone for the fellowship of churches, and a transformative moment for each participant.

The assembly, taking place every seven years, is the WCC's highest policy-making body, setting the agenda for the WCC's work in the years to come. Assemblies speak with a public voice on behalf of the member churches. Delegates and participants gather in prayer and celebration to reaffirm the fellowship and mutual commitment of member churches and ecumenical partners, as well as to take counsel from one another. The delegates elect a moderator and two vice moderators, eight presidents representing different regions, and 150 members of the central committee, who in turn will elect 24 members to the executive committee. The delegates receive an account of the work of the WCC through the reports of the out-going moderator and the general secretary as well as of the various committees formed during the assembly. Official delegates of the 345 member churches deliberate the business of the WCC by consensus.

The assembly is a time when participants—voting and non-voting—meet. It was reported in *Madang*, the daily newspaper of the 10th Assembly of the WCC, that on October 30, the first day of the assembly, “some 5,000 Christians representing more than 300 churches and 100 countries—including 2,500 Korean Christians—gathered as the World Council of Church (WCC) opened its 10th Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea.”

Diverse in geography, culture, language, church affiliation, faith tradition, age, and gender, delegates come to celebrate and to share their issues and concerns in thematic and business plenaries, in small groups including Bible studies and ecumenical conversations, in regional and confessional groups, and in the exhibit areas. Local participants rub shoulders with foreign visitors in formal and informal settings. Some attend closed plenary business meetings while others explore ecumenical conversation in more informal settings.

Ecumenical partners also join in the assembly and contribute ideas through various spaces of dialogues. For example, the Norwegian Ecumenical Peace Platform (NEPP) (comprising Caritas Norway, the Council of Churches of Norway, and Norwegian Church Aid) met with their counterparts from the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) (made up of some delegates and assembly participants) to dialogue on the prospects for the resumption of peace talks between the government

Although I was no newcomer to WCC assemblies, my first impression of Busan was one of great variety and mutual respect. How seriously the many different participants took one another, and how carefully we listened to one another! And clearly, I was not alone in that perception.

Jasmine Bostock, delegate of the Episcopal Church USA and chair of the Executive Council on Indigenous Ministries, shared her experience at the WCC's 10th Assembly in Busan:

I have always been proud to be an Indigenous person, and at this assembly that pride was renewed. Not only in my own personal sense of culture and my history, but also in the way we, as an Indigenous group, were mobilized and organized and able to get things done. Rarely, if ever, have I seen a group so committed through an entire assembly to advocating and continuing to meet amongst ourselves and with the WCC leadership about the place of Indigenous peoples in the work of the WCC in the coming years.

of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front / Communist Party of the Philippines / New Peoples' Army. Norway is the third-party facilitator of the peace process.

I was delighted to discover that the assembly remains a spiritual experience of prayer, encounter, reflection, and discernment. At the Busan assembly, the timetable was tight, but the movement from one hall to another was smooth and the vibrant sharing of ideas made the event more meaningful.

Each day of the 10th Assembly started with morning prayer at 8:00 a.m. and ended with a 30-minute evening prayer at 8:00 p.m. The usual flow of the daily timetable was as follows: Morning prayer → Bible study → Theme plenary → Ecumenical conversation → Madang workshops, book launching, exhibition, and visits → Business plenary → Committee meetings → Evening prayer. Confessional and regional meetings were also strategically scheduled.

In between these scheduled happenings, special events were organized and hosted by confessional partners at the Madang Hall. *Madang* is a Korean word for courtyard, the usual meeting place in a village or government compound. As an assembly point at the Busan assembly, the Madang helped highlight the fact that the WCC itself is an assembled community and that the whole gathering was vibrant with life. In the local languages of past assemblies, these meeting places have been called *Mutirão* ("coming together") in Porto Alegre, Brazil (2006), and *Padare* ("people coming together to receive and share wisdom") in Harare, Zimbabwe (1998).

Being in this setting brought back so many personal memories of experiences with the WCC. At times, lunch breaks featured special events relevant to the ecumenical community. One of them was the gathering of all Bossey alumni, faculty, and staff. I attended this with my husband, Pastor Alvaro O. Senturias, Jr, an Ecumenical Institute (Bossey, Switzerland) graduate school alumnus in both 1974 and 1996. The

stories shared about life in Bossey drew raucous laughter as interesting experiences from living together in different perspectives, cultures, and traditions were brought to life.

I myself had connections with Bossey when, as a staff member of the WCC, I organized health and healing courses on the campus overlooking the Lake of Geneva. Over the years Bossey has built a reputation as an ecumenical laboratory for controversial and cutting-edge ideas. I remember that as a moderator of the Policy Reference Committee on Human Sexuality following the Harare assembly, I was invited to participate in seminars on human sexuality organized by the late Prof. Faitala Talapusi. People live together on and around the grounds of the Château de Bossey for their graduate studies, and the length of time for individual studies varies according to the course of each student. The Busan assembly saw the launching of the collection of essays, *A Place To Remember: The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey*, which contains reflections of Bossey graduates from different parts of the world about their life-altering experiences. Prof. Ioan Sauca, now the director of Bossey and WCC associate general secretary for ecumenical formation, was once a graduate student there.

The systematic tracing of graduates' careers is one of the activities Bossey will pursue in the coming years as a way to evaluate the impact of Bossey's educational mission in the life of the church and society, and in order to seek support from constituencies for the ecumenical learning that takes place in cross-cultural and faith settings.

## **Assembly Theme: "God of Life, Lead Us to Justice and Peace"**

The theme of the Busan assembly, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace," is a prayer that is very appropriate in our world today. Prayer themes also came to life in the past two assemblies: "Come, Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation" (Cantabria, 1991) and "God, in your Grace, Transform the World" (Porto Alegre, 2006). The adoption of a short sentence prayer as the assembly theme in recent years has been effective in reminding us of the spiritual significance of our journey together. In 2006, at the Porto Alegre assembly in Brazil, the theme was "God, in your grace, transform the world."

Deeply moved by what is going on today in my country, the Philippines, I found myself echoing on my Facebook page the prayer theme, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." My own involvement in mission has been profoundly influenced in recent years by the struggle for justice and peace, especially in the context of a tri-country programme supported and facilitated by the Commission of Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD), one of the programmes in 1979-80 under "justice and service" in the WCC (Geneva), Missionsakademie an der Universität Hamburg (Germany), the Ecumenical Center for Development (Philippines), and the Indian Social Institute (Bangalore, India) in 1979-1980. In this work, I have felt the importance of becoming more deeply involved in the cutting-edge issues

of church and society and in solidarity building. The Busan assembly theme was a reminder that we do not rely on ourselves alone but we draw our strength from acknowledging that it is God's mission that encourages us on the way toward justice and peace, for God is encountered in our lived realities.

The theme of justice and peace has been a key feature on the agenda of the WCC since its inauguration, as the world faced the terror and challenge of World War II and many ensuing crisis situations. It is not that the ecumenical movement suddenly chose to emphasize justice and peace at the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Consider this vision of Christian unity, phrased in the language of that era, from the "Message" of the 1st Assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948:

We have to ask God to teach us together to say No and to say Yes in truth. No to all that flouts the love of Christ, to every system, every programme and every person that treats any man as though he were an irresponsible thing or a means of profit, to the defenders of injustice in the name of order, to those who sow the seeds of war or urge war as inevitable; Yes, to all that conforms to the love of Christ, to all who seek for justice, to the peacemakers, to all who hope, fight and suffer for the cause of man, to all who—even without knowing it—look to new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Justice and peace are and always have been central to the life and work of the WCC. We need to pray together as we work together, never wavering or giving way to fatigue in the search for justice and peace in our broken world.

In his opening remarks at the 10th Assembly, the Rev. Dr Walter Altmann of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, moderator of the WCC elected in Porto Alegre in 2006, said, "Thank God we don't have to take the first step, because that has already been taken by those who went before us. We just need to understand where we are in the journey and move forward." The foundation for ecumenical ministries of justice and peace has already been laid in many gatherings, such as the peace convocation in Seoul in 1990 and the Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Jamaica in 2011. The WCC did not waver despite criticisms from some member churches and ecumenical partners when it organized the Programme to Combat Racism and supported the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. I remember that in 1983, at my own first assembly in Vancouver, we were challenged to boycott Shell Oil because of its perceived support of apartheid. Several efforts were made to call for the release of political prisoners, among them Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. It was a joyful

moment when Nelson Mandela was released from prison on 11 February 1990. He said, “Our march to freedom is irreversible.” In June 1990 Nelson Mandela made an official visit to the WCC offices in Geneva to thank the ecumenical movement for all its help in lifting apartheid.

The WCC has provided spaces for people to talk on a wide range of issues at the United Nations through the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA). From its creation two years prior to the first assembly, the CCIA has overseen the WCC’s programmes on Public Witness: Addressing Power, Affirming Peace; Justice, *Diakonia*, and Responsibility for Creation; and Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation.

## Pre-Assembly Preparation

The success of any event associated with an assembly lies in the preparation that goes into it. Assembly planning committees are organized at the international, regional, and local levels. Because the 10th Assembly was held in Asia, the Christian Conference of Asia devoted significant time to accompanying the event. The assembly Planning Committee also commissioned a planning group for common prayer that encouraged people to write songs and prayers for daily and special occasions of inter-confessional devotions at the assembly.

The mobilization of the Korean churches to support local preparation was crucial. In one instance, at the Sansung Presbyterian Church in Busan, more than 50 volunteers gathered just before the assembly to pack the 3000 welcome bags for assembly delegates, filling them with assembly resource materials – the prayer book, Bible studies guide, programme, and handbook – published in Korea. They also packed gifts for assembly participants, which they distributed as part of the participants’ welcome package.

The Busan assembly also reflected the advanced state of media technology in South Korea. Multimedia presentations supported the global demand to be informed about what was going on at the assembly, turning the 10th WCC Assembly into the most globally accessible such gathering to date. The Christian Broadcasting System in Korea, the oldest Christian television network of Korea, was mobilized to provide an online live-stream broadcast. This arrangement enabled our own church in the Philippines—the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)-Cosmopolitan Church—to keep abreast of the WCC events being streamed live from Busan. My senior pastor, the Rev. Dr José Andrés Sotto – who sent off two members of our congregation and Rev. Dr Eleazar Fernandez, president of Union Theological Seminary (Dasmariñas, Cavite), to Korea on Sunday, October 26 – reported in an email message that he was following the proceedings through live-streaming. In

addition, a downloadable free mobile application for tablets and mobile phones that featured daily stories, photos, and links to videos from the assembly, was made available through the iTunes Store and Google Market. The local host committee provided a 15-minute video broadcast each day, and Madang Live could be seen on You Tube, showing highlights and feature stories from the assembly. Social media networks such as the WCC Twitter site (@oikoumene, @OlavTveit) and the assembly Twitter site (@wcc2013), as well as the WCC Assembly Facebook event, engaged some 600 people from around the world through sharing information, articles, and links about the assembly. Global participants could also access information in Korean on the visitors' programme organized by the Korean Host Committee of the WCC through wcc2013.kr. And finally, the WCC assembly website featured daily news stories and updates.

The opening plenary was superbly produced with the latest in multimedia technology. We learned so much about the different phases of Korean political history and over one hundred years of the church.

## Korean Host Committee

The Korean government and many Christian churches across the nation gave their generous support to the 10th Assembly. Each of the participants, whether voting or non-voting, received a letter of welcome from the moderator of the Korean Host Committee, the Rev. Dr Kim Sam-Hwan. The Korean churches warmly, generously, and efficiently welcomed the more than 741 delegates representing 90 percent of the 345 WCC member churches, 117 stewards, 195 staff members and co-opted staff, as well as the more than 1000 10th Assembly participants, guests, and media that came to the global event—from the airport to their respective hotels to the huge Busan Exhibition and Convention Center (BEXCO). Each person was treated as an angelic guest visiting the festival of faith, welcome to celebrate with the rest of those assembled. Throughout the ten-day affair, “Arirang,” a Korean folk song listed by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, reverberated in every corner of the assembly venue, a expression of the varied emotions and spirituality of the local hosts.

On the premises of BEXCO, participants found designated places for prayer, the thematic plenaries, the business plenary, and the Madang in the huge exhibition hall. There were ample spaces for Bible studies and ecumenical conversations. The designated rooms for staff and media and the documentation rooms exuded comfort and warmth. The lower levels of BEXCO featured restaurants, and the overflow of people at lunchtime was easily handled by additional eateries in nearby locations. Although some commented that such a huge place was not congenial for this kind of gathering, it brought all of us together in one place and our hosts were more than willing to

give information to those who needed assistance. All the logistical arrangements were given meticulous attention and the Korean churches contributed financially to make it possible to use the facility.

As in many large WCC gatherings, a dissident group—here made up of Korean Christians not affiliated with the ecumenical movement—took advantage of the occasion to demonstrate at the perimeter of BEXCO, against WCC and its programmes. One picket sign in English proclaimed that the protestors were “Dead Set Against WCC” – and brochures objected to dialogue with other world faiths on an equal basis, as well as to the assembly’s open discussion of a variety of social and intercultural themes.

## **Pre-Assembly Events**

Assemblies are generally preceded by pre-assembly meetings and various preparatory events. For example, the first assembly I attended, in Vancouver (1983), offered pre-assemblies for women and youth. Both were aimed at inviting the delegates to participate in the discourse of the assembly and also to ensure that the women’s voices would be heard, especially in the elections of central committee members. We also took time to prepare ourselves adequately to learn from other churches in other countries. For example, in preparing for that assembly, I visited Japan and had the privilege of meeting Dr Pauline Webb, a Methodist laywoman from England, and Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk, who is now Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. The friendship and exposure to different realities developed during the study visit made me feel at home at my very first assembly. Furthermore, when we arrived in Vancouver, we were given the chance to stay in the homes of church people in and around that great Canadian city.

In this 10th Assembly, delegates and participants—particularly the young people, women, men, Indigenous people, and people with disabilities—were prepared in creative ways. The WCC has improved so much in heeding the call for inclusive participation. However, despite this there was still a cry from youth insisting that they need more substantial participation. The WCC leaders commented that the Busan assembly was a young assembly, seeing more young people participate than ever before. Around 600 young people were involved in various ways.

The pre-assembly event organized by Indigenous peoples was attended by 50 Indigenous peoples and those in solidarity with their concerns about ecological justice, self-determination, and economy of life. The Rev. Fr Rex R. B. Reyes, Jr, the first Indigenous person to lead the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), emphasized the positive contribution of the Indigenous people but lamented that the present generation refused to learn from them. He stated that

Indigenous peoples through generations have tried to teach us reverence for the land, but somehow, until our generation, we refused to learn. Their spirituality adds

meaning to our liturgical life yet we have so far failed to put those into concrete expressions in terms of engaging the principalities and powers that cast darkness in the heavenly places.

The participants contributed ideas on the theme “God of life, renew the people of the land” and came up with a statement that was presented during the business plenary of the main assembly, which was approved by the assembly. I feel strongly that this has implications for the greater involvement of Indigenous people in the life and work of the council, ensuring that this partnership is reflected in the future agenda of the WCC. The assembly also agreed that the category of “Indigenous Person” be given a space in the membership of the executive committee. An outstanding issue that still needs to be resolved is the determination of who is considered “Indigenous.” It was suggested that, in order to ensure that Indigenous voices are truly represented, their representative to the leadership body be nominated by Indigenous peoples themselves, and not by the country or church group they came from.

The pre-assembly of the youth sector was aimed at providing young ecumenists space to discuss issues of migration, eco-justice, and reconciliation and to equip them to prepare particularly for the decision-making sessions at the main assembly. The active participation of the young people as stewards, delegates, and participants was visible throughout the assembly. But again, in my opinion and that of many others, youth participation needs to be even more substantial.

The pre-assembly of the Community of Women and Men celebrated 60 years since the creation of the Women in Church and Society. For the first time, this pre-assembly session included men, tackling issues of gender justice, redemptive masculinities, violence, and sexual abuse. The men joined the women in the campaign “Thursday in Black” to support the abolition of rape and violence against women. During this pre-assembly’s service of common prayer, we were asked to visualize an invisible wailing wall where women and men brought their pain. We uttered our lamentations and hopes for a better world in our prayers, as well as in sharing our stories and reading the Bible together.

The pre-assembly on a Church for All was organized by the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN). It highlighted the concerns of people with disabilities and emphasized that people with disabilities are givers and not just receivers. They urged the churches to give people with disabilities the chance to use their gifts. Simone Poortman, a founding member of EDAN, emphasized the need to promote an inclusive church.

These pre-assembly meetings on October 28 and 29 helped participants listen to the stories and concerns that later could be deliberated in the assembly decision-making sessions. Time was made in all the pre-assembly meetings to meet with the leadership of the WCC. In the presentation of the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC, he gave a signal to participants in all the pre-assemblies “that in the next eight years, journeying together in a pilgrimage of justice and peace will be an overall perspective on planning the work in WCC.”

## **Peace Train from Berlin to Busan**

The image of a peace pilgrimage came into focus before the pre-assembly meetings, when around 100 people journeyed together on a “peace train” from Berlin to Busan from October 8 to October 27, 2013, arriving in time for the start of the 10th Assembly events. People from 16 countries and 20 different denominations joined the peace train.

In my Bible study group at the assembly, I was fortunate to sit beside Rev. Rilma Sands and discovered that she had travelled on board the peace train from Berlin to Busan. It gave me an idea how a pilgrimage for justice and peace could be forged among churches. Rev. Rilma Sands is 87 years old and a recently retired minister in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa / New Zealand. She shared her testimony with me:

Nothing in my life prepared me for what I would feel and learn during this trip. In spite of having lived the first third of my life in a series of dictatorships and police states and in spite of the hard moments that life brings, I have come to realize I have lived a very sheltered life in Uruguay, Argentina, and then New Zealand, where I have been living for the past 42 years. We started in Berlin on October 8 after four days of getting to know each other and attending seminars on German and Korean history and seeing places of interest and a special candlelight service at the Brandenburg Gate. In Berlin, I first heard of the tragedy of families being split and not being able to meet again. I felt the pain in my heart. The next stop was in Moscow, where we spent three days with the Russian Orthodox Church. We journeyed on to Central Asia where we saw scenic spots, like an expansive lake in Siberia. From there we reached Beijing, and then we travelled to Dandong, China, to view North Korea from the China side. When we went to the border point with all the barbed wires around, I was reminded of a high security prison in New Zealand that is hard to get in to visit, even harder to get out for prisoners. We took the ferry from Dandong to Incheon, a port city in the western part of Korea on the Yellow Sea. From there we went to Seoul. The next day we went to the broken bridge standing next to the friendship bridge. The word and the feeling that came to me was one of pathos, an extreme sadness and compassion. The juxtaposition of the broken bridge alongside the friendship bridge somehow reminded me not just of the current situation in Korea but of the whole world—a world which is broken. But the friendship bridge alongside reminded me of the people I have been travelling with, people who, in spite of the pain, are full of joy and hope. We arrived in Busan on October 27. The passion for justice and peace that I have nurtured all my life has been kindled into positive action. I have made a commitment not just to raise awareness of issues but to participate in any way possible to enable justice and peace

to prevail in the world. So I will advocate for the issues between North and South Korea to be resolved with justice, and for peace to once and for all be established in this wonderful peninsula, so that people may once again be united in one common nation in the same way that Germany was. I believe that once that happens, the Cold War will finally be over.

It was a blessing to hear the story of Rilma, and in the November 7 peace plenary, to see glimpses of that. At that time, Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev of the Russian Orthodox Church remarked, "The peace train will be an epoch-making event and a turning point for peace in the Korean Peninsula."

## Weekend Pilgrimage for Peace in the Korean Peninsula and the World

The assembly was a learning assembly when it came to justice and peace issues faced by the Korean people (*minjung*). The local host committee arranged a weekend of pilgrimage to Seoul, Busan, Jeju Island, and Gwangju on November 2 and 3 as part of the assembly programme. I had the opportunity to join 800 pre-selected participants in the weekend pilgrimage for peace and reconciliation, hosted by the local churches. The group to which I was assigned went to Imjingak, located seven kilometres from the Military Demarcation Line. There, the Bell of Peace was erected in 1972 in the hope that unification of North and South Korea would someday be possible.

At the site, the Korean host committee led prayers of remembrance with the ringing of the Bell of Peace by seven participants, representing seven regions of the world. Standing so close to the borders reminded us of the suffering of the people of Korea and the urgent need for unification. Our pilgrimage moved from the Bell of Peace to the pond, where participants gathered at the spot under the bridge that is the front line of division. This spot brings together the past, present, and future. Young theology students from the Sungkonghoe University performed a traditional dance for the bride, accompanied by the heritage song "Arirang," expressing hope for the reconciliation of Korea. At the bridge, the pilgrims shared messages of peace written on ribbons, which we placed on the iron fence along the military demarcation line. The thousands of ribbons carrying prayers and wishes for a unified Korea stood as a poignant representation of the benediction "Now Go in Peace," which we sang together. I remembered other walls of division and the martyrs for justice and peace in our world today as we walked through the peace park on our way to rejoin others, in 24 buses, to meet for a fellowship meal at MyungSung Presbyterian Church in Seoul. The sumptuous meal was punctuated by a cultural presentation of music and dance, reminding us of the profundity of Korea's folk heritage.

I was happy to be part of a team of six people from Indonesia, the Philippines, Kenya, and Australia who prayed with local church people and brought greetings of peace. We derived hope from their persistence in working for changes in the lives of their people. The Millennium Development Goal of 2015 aims to overcome poverty and hunger. The MokMin Presbyterian Church, which gives priority to serving the poor in the area, began in 1979 with 50 poor people and has developed into a church ready to receive 2000 people at any given time. The church serves the needs of the people “from womb to tomb,” not only those of the church members but also of the larger community. It is a praying church, like many in Korea. At 5 a.m. every morning the senior pastor leads the prayer life of the community. This church is engaged in mission in many parts of the world, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, proving that there is much to learn from the Koreans in how to journey as churches toward justice and peace.

Back in Busan, I was excited to share my Seoul experience with my husband, Pastor Alvaro O. Senturias, Jr., who joined the exposure visit on peace issues in the Dongrae area, eight kilometres from BEXCO. The archaeological site of Dongrae Mountain Fortress was a pivotal place of resistance for the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910) against the 1592 invasion of Japanese military forces, which desired to conquer Korea in order to reach China. The group heard stories of the bravery of the Korean people in resisting invaders, and learned that despite the occupation by the Japanese for many years, Korea managed to build its economy and lift the lives of the people through collective generosity, a trait that we experienced during the assembly. Along with exposure to peace issues, Busan also offered visits on such themes as marine culture; industry and ecology; nuclear issues; history and democratization; justice and struggles for life; empowering the marginalized; women, human rights, and liberation; spiritual plurality; Buddhism; Confucianism; multicultural work; and economic development. In Gwangju, visitors could immerse themselves in history and environment, justice and democracy, and alternative civilization. And on Jeju Island, guests had much to learn about history and the environment.

On Sunday, delegates were also able to visit local churches in Busan and Jeju Island. They signed up for preaching, praying, or just participating in the service. All of us received gifts from our Korean hosts, and we gave presents from our countries.

## **Prayer Life of the Assembly**

At the heart of any WCC assembly is common prayer: through the proclamation of the word, the procession of symbols carried by people from different confessions and countries, the singing of hymns, and the presentation of creative liturgical dance.

With the theme in the form of a prayer, “God of Life, lead us to justice and peace,” the daily prayers each were followed by one element of the theme:

Day 1 (October 31, Thursday)—God’s Journey—TREE OF LIFE  
 Day 2 (November 1, Friday)—Journeying with Asia—DRUM  
 Day 3 (November 2, Saturday)—A Pilgrimage with Korean Churches—CELEBRATION  
 Day 4 (November 3, Sunday)—Worship in Korean churches  
 Day 5 (November 4, Monday)—On the Way with Mission—WATER  
 Day 6 (November 5, Tuesday)—Ways toward Unity—FIRE AND WIND  
 Day 7 (November 6, Wednesday)—Paths of Justice—FOOD AND SOIL  
 Day 8 (November 7, Thursday)—Paths of Peace—WILDFLOWERS  
 Day 9 (November 8, Friday)—Footprints—WASHING OF THE FEET

The lengthy inaugural prayer was one of lamentation. Speaking personally, I missed the joy of celebrating our togetherness as in past assemblies. But perhaps it bore witness to the spirit of the time: there is much to lament in a world where we face economic, ecological, social, and spiritual challenges in so many places. During the previous month of September 2013, the Philippines experienced three weeks of strife leading to displacement of people in Zamboanga City; in October the island-province of Bohol suffered through a severe earthquake and after-shocks. Little did we know that on November 8, at the time of the closing prayer of the assembly, super-typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda would devastate so many towns and villages in the Visayan region of the Philippines, particularly in Tacloban and Guian in Eastern Visayas—leading to a great number of deaths.

We lament the continuing climate crises that are devastating lives and displacing people from their communities, making them ecological refugees. We lament the continuing strife in Arab countries and other parts of the world. We lament the social effects of racism, of modern day slavery, and of human and drug trafficking. We lament the new forms of idolatry in our world and forms of spirituality that are centred only on the self. We lament the brokenness of the human family and human communities. Many of us also lament that Christians cannot share the eucharist together.

But through it all, the words of the psalmist, “Let everything that breathes praise the Lord, praise the Lord” (Ps. 150:6), came alive in the singing of the Korean choir and other volunteers making up the choir of the 10th Assembly. We also experienced the commitment of the Teatro Ekyumenical (ecumenical theatre) group of young people from the NCCP, sharing their talent in creative arts, dramatizing biblical stories and the lamentations of the world. These moving presentations were inspired by Dr Rommel Linnatoc. And young people from other parts of the world also helped interpret the different symbols and each Bible study focus.

The resource book “Hallelujah,” produced for the prayer life of the assembly and available in English, French, Spanish, German, and Korean, contained 45 musical pieces from different countries and in different languages. The humongous size of the location made it somewhat less congenial for the atmosphere of prayer, especially when the hall was not filled to its intended audience of 5000 people. But prayers have a way of rising and filling up space. After each session of common prayer, we could not help but be led and inspired by prayers, and the limitations of a huge, cavernous hall were easily glossed over.

One change in Busan from the first WCC assemblies I attended that caught my attention repeatedly is that we now refer to the services as “common prayer,” rather than “worship.” This is the result of recommendations in the report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, first submitted to the WCC central committee in 2002, in which there was an action to refrain from using the term “worship” in regard to future assemblies’ common acts of prayer and praise, lest this be confused with the liturgy or the eucharist; instead, services are classified as either “confessional common prayer” or “inter-confessional common prayer.” Perhaps I am too much of a Protestant from a Reformed background. My definition of worship seems to differ from others’ understanding.

On the other hand, it is essential that we recognize areas of our common life where more ecumenical dialogue is necessary to attain understanding and agreement. If we are to move forward, we must move together.

Even though I know this intellectually, I do regret that we no longer attempt in the course of an assembly any form of ecumenical eucharistic celebration, such as the Lima Liturgy. This liturgy was developed within the ecumenical movement in 1982. I first experienced the Lima liturgy in Vancouver at the WCC Assembly in 1983. This ecumenical liturgy stimulated a new awareness of the possibilities of having a common eucharistic celebration in the future. However, given the many doctrinal interpretations of the sacrament of the eucharist (among them, transubstantiation; consubstantiation; and the symbolic power of bread and wine), problems arose over the liturgy. Somehow, in using the term “common prayer” and distancing ourselves from a common eucharist, I felt as though we moved backwards in our aspirations to achieve some measure of visible unity, which seemed an indication that our churches—notwithstanding the many positive responses to the WCC consensus document on baptism, the eucharist, and ministry—might not yet be ready for unity in the celebration of the eucharist. I feel a sense of incompleteness. How can we restore our brokenness and become part of the one body of Christ?

In Busan, there were many memorable moments in our prayer and praise. The opening homily by His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, who later in the week would be elected one of the presidents of the WCC, reminded us of the lasting importance of scripture and tradition in the lives of Christians today. There was much for all of us to ponder in this offering in the opening service.

For me, though, the highlight of the prayer life of the assembly was the moving proclamation of the Word in the sending service by Father Michael Lapsley, SSM, director of the Institute for Healing of Memories, Cape Town, South Africa. The questions he raised at the beginning of his sermon were helpful to me as we wrapped up our experience of the entire assembly and as we continued to examine our critical take on the assembly, for those questions situate us in our lived reality:

1. How was your experience of this assembly?
2. How was your spiritual state as you arrived? What has happened to you in these days and how are you now? Was it a roller coaster, or rather steady?
3. Which stories have imprinted on your souls and pierced your heart?
4. What made you angry?
5. What will you never forget about the 10th Assembly?
6. How are things in your life, your family, your local church, your denomination, your society, your country?
7. What is your gender?
8. Do you come from a place of conflict?
9. Do you see yourself as a member of a majority or a minority, tribally, racially, linguistically, sexually?
10. Are Christians a minority or a majority in your land?
11. Do you see yourself and your people as bystanders, victims, or victimizers, or would we dare to admit we could be all three at the same time, even if in very different measure?

Through this series of questions, we realized that we are all coming and reacting from a particular context. Some of the loads that we carry created heavy burdens in our journey; but others helped lighten the way, making our journeys bearable and inspiring.

I found Father Lapsley's closing sermon particularly inspiring and compelling, arising as it did from a deep experience of hurt but also from a sense of hope and victory as we serve a living God. He allowed us to see that the forces of justice, kindness, gentleness, compassion, peace, life, and God are stronger than evil. I was moved to tears when he confessed to the entire LGBTI community that he was deeply sorry for "our part as religious people, in the pain you have experienced across the ages. I have a dream that in my lifetime, I will hear all the leaders of all our great faith traditions making the same apology." I was reminded of my own intervention during the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (Jamaica, 2011), when I suggested that our movement act to create safe spaces for the LGBTI community within our faith traditions. I have always felt since then that confessions of sins against others also come to us in a call from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who did not discriminate against or stigmatize those he encountered on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Father Lapsley posed a question, which I hope will be seriously considered by the central committee in its strategic plan for the future of the WCC: "Where is the cutting edge of the ecumenical movement going forward—however controversial it may be." There is a need for inclusive justice and healing of memories of those in pain, such as the Palestinian and Jewish mothers who suffer seeing their children killed. He cited the significant victory of the cutting-edge Programme to Combat Racism in the 1970s. He sees the next cutting-edge programmes featuring our common and continuing struggles to end ongoing racism, gender inequality, gender-based violence, and violence against children, as well as to lobby against the arms trade.

## **Bible Studies**

There were six Bible studies starting on the second day of the assembly. The Bible study materials were prepared by six theologians and pastors from different continents of the world, and a collection of Bible studies were published as "Bible Studies for Peace and Justice" and made available on the assembly website. The scripture passage for specific days was read in the morning prayers, sometimes through creative presentations like a dramatization of the story of Naboth's vineyard.

Small groups of assembly participants were led in study by facilitators, who reported the results of the discussions based on the guide questions back to the plenary. Given the large number of questions, they were divided among the small groups, which could choose which questions to answer. The discussion was based on the lived realities of the participants: contextual Bible Study ("CBS") at its best. It was also a space for building community, especially when participants chose to remain in one group for the entire six Bible study sessions. By end of the assembly, these participants had become more intimate, learning from each other's experiences.

### **Bible Study 1: Genesis 2:4b-17—“Do Just This—Protect Life!”**

In the first study, we reflected on the nature of life and how to celebrate, sustain, and affirm it in relation to the theme of the assembly. The study was prepared by Jione Havea of the Methodist Church of Tonga.

### **Bible Study 2: Amos 5:14-24—“Roll Justice”**

The second study reflected on Asia as a continent of suffering and hope. While focusing on the suffering of God’s people, we envisioned the reign of God and how we may find ways to transform our lived reality into liberation, joy, and hope. The study was prepared by Kathie G. Cannon, professor of Christian ethics at Union Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) in Richmond, Virginia, US.

### **Bible Study 3: Acts 8:26-40—“Living Water”**

In the third study, we explored the mission of the Spirit in the symbol of the water of life. We asked ourselves the questions: How do we discern God’s life-giving work? And how are we enabled to participate in God’s mission? The study was prepared by Eleni Kasselouri-Hatyvassiliadi, a Greek Orthodox biblical scholar teaching at the Hellenic Open University in Greece.

### **Bible Study 4: Acts 2:1-13—“Being and Becoming Church: The Spirit-Filled Genesis”**

In the fourth study, we explored the Pentecost event from a unity perspective, bringing new and dynamic understanding of the ecumenical movement and examining the relationship of the outpouring of the Spirit to justice and peace in today’s realities. The study was written by Rev. Hyunju Bae, professor in the department of New Testament Studies at Busan Presbyterian University, Republic of Korea.

### **Bible Study 5: 1 Kings 21:1-22—“Struggles for Justice in an Ambiguous World”**

In the fifth study, the participants explored the lived reality of injustice in the global market and how God’s justice can protect life. The study was written by Sarojini Nadar, associate professor and director of the gender and religious programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

### **Bible Study 6: John 14:27-31—“Go in Peace”**

In the sixth study, the participants explored the paths to the genuine “peace of Christ” in our lived realities of violence at the global and local levels. As we focused on the symbol of wild flowers, we asked ourselves how we can sow the seed of peace in our children and our young people. We also looked at the missiological implications of our work for peace in situations where the powerful abuse the powerless. The study was written by Nestor O. Miguez, professor of Bible at the Instituto Universitario ISEDET in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Of special interest is the reflection by the Rt Revd Alan Abernethy, Bishop of the Church of Ireland, on his participation in his Bible study group:

In my own Bible study group there were delegates from Syria, Lebanon, Jerusalem, South Africa, Sri Lanka, India, Europe, North America, Africa, the Caribbean and Korea. This constantly raised the question as to how much of our biblical interpretation is based on our culture rather than on the text, which led to some interesting discussions. However, it's clear that people are "doing" faith in all sorts of different places and we strengthened one another as we shared together.

## **Assembly Plenary Sessions**

The assembly plenary sessions were classified into non-thematic plenary, thematic plenaries, business plenary, and decision plenary. At the beginning of each plenary session, greetings from religious leaders were read by their representatives or were conveyed personally.

In the first plenary session of the assembly, all the delegates and participants were welcomed to Busan by Hur Nam-sik, mayor of Busan; the Rev. Dr Kim Sam Whan, moderator of the Korean Host Committee of the WCC assembly; and the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC general secretary. The prime minister of the Republic of Korea at that time, His Excellency Jung Hong-won, principal executive assistant to the president, came personally to welcome the participants to the Republic of Korea. The WCC general secretary also welcomed three churches accepted into the WCC fellowship since its 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2006: the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil, which joined in 2008; the Lao Evangelical Church, 2008; and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, 2013.

The assembly received video and written greetings from the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Orthodox) and from Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC but the Vatican sends representatives to WCC assemblies as observers. Pope Francis' message to the assembly centred on the Christian duty and mission to serve the needy and to promote the human family as fundamental building blocks of society. The message was read by Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity.

## **Thematic Plenaries**

The six thematic plenaries of the assembly were (1) God of life, lead us to justice and peace!; (2) Asia plenary: Living together in God's justice and peace; (3) Mission: A call to life-giving witness; (4) Unity in Christ: The journey of the fellowship; (5) God of life lead us to do justice in today's world; (6) God of life lead us to build peace in today's world.

**“God of life, lead us to justice and peace” (October 31)**

Moderated by Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian, of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern Diocese) and president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the US, this plenary offered an in-depth understanding of the cutting-edge events in the world and theological reflections on the reality of the lives of the churches and the world in which they live. There were three excellent speakers. “The Churches Listening in the World” was presented by Mr Michel Sidibé, executive director of UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and also under-secretary of the United Nations, a native of Mali and a global health expert who began his advocacy with his nomadic Tuareg people in Africa. “The Churches’ Voice in the World: Perspective of a Church in the Middle East” was presented by Dr Wedad Abbas Tawfik, an Egyptian lay person of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria and since 2006 member of the WCC’s plenary commission on Faith and Order. “The Church in and for the World: A Theological Reflection” was presented by Bishop Duleep Kamil de Chikera, Anglican Bishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and member of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA). Further reflections on the theme were contributed by Ms Melisande Schifter, M.Th. of German and Thai descent and a young theologian from the Church in Baden, Germany, with experience in East Africa, China, and the US.

The inspiring message of Michel Sidibé brought home the point that “no one should be left behind in social justice. Working for justice in our world would mean not accepting inequity where some people are privileged while others are left behind.” He described the tremendous changes in the commitment to get to zero HIV infection, zero AIDS deaths, and zero stigma and discrimination. His challenge was that, with the right efforts, new HIV infections could be reduced to zero among children, even within the short time remaining until the Millennium Development Goals culminate at the end of 2015. No one could have predicted that Africa would increase the number of people on treatment by more than 800 percent in the last six or seven years. Ten million people are currently on anti-retroviral treatment (ART). This is due to the reduction in the cost of ART from USD 15,000.00/year to USD 80.00/year. Still, 1.7 million people are dying and 18 million people are waiting for treatment. Currently, the epicentre of HIV is among those in stable relationships, with more than 50 percent among discordant couples, where the husband is positive and the wife is negative, or vice versa. There is a need to protect the vulnerable people, especially the growing number of sex workers and intravenous drug users who share needles. The challenge is not over when, instead of universal access, we have universal obstacles; when punitive laws, criminalization, exclusion, prejudice, and discrimination send people underground and block access to treatment. The church is called to be the body to which people can turn in order to give meaning to their lives.

Dr Wedad Abbas Tawfik spoke about the experience of turmoil and pain in her own country, Egypt, and also in Syria and the whole of the Middle East. The December 2010 “Arab Spring” raised the expectations of Egyptians aspiring for “justice and peace” in the Middle East region, yet by late 2013 it had resulted in violence and

instability. She shared that the turmoil for Christians in Egypt began when they woke up to the news of an atrocious bombing of a Coptic Church in Alexandria on New Year's Day, 2011. The bombing, according to media reports, resulted in the killing of more than twenty people. Dr Tawfik commented, "This terrorist attack still managed to unite both Christians and Muslims in a bond of suffering, where they mourned together. The Muslims also stood up in several localities to protect the Christians while they prayed in their churches." Amidst this suffering, Tawfik said, the church did not forget its role. She concluded, "With this faith the churches have been striving for justice and peace. Witnessing the God of life in suffering is a real challenge, but the churches in Egypt have proved to be a true witness, praying faithfully, 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace.'"

Bishop Duleep Kamil de Chickera reflected theologically from the perspective of the victim, the marginalized. He said, "The church is more than those who believe and belong. The crucial question is not 'Who is Jesus?' It is rather 'Where is Jesus?'" He emphasized prophetic and revolutionary *diakonia*. People in the margins are the concern of our Lord Jesus Christ who always seeks the lost ones and uplifts those on the margin.

### **Asia plenary: "Living together in God's justice and peace" (November 1)**

The Asia plenary on "Living together in God's justice and peace" was moderated by the Rev. Dr Soritua Nababan, then completing his term as WCC president from Asia. He had served as bishop (Ephorus) of the Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP) from 1987 to 1998. The plenary started with a presentation and cultural drama performed by Teatro Ekyumenikal of the NCCP. The artists depicted the multiple challenges of Asia.

The conversation between generations was presented by the Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia and the first woman to hold this post in 55 years, and by Ms Yang Ya-Chi of the University of Cambridge, where she has done research on Christianity in Asia. The theological reflections were given by the Rev. Connie Semy Mella, ordained elder of the Philippines Central Conference of the United Methodist Church and associate dean, Union Theological Seminary; and by the Rev. Daniel Na, archpriest of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and vicar general of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea and concurrently the dean of St Paul's Orthodox Church. A story of hope was presented by Dr Deepanna Choudhrie, who trained as a radiologist at Christian Medical College, Vellore, India. She is serving in Padhar Hospital, a 200-bed mission hospital in rural central India. She told the story of her care of abandoned conjoint twin girls, Stuti and Aradhana, who underwent an operation at Padhar Hospital that received international media attention in 2012.

Rev. Connie Semy Mella presented a deeply moving theological reflection on the lived reality of the Asian people, expressed from her deep spirituality and passion for peace. Here is part of what she shared:

### **I Want Peace If**

*The PEACE that is based on justice and respect for life;  
The PEACE that upholds human dignity and the integrity of the created  
The PEACE where nation shall not lift up sword or bomb against nation;  
Where people can live without fear or terror;  
Where no one will live in hunger and despair;  
Where all can access the resources of the world.  
The PEACE where justice is its foundation.  
I want peace.  
But where is peace...where is justice?*

*When a Dalit woman's sexuality is constantly violated, how does she understand peace? When a street child goes hungry in an affluent city, how does this child understand peace? When the Indigenous people are being uprooted from their ancestral land, how do they understand peace? When the workers are being deprived of their just wages and benefits, what does peace mean to them? When students could not continue their studies because of lack of resources, how do they understand peace?*

### **"Mission: A call to life-giving witness" (November 4)**

I paid close attention to this plenary because I was a former staff under the CWME and the Christian Medical Commission (CMC) that it gave birth to in 1968. I was also an observer in the CWME meeting in Manila in 2012 to finalize the mission statement for submission to the central committee meeting in Cyprus. The plenary on mission was moderated by Dr Kirsteen Kim, professor of theology and world Christianity at Leeds Trinity University and vice-moderator of the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). The mission plenary highlighted the common challenges and opportunities for mission, principal topics on the agenda of the CWME for years. The new mission statement was approved by the WCC central committee, which met in Crete in 2012. The plenary session in Busan started with a video presentation on the changed mission context as perceived from the perspective of the CWME. This was followed by a theological reflection by Rev. Prof. Dr Stephen Bevans on the pneumatological aspect of mission in the presence of the life-giving Spirit, highlighting the transformative, dynamic mission of the Spirit and the new implications for mission work. The Teatro Ekyumenikal, under the leadership of Dr Rommel Linatoc, has been accompanying the CWME in bringing in the aspiration of youth and particularly of Asian people in mission and evangelism. They presented a cultural show on the Spirit and the fullness of life. Rev. Cecilia Castillo Nanjari interpreted "new ways of doing evangelism, witnessing to the gospel of life in a secular, post-modern context." Bishop Geevarghese Mor Coorilos of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and the East, and the moderator of the CWME, gave a reflection on "Mission towards Fullness of Life: New Affirmations and Concepts of Mission," an approach to God's mission that arises from the witness of those on the margins.

## **“Unity in Christ: The journey of the fellowship” (November 5)**

The unity plenary focused on the vision of unity and the spiritual dimension of this journey. It featured artwork from the late Sadao Watanabe of Japan; the work of Chinese artist He Qi, who was present with us in Busan; photography from Sean Hawkey; and music from Korean musicians and the Taizé community.

The unity statement asserts that the “unity of the Church and the human community and the unity of the whole creation belong together.” The statement stresses that diversity of creation is a gift from God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Dame Mary Tanner, the moderator of the plenary, introduced the journey of the whole fellowship, calling the audience to reflect prayerfully on the issue of unity as we write our unity prayers. She lamented that we do not eat and drink around the one table of the Lord. Two voices, Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste of the Romanian Orthodox Church and Rev. Dr Neville Callam of the Baptist World Alliance, representing different ecclesial and cultural contexts, spoke on the challenge of unity. H.E. Metropolitan Nifon suggested that the reason some members of WCC member churches speak out against the ecumenical movement is because they fear losing their particular tradition. On the other hand, Neville Callam, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, observed that some churches hold on to their peculiarities and do not seek signs of the one Christ in other churches. Two voices of hope, Ms Alice Fabian and Bishop Mark MacDonald, shared their belief in the timeliness of the ecumenical vision and the importance of persevering on the journey to unity. Bishop MacDonald said of his experiences in Canada and Alaska that “at 50 degrees below zero, denominational differences disappear”; but he also warned, “Secularization provides dense cover for idolatry. As people find freedom from religiosity, they become enslaved to an idolatrous lifestyle,” creating a challenge to unity of the church.

## **“God of life, lead us to do justice in today’s world!” (November 6)**

The plenary started with a presentation from the Korean Children’s Choir singing “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” a traditional African-American spiritual published in 1927. I see in these young voices representing the hope that the God of life will lead us to justice and peace my grandson, Micah Jovito Alvaro Senturias Baldonado, an 11-year-old who was born in Yale-New Haven Hospital and is now growing up in Charlotte, North Carolina, in the US. I see in him the hope that keeps me working and praying for justice and peace. I was literally moved to tears. It set the tone for a dynamic plenary on justice. Following the Korean Children’s Choir presentation, the plenary moderator Rev. Dr Angelique Walker-Smith, a Baptist pastor from the US, provided the context for the plenary. The prevailing globalized culture seems to accept and legitimate social, economic, and ecological injustice, resulting in human and ecological abuse; exclusion; impoverishment of the vulnerable; and the denial of rights and dignity of many, particularly people with disabilities, women, children, and people living with HIV and AIDS. Such groups of human beings are increasingly being seen as the inevitable fallout in a world gripped by the logic of

dominion, growth, and greed. Injustice has always been a part of human history, but the injustice of our generation to the earth and to our own brothers and sisters seems to have no parallel.

The moderator provided a space to deliberate on these issues in the world and ensured the participation of those who were usually in the margins in a Madang talk show. This brought together Mr Martin Khor, Malaysian executive director of the South Centre, an intergovernmental policy research and analysis institution of developing countries; Dr Julia Duchrow, head of the Human Rights and Peace desk of Bread for the World in Berlin, Germany; Bishop Iosif of Patara, Ecumenical Patriarchate and vicar of the archdiocese of Buenos Aires and South America; and Rev. Phumzile Mabizela from South Africa, ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Africa and executive director of the International Network of Religious Leaders Living with and personally affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+). Stories from the audience were presented by Rev. Tafue Lusama, general secretary of the Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu; Dr Lukas Andrianos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, from Greece and Madagascar; and Ms Shyreen Mvula of the Church of Central Africa, a Presbyterian church member in Malawi.

People living with HIV (PLHIV+) provided a platform in the plenary to share the stories of its members. In the past, others too often have spoken for people living with HIV, but this time the WCC heeded the call for meaningful participation and full involvement of people living with HIV. Indeed the saying “Nothing about us, without us” had been heeded. I was deeply touched and moved to hear the powerful challenge of Rev. Mabizela, as he advocated for a comprehensive response to the HIV pandemic and urged delegates to create a safe space for discussion of sexual diversity, stating, “The issue of justice should not be an optional extra for the church; it should be the core of our ministry.” Nineteen-year-old Shyreen Mrula, born with HIV, came to the session with timely challenges: for WCC to put human sexuality, sex, and reproductive health and rights on its agenda, and for the churches to develop sex education programmes to guide young people in making their life choices. She brought forward concerns about marriage and raising a family in relation to persons living with HIV. For me, this was by far the most moving plenary.

Thanks to the social media, I read this statement from Rev. Japé Mokgethi-Heath, a Namibian theologian and consultant on theology and HIV of the Church of Sweden and assembly participant, posted on Facebook:

While the tacit message remains that exercising your sexuality negatively impacts on your spirituality, this remains a challenge for the church. Unless we affirm, embrace and celebrate human sexuality in its fullness and diversity, and acknowledge that it feeds rather than flaws spirituality, we will remain incapable of dealing with many of the challenges which churches have to face today and in the future.

## **“God of life, lead us to build peace in today’s world” (November 7)**

God’s visionary peace is for the whole world. Local and national peace activists were invited to think globally with the WCC concerning the problems that transcend solutions. The peace plenary was moderated by the Most Reverend Dr Thabo Makgoba, Anglican archbishop of Cape Town and head of Anglican Church of Southern Africa. He invited the following peace activists to join him on the stage: Ms Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate of 2011, who founded various peace and reconciliation initiatives and led a nonviolent movement of Christian and Muslim women that played a pivotal role in ending Liberia’s civil war in 2003; Dr Chang Yoon Jae, a professor of theology at Ewha Women’s University in Seoul, Republic of Korea; Mr Stanley J. Noffsinger, the general secretary of the Church of the Brethren, who served as vice-president of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; Ms Agata Abrahamian, leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church’s youth community, who comes from Iran and served as steward at the assembly; and Mr Fabian Corrales, a Baptist, born deaf, who is an interdisciplinary scholar in disabilities studies in the graduate school of the University of Costa Rica and was the current coordinator of the Ecumenical Disability Network.

These people shared their stories and signs of hope regarding the potential of churches to address truly global issues together, thereby helping to shape peace. One bit of information that should move us to stop nuclear proliferation was a revelation from Dr Chang Yoon-jae concerning the presence of 117 nuclear power plants now in Asia, with another 344 under construction.

## **Business Plenary**

In the public issues deliberations, four issues were initially endorsed by the central committee and the executive committee:

- Statement on politicization of religion and rights of religious minorities;
- Statement on human rights of stateless people;
- Statement on peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula; and
- Statement on the way to just peace.

In addition, the executive committee that met on 28-29 October 2013 added three issues:

- Statement affirming the Christian presence and witness in the Middle East;
- Minute on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and
- Minute on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

On the last day for submission of public issues, 22 new proposals were reviewed, but only four of these met the stipulated criteria for approval:

- Statement on the current critical situation of Abeyi in South Sudan;

Statement on moving toward a nuclear-free world;  
Resolution on urging improved United States–Cuba relations and the lifting of economic sanctions; and  
Minute on Indigenous people.

Later in the business plenary, a minute on climate justice was also acted upon.

Given the overwhelming number of requests for public issue actions by the assembly, churches are urged in future to submit their proposals well in advance, unless the issues address a current crisis or other previously unforeseen situation. WCC member churches need to give sufficient time and preparation for issues to be put forward, well ahead of the meeting of any subsequent assembly, so that the member churches may speak with one voice.

As a listener seated in one of the special rows for assembly advisers, I could feel the deep division on issues surrounding family relations, particularly those relating to reproductive and sexual rights and gender construction. This divide is on the basis of confession and, perhaps, clash of culture.

Geo-political divisions also tabled the action on the statement on moving toward a nuclear-free world, for lack of adequate research. This was disappointing, as we see the need to address the common threats to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation from nuclear weapons and nuclear power and the modernization of nuclear arsenals by all nuclear-armed states. The Asia-Pacific region experiences the danger of volatile, military-based security in the Korean peninsula, a threat made more intense by nuclear weapons and associated militarization and the extensive network of US bases in the western Pacific that supports nuclear forces. The world has seen the horrifying effects of the nuclear weapons dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the consequences of nuclear accidents at Three Mile Island (1979), Chernobyl (1986), and Fukushima (2011). Despite this, the Statement on moving toward a nuclear-free world had to be tabled after a delegate from the Church of England pointed to lack of supporting research on the nuclear issue. It is hoped that the new WCC central committee will include nuclear weapons, and other forms of weapons in the arsenal of the world, in their agenda for strategic planning in July 2014.

### **Ecumenical Conversations**

There were 21 ecumenical conversations on critical issues challenging the churches and the world today. I was one of the facilitators for the ecumenical conversation on health and healing, where I introduced the WCC's involvement in this area, and especially through the Christian Medical Commission established in 1968.

The Ecumenical Conversations were as follows:

EC 01. Called to be one: New ecumenical landscapes.

- EC 02. The Church: Towards a Common Vision.
- EC 03. Transformed by renewal: Biblical sources and ecumenical perspectives.
- EC 04. Moral Discernment for life, justice, and peace.
- EC 05. We must pray together if we are to stay together.
- EC 06. Developing effective leadership: Contextual ecumenical formation and theological education.
- EC 07. Together towards Life: Mission in Changing Contexts.
- EC 08. Evangelism today: New ways for authentic discipleship.
- EC 09. Community of women and men in the church: Mutual recognition and transformative justice.
- EC 10. Exploring Christian self-identity in a world of many faiths.
- EC 11. Bonded with the marginalized for a just and inclusive church.
- EC 12. The earth community groans: A call to ecological justice and peace.
- EC 13. An economy of life: Overcoming greed.
- EC 14. Human security: Sustaining peace with justice and human rights.
- EC 15. The way of just peace: Building peace together.
- EC 16. Religions working together for peace and freedom.
- EC 17. The Korean peninsula: Ecumenical solidarity for justice and peace.
- EC 18. Middle East: Whose justice, what peace?
- EC 19. Churches' advocacy for children's rights.
- EC 20. Ecumenical health and healing ministries.
- EC 21. Compelled to serve: The diaconal church in a rapidly changing world.

The ecumenical conversations provided the space for a rich sharing of stories, historical data, insights, and programmatic directions. Certain documents were brought to the attention of assembly participants, such as *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, a text that invites official responses from churches and other partners by December 2015; and "Moral Discernment in the Churches," which was yet to be sent to the churches with encouragement to use it for reflection, discernment, and action.

## **New WCC Leadership: 2014-2020**

Immediately following the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the new WCC central committee made history by electing Dr Agnes Abuom, Anglican laywoman from Nairobi, Kenya, as its moderator through the 11th Assembly, in approximately seven years' time. She is the first woman, the first member of the laity, and the first African to hold this key position in the 65-year history of the WCC.

Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima, from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, was re-elected as one of the two vice-moderators. Bishop Mary Ann Swenson of the United Methodist Church, based in the US, was also elected as vice-moderator.

Four women and four men were elected as WCC presidents, a testament to the principle of equal gender representation. All of the current presidents are ordained:

Rev. Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies van Huffel, Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Rev. Prof. Dr Sang Chang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea  
Archbishop Anders Wejryd, Church of Sweden

Rev. Gloria Nohemy Ulloa Alvarado, Presbyterian Church in Colombia  
Bishop Mark MacDonald, Anglican Church of Canada

Rev. Dr Mele'ana Puloka, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

H.B. John X, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and all the East

H.H. Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians

The central committee comprises 150 members, and the executive committee, 23 members. The executive committee is made up of 14 men and 9 women; of those, 4 are young people, 17 are ordained, 6 are lay, 1 is an Indigenous person, and 1 is a person with disability. In terms of regional representation, 4 members are from Asia; 3 each from Africa and Europe; and 1 each from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. The rest are along Orthodox confession: 5 from Eastern Orthodox and 2 from Oriental Orthodox churches.

We did not achieve the desired percentage of young people, neither among the assembly delegates nor among incoming members of the WCC central committee, in spite of reports that this was a "young assembly." Only 13 percent, or a total of 19 "youth" members, were elected. This was a decrease of 2 percent since the last election at Porto Alegre in 2006, and fell

far short of the goal of 25 percent youth representation. The young people lamented that ECHOS, the existing youth organization, was not involved in the nomination process. Mr Ismael T. Fisco Jr, chairperson of Kalipunan ng Kristiyanong Kabataan sa Pilipinas (KKKP), an organization of Christian youth in the Philippines, who was part of the WCC media and documentation team at Busan also pointed out that the young participants were unable to present a consolidated statement from the pre-assembly to bring to the business plenary for action, unlike the other pre-assembly gatherings. Ms Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee, executive secretary of the young adult mission service of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, commented, "The real ethos and values of *oikoumene* will never be digested if spaces are limited for young adults." She added that the ecumenical movement's prophetic witness to the world will likely lose its drive if organizations like the WCC fail to live up to their promises."

## The Future of the Ecumenical Movement

Despite reports of diminution of funds, the ecumenical movement sails into the future. Churches are invited to invest all forms of resources for the good of the ecumenical movement. Member churches and ecumenical partners are finding ways to support WCC as it undertakes its role in helping transform our broken world. Certainly, the assembly has reminded the delegates and participants that God is the energy that drives our efforts. The theological exploration of the meaning of God of life needs to be an important priority in the years to come. We are reminded by many groups to look into the margins for guidance on understanding God, from whom comes tender mercy, light in the midst of darkness, and our guide into the way of justice and peace. We need to learn this together with people of other faiths and even in our association with the secular movement. Many of us have participated in WCC assemblies, convocations, study missions, high level meetings, consultations, United Nations meetings, commission meetings, governing body meetings, Bossey graduate school, and other WCC events. So many resources have been invested in this movement. It is time for us to commit ourselves and act together toward healing our broken world, which includes various churches established in the name of our triune God.

## Journeying Together in a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Rev. Dr Olav Tveit had been clear from the very beginning when he told pre-assembly meetings and repeated in his report to the 10th Assembly that "in the next eight years, journeying together in a pilgrimage of justice and peace will be an overall

perspective to plan the work of the WCC.” He anchored his message on the gospel passage: “By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:78-79).

A pilgrimage is a journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. The Christians’ early pilgrimages were in the Holy Land. But if we sing a famous Kirchentag song that I first heard in a central committee meeting in Hannover in 1988, “Jeder teil dieser Erde ist meinem Volk heilig” (Every part of this earth is sacred to my people), our pilgrimage is not limited to the Holy Land, though we are aware that one of the contentious issues of justice and peace continues to persist in Israel-Palestine relations.

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a model for a pilgrimage toward justice and peace. EAPPI was visibly present at one of the booths in the Madang Hall at Busan. Advocates explained that the aim of the programme is to bring internationals referred to as “Ecumenical Accompaniers” (EAs) to the West Bank to experience life under occupation, to provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, to monitor and report human rights abuses, and to support Palestinians and Israelis working together for peace. When they return home after at least a three-month stay, the EAs become advocates for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict through an end to the occupation, respect for international law, and implementation of UN resolutions. An example of a high-level visit of a religious leader to the Holy Land was that of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in June 2013. He took time to visit the EAPPI at the Qalandiya checkpoint and, after seeing the indignity that so many Palestinians suffer on a daily basis, he remarked that it was an educational experience for him. Praying in an Anglican Church, he said that only “finding each others’ humanity, recognizing it, and seeing in it the image of God will bring about peace in the land.” High-level visits of religious leaders can help educate the visitors concerning issues of justice and peace. This kind of accompaniment programme and high-level visits by religious leaders could well be replicated in other parts of the world where we find turmoil, for example, in North and South Korea.

## **Journeying Together as Men and Women toward a Wholistic Approach to the Dignity of Life**

The ecumenical conversation on the “Community of Women and Men: Mutual Recognition and Transformative Justice” began with a reading of this inspiring passage: “The church, as a prophetic sign in today’s world, is called to embody a true community of women and men. Such an inclusive community is God’s gift and promise for humanity, being created ‘in God’s image,’ male and female” (Gen. 1:27). We were reminded that 2013 is the 60th year since the creation of “Women in Church and

Society.” This is an important milestone as we continue the journey together as men and women toward a wholistic approach to the dignity of life.

In Busan, a pre-assembly event that had traditionally been a “women’s gathering” included women and men as a combined community considering together their interrelatedness within the churches. Men who participated in this pre-assembly stated that they

have a long way to go on the journey toward a true community of women and men in the churches and in society at large. The Spirit beckons us into a just community of equals. The Spirit is speaking to the churches and is calling us to listen. Today, as men committed to gender justice and a life-affirming community of women and men, we listen and respond to the Spirit’s call. We joyfully celebrate the advances of the women’s movement, we appreciate the participation of men who have journeyed with the women and look forward to a full community of humans together.

This journey together will result in a call for transformative justice and mutual accountability in different ministries of the church with regard to how men and women are to grow into an ever more inclusive community. The men who attended this pre-assembly denounced patriarchy, a form of unjust gender relations and a social structure that affects both women and men. These men have made a commitment to redeem masculinity and work toward equal relations among men and women. The ecumenical movement needs to follow up on this commitment.

The attainment of wholistic human dignity calls for a programme that would enable transformative justice in the sphere of gender relations. The statement produced by the men during the pre-assembly needs to be revisited and factored into the WCC’s strategic planning so that men may be held accountable on their pledge to work for gender justice. It was a bold statement that calls for monitoring and follow-up, from now until the next assembly.

Further issues that need to be addressed concern addressing patriarchy and gender construction and deconstruction, so that justice is served and safe space is provided to talk about sexual health and rights, as well as reproductive health and rights. The discussion on sexual and reproductive health is best addressed within the context of *imago dei*, human rights, respect for the human body, and family planning. Such rights should be guaranteed to all.

The campaign “Thursday in Black” was observed during the assembly, aimed at working for the prevention of gender- and sexually-based violence. In addition, we need to ensure safe motherhood, sexuality education, prevention and care for people with HIV and AIDS, and ending stigma, shame, denial, discrimination, inaction, and “mis-actions” around issues of HIV. We have today, after intense research, the tools we need to facilitate this process, exemplified in the “SAVE Guide” training materials produced by INERELA+.

It is important to replicate the model of the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa in other continents of the world. The development of “HIV-competent

churches” enables ministry at the local level and life-affirming networks at every level. This pattern can be applied in other areas. One example was suggested in Busan through Father Michael Lapsley’s recommendation to train ecumenical leaders in the healing of memories and dealing with enmities of the past for the sake of true reconciliation.

## **Journeying in Mission: Together toward Life**

Local churches in different parts of the world are keen to do mission, but often it is “to win souls for Christ.” The new mission statement was introduced in the assembly. As has been observed, in the statement we learn about the Spirit’s role in mission and the relevance of marginalized people to God’s mission. We need to take heed in mission of the role of Indigenous peoples, people with disability, people living with HIV, young people and children, and the poor, deprived, and oppressed. Bishop Duleep Kamil de Chikera asked the question: “Where is Jesus?” Answering it provides a good framework for making our actions more practical and useful as we undertake prophetic *diakonia* in mission. We need to get feedback from the churches and be sure of their reception of the mission statement. The stories emanating from the margins are helpful in evaluating the journey.

## **Moving Together**

I have come away from Busan with many convictions. Although not everyone will agree with each of my conclusions, I make bold to share them with you:

We are challenged by our experiences in Busan. We want to share our intention to move together as we seek to follow the triune God more closely. We were informed that the WCC will host meetings with key people from government and intergovernmental organizations, as well as with high level religious leaders, on issues like the conflict in Syria and other conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere.

We need to address the issues put forward by the youth, especially during the pre-assembly, and ensure that they are provided opportunities for capacity-building as well as the chance to lead in significant areas in the life of the ecumenical movement. Indigenous peoples are also seeking genuine participation in the life of the ecumenical movement. The WCC needs to listen to voices of authentic Indigenous peoples’ representatives and grant them the right to submit their own nominees from among the church representatives to the nomination committee.

The new central committee should take into consideration the findings and recommendations of the Ecumenical Conversations in making programme plans for the coming seven to eight years. It is important to recognize the importance of promoting ecumenism and mission from below, an ecumenism and mission that builds bridges and fosters cooperation with a wider network of the *oikoumene*. Ecumenism needs to be receptive to new methodologies of communication and networking, and create

ecumenical space for encounter with new ways of being church. Churches are urged to look beyond themselves in order to foster renewal in political and economic systems in society, journeying together toward peace, justice, and integrity of creation.

The broad range of gifts that the God of life has given us ought to be celebrated. May the churches be places of healing and compassion, of seeking for justice and peace, and of sowing the seed—the word of God—so that justice will grow, and so that God’s deep peace based on justice may rest on the world. May those of us in the ecumenical movement always pray, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.” Amen.



# MESSAGE OF THE 10TH ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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## Join the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

*By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

*Luke 1:78-79*

Dear sisters and brothers, we greet you in the name of Christ.

1. We gathered in the Republic of Korea at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (30 October—8 November 2013). Coming from 345 member churches of the fellowship and from partner organizations in the ecumenical movement, we joined in prayer, shared stories from our local communities, and took to heart strong messages of agony and hope. We are thankful for the many engaging statements released. Our common pilgrimage traced the theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”

2. In the city of Busan, we journeyed together on a road of transformation—we pray that as we are being transformed ourselves, God will make us instruments of peace. Many of us travelled to other parts of Korea, where we witnessed the open wounds of a society torn by conflict and division. How necessary is justice for peace; reconciliation for healing; and a change of heart for the world to be made whole! We were encouraged by the active and committed churches we encountered; their work bears bountiful fruit.

3. We share our experience of the search for unity in Korea as a sign of hope in the world. This is not the only land where people live divided, in poverty and richness, happiness and violence, welfare and war. We are not allowed to close our eyes to harsh realities or to rest our hands from God’s transforming work. As a fellowship, the World Council of Churches stands in solidarity with the people and the churches in the Korean peninsula, and with all who strive for justice and peace.

4. God our Creator is the source of all life. In the love of Jesus Christ and by the mercy of the Holy Spirit we, as a communion of the children of God, move together toward the fulfillment of the Kingdom. Seeking grace from God, we are called, in our

diversity, to be just stewards of God's creation. This is the vision of the New Heaven and Earth, where Christ will "fill all in all" (Eph 1.23).

5. We live in a time of global crises. Economic, ecological, socio-political and spiritual challenges confront us. In darkness and in the shadow of death, in suffering and persecution, how precious is the gift of hope from the Risen Lord! By the flame of the Spirit in our hearts, we pray to Christ to brighten the world: for his light to turn our whole beings to caring for the whole of creation and to affirm that all people are created in God's image. Listening to voices that often come from the margins, let us all share lessons of hope and perseverance. Let us recommit ourselves to work for liberation and to act in solidarity. May the illuminating Word of God guide us on our journey.

6. 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 seed the Good News so that justice will grow and God's deep peace rest on the world.\*

*Blessed are they who observe justice,  
who do righteousness at all times!  
Psalm 106:3*

God of life, lead us to justice and peace!

\*APPROVED. Dissenting opinions: Archimandrite Jack Khalil of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East wished to register his dissent to the use of the word "transformation" in two places in the message, on the theological ground that as Christians our transformation is already completed in our baptism. Metropolitan Bishop of Damietta wished to register his dissent to the phrase "all people are created," having preferred it to say "were created."

# UNITY STATEMENT OF THE 10TH ASSEMBLY: GOD'S GIFT AND CALL TO UNITY— AND OUR COMMITMENT

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1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Creation is a gift from the living God. We celebrate creation’s life in its diversity and give thanks for its goodness. It is the will of God that the whole creation, reconciled in the love of Christ through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, should live together in unity and peace” (Eph.1).

## **Our experience**

2. Today, the whole creation, the world, and its people, live in the tension between the profoundest hope and the deepest despair. We give thanks for the diversity of human cultures, for the wonder of knowledge and learning, for the enthusiasm and vibrancy of many young people, for communities being rebuilt and enemies reconciled, for people being healed and populations fed. We rejoice when people of different faiths work together for justice and peace. These are signs of hope and new beginnings. But we grieve that there are also places where God’s children cry out. Social and economic injustice, poverty and famine, and greed and war ravage our world. There is violence and terrorism and the threat of war, particularly nuclear war. Many have to live with HIV and AIDS, and suffer from other epidemics; peoples are displaced and their lands dispossessed. Many women and children are victims of violence, inequality, and trafficking, as are some men. There are those who are marginalized and excluded. We are all in danger of being alienated from our cultures and disconnected from earth. Creation has been misused, and we face threats to the balance of life, a growing ecological crisis, and the effects of climate change. These are signs of our disordered relations with God, with one another, and with creation, and we confess that they dishonour God’s gift of life.

3. Within churches we experience a similar tension between celebration and sorrow. There are signs of vibrant life and creative energy in the growth of Christian communities around the world with rich diversity. There is a deepening sense among some churches of needing one another and of being called by Christ to be in unity. In places where churches experience anguish and constant fear of persecution, solidarity between Christians from different traditions in the service of justice and peace is a sign of God’s grace. The ecumenical movement has encouraged new friendships forming a seed bed in which unity can grow. There are places where Christians work and witness together in their local communities and new regional agreements of covenanting, closer fellowship, and church unions. Increasingly, we recognize that we are called to share with, and learn from, those of other faiths, to work with them in common efforts for justice and peace and for the preservation of the integrity of

God's beautiful but hurting creation. These deepening relationships bring new challenges and enlarge our understanding.

4. We grieve that there are also painful experiences of situations where diversity has turned into division and we do not always recognize the face of Christ in each other. We cannot all gather together around the table in eucharistic communion. Divisive issues remain. New issues bring sharp challenges which create new divisions within and between churches. These must be addressed in the fellowship of churches by the way of consensus discernment. Too easily we withdraw into our own traditions and communities, refusing to be challenged and enriched by the gifts others hold out to us. Sometimes we seem to embrace the creative new life of faith and yet do not embrace a passion for unity or a longing for fellowship with others. This makes us more ready to tolerate injustice and even conflicts between and within the churches. We are held back as some grow weary and disappointed on the ecumenical path.

5. We do not always honour the God who is the source of our life. Whenever we abuse life through our practices of exclusion and marginalization, our refusal to pursue justice, our unwillingness to live in peace, our failure to seek unity, and our exploitation of creation, we reject the gifts God holds out to us.

### **Our shared scriptural vision**

6. As we read the scriptures together, under the guidance of the Spirit, our eyes are opened to the place of the community of God's people within creation. Men and women are created in the image and likeness of God and given the responsibility to care for life (Gen. 1:27-28). The covenant with Israel marks a decisive moment in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation. The prophets call God's covenanted people to work for justice and peace, to care for the poor, the outcast and the marginalized, and to be a light to the nations (Micah 6:8; Isa. 49:6).

7. God sent Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God (John 1). Through his ministry and through his death on the cross Jesus destroyed the walls of separation and hostility, established a new covenant, and brought about genuine unity and reconciliation in his own Body (Eph. 1:9-10 and 2:14-16). He announced the coming kingdom of God, had compassion for the crowds, healed the sick, and preached good news to the poor (Matt. 9:35-36; Luke 4:14-24). He reached out to the despised, the sinners, the alien, offering acceptance and redemption. By his life, death, and resurrection, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus revealed the communion of the life of God the holy Trinity, and opened to all a new way of living in communion with one another in the love of God (1 John 1:1-3). Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples for the sake of the world (John 17:20-24). He entrusted his message and his ministry of unity and reconciliation to his disciples and through them to the church, which is called to continue his mission (2 Cor. 5: 18-20). From the beginning, the community of believers lived together, were devoted to the apostolic teaching and fellowship,

breaking bread and praying together, caring for the poor, proclaiming the good news, and yet struggling with factions and divisions (Acts 2:42; Acts 15).

8. The church, as the body of Christ, embodies Jesus' uniting, reconciling, and self-sacrificial love to the world on the cross. At the heart of God's own life of communion is forever a cross and forever resurrection—a reality which is revealed to us and through us. We pray and wait with eager longing for God to renew the whole creation (Rom. 8:19-21). God is always there ahead of us in our pilgrimage, always surprising us, calling us to repentance, forgiving our failures, and offering us the gift of new life.

### **God's call to unity today**

9. On our ecumenical journey we have come to understand more about God's call to the church to serve the unity of all creation. The vocation of the cChurch is to be: a foretaste of new creation; a prophetic sign to the whole world of the life God intends for all; and a servant spreading the good news of God's kingdom of justice, peace, and love.

10. As foretaste, God gives to the church gracious gifts: the word, testified to in holy scripture, to which we are invited to respond in faith in the power of the Holy Spirit; baptism, in which we are made a new creation in Christ; the eucharist, the fullest expression of communion with God and with one another, which builds up the fellowship and from which we are sent out in mission; an apostolic ministry to draw out and nurture the gifts of all the faithful and to lead the mission of the church. Conciliar gatherings too are gifts enabling the fellowship, under the Spirit's guidance, to discern the will of God, to teach together and to live sacrificially, serving one another's needs and the world's needs. The unity of the church is not uniformity; diversity is also a gift, creative and life-giving. But diversity cannot be so great that those in Christ become strangers and enemies to one another, thus damaging the uniting reality of life in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

11. As prophetic sign, the church's vocation is to show forth the life that God wills for the whole creation. We are hardly a credible sign as long as our ecclesial divisions, which spring from fundamental disagreements in faith, remain. Divisions and marginalization on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, disability, power, status, caste, and other forms of discrimination also obscure the church's witness to unity. To be a credible sign, our life together must reflect the qualities of patience, humility, generosity, attentive listening to one another, mutual accountability, inclusivity, and a willingness to stay together, not saying "I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12:21). We are called to be a community upholding justice in its own life, living together in peace, never

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1. We pray that as our churches respond to the Faith and Order document, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, we may be helped to understand more of the visible unity that God calls us to live in and for the world.

settling for the easy peace that silences protest and pain, but struggling for the true peace that comes with justice. Only as Christians are being reconciled and renewed by God's Spirit will the church bear authentic witness to the possibility of reconciled life for all people, for all creation. It is often in its weakness and poverty, suffering as Christ suffers, that the church is truly sign and mystery of God's grace.<sup>2</sup>

12. As servant, the church is called to make present God's holy, loving, and life-affirming plan for the world revealed in Jesus Christ. By its very nature, the church is missionary, called and sent to witness to the gift of communion that God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the kingdom of God. In its work of holistic mission—evangelism and *diakonia* done in Christ's way—the church participates in offering God's life to the world.<sup>3</sup> In the power of the Spirit, the church is to proclaim the good news in ways that awaken a response in different contexts, languages, and cultures, to pursue God's justice, and to work for God's peace. Christians are called to make common cause with people of other faiths or none, wherever possible, for the well-being of all peoples and creation.

13. The unity of the church, the unity of the human community and the unity of the whole creation are interconnected. Christ who makes us one calls us to live in justice and peace and impels us to work together for justice and peace in God's world. The plan of God made known to us in Christ is, in the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ, "things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9-10).

### **Our commitment**

14. We affirm the place of the church in God's design and repent of the divisions among and within our churches, confessing with sorrow that our disunity undermines our witness to the good news of Jesus Christ and makes less credible our witness to that unity God desires for all. We confess our failures to do justice, to work for peace, and to sustain creation. Despite our failings, God is faithful and forgiving and continues to call us to unity. Having faith in God's creating and re-creating power, we long for the church to be foretaste, credible sign, and effective servant of the new life that God is offering to the world. It is in God, who beckons us to life in all its fullness, that joy, hope, and a passion for unity are renewed. Therefore, we urge one another to remain committed to the primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches: to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ,

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2. We gratefully acknowledge the many programmes of the WCC that have helped us to understand what it means to be a faithful community where divisions of ethnicity, race, gender, power, and status are being confronted and overcome.

3. We are thankful for all we have learned through the Decade to Overcome Violence about just peace in God's way, focused in "An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace" from the Jamaica International Ecumenical Peace Convocation of 2011; and all we have learned about mission in God's way, encapsulated in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism document, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*.

through witness and service to the world and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.<sup>4</sup>

We affirm the uniqueness of our fellowship and our conviction to pursue the unity of the visible church together, thankful for our diversity and conscious of our need to grow in communion.

15. In faithfulness to this our common calling, we will seek together the full visible unity of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church when we shall express our unity around the one table of the Lord. In pursuing the unity of the church we will open ourselves to receive the gifts of each other's traditions, and offer our gifts to one another. We will learn to commemorate together the martyrs who witnessed to our common faith. We will continue theological conversations, giving attention to new voices and different methods of approach. We will seek to live out the consequences of our theological agreements. We will intensify our work for justice, peace, and the healing of creation, and address together the complex challenges of contemporary social, economic, and moral issues. We will work for more just, participatory, and inclusive ways of living together. We will make common cause for the well-being of humanity and creation with those of other faith communities. We will hold each other accountable for fulfilling these commitments. Above all, we will pray without ceasing for the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17): a unity of faith, love, and compassion that Jesus Christ brought through his ministry; a unity like the unity Christ shares with the Father; a unity enfolded in the communion of the life and love of the triune God. Here, we receive the mandate for the church's vocation for unity in mission and service.

16. We turn to God, the source of all life, and we pray:

*O God of life,  
lead us to justice and peace,  
that suffering people may discover hope;  
the scarred world find healing;  
and divided churches become visibly one,  
through the one who prayed for us,  
and in whom we are one body,  
your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who with you and the Holy Spirit,  
is worthy to be praised, one God,  
now and forever. Amen.*

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4. *The Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches* as amended by the 9th Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2006; III: Purposes and Functions. We remember the words of the 1st WCC Assembly in 1948, "Here at Amsterdam we have covenanted with one another in constituting this World Council of Churches. We intend to stay together."



# **EXPLORING THE ASSEMBLY THEME**



## MESSAGE OF BLESSING

### *His Holiness Karekin II*

### *Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians*

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*“And he said to them, ‘O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!  
Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’”*

Honorable leaders of the Republic of Korea, respected leaders of the World Council of Churches, reverend sisters and brothers, beloved participants in this assembly:

It is with immense spiritual joy that we greet you, the participants in the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. We have travelled here from the ancient land of Armenia, in the shadow of biblical Mount Ararat. The people of that land were the first in history to embrace Christianity as their national faith, and to establish the first Christian kingdom on earth. We bring with us more than 1,700 years of blessings from our ancient and vibrant Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin to all of you gathered here: our sisters and brothers, our friends and co-workers in the ongoing mission to shine the light of our Lord Jesus Christ into every corner of the world.

We offer a special blessing upon the people of our host nation, Korea. As Armenians, we feel a kinship with them. Like us, the Korean people have known pain, domination, and division in their long and rich history; but they have not allowed this to dim their creative spirit or their aspiration to freedom. The light of Christ shines brightly through their evangelical zeal, and we are proud to witness the growing strength of their wonderful Christian community.

We also express our deep gratitude to the World Council of Churches, to all of its officers, and to the WCC General Secretary, the Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. The Armenian Church has been proud to be a part of this body for more than fifty years; and in recent years Dr Tveit has been a cherished visitor to our Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

The ecumenical spirit has deep roots in Armenian civilization—extending back to the blessed fathers of the Armenian Apostolic Church: Saint Nerses the Graceful, Saint Nerses of Lambron, and their legacy. In the Middle Ages, they boldly undertook dialogues with the Roman Catholic and Byzantine churches, under the noble slogan: “Unity in the essentials; liberty in the non-essentials; love in *all* things.” And today as well, the Armenian Church sincerely welcomes expanded dialogue—a quest

for common ground and mutual support—for the glory of Christ’s holy church, the peace of the world, and the welfare of all humankind.

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In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We give glory to the Lord, who with his presence brings light to the human heart.

A little while ago we heard the gospel story of the miracle on the road to Emmaus. It tells how the risen Lord, mere hours after his resurrection, appeared to two disciples and spoke with them. The travellers were so despondent that they didn’t even recognize their master. Yet the Lord, through his words and personal presence, removed their doubt, left them with a deeper feeling of hope and faith—and a deeper awareness of God’s saving power.

They returned to Jerusalem and shared their joy with Christ’s followers, thereby dispelling the unbelief and dejection of their circle that was soon to become the church. That room in Jerusalem and the disciples therein represent the church in her full and glorious unity. It is the fulfillment of the words of the risen Lord:

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last . . . I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another  
(John 15:16-17)

And some two thousand years later, we too—each in our own way—continue that mission. The words of St. John surely resonate with this gathering as well. For today we are likewise in one place and of one heart, gathered as the branches of the true grapevine. Each of us is different and unique, but we are shoots from the same root. Our mutual faith in Christ—truly, our love for the Lord—is what unites us. This example of unity is what all participants in the ecumenical movement are called to demonstrate, first and foremost. We must strive above all for a spiritual unity: a unity of faith and service; a unity of witness throughout the world in the name of Jesus Christ and his holy church.

Speaking in the name of Christ, acting with the presence of Christ—forthrightly and without hesitation—is what that witness entails. Certainly our words and actions must be judicious, sober, responsible—even delicate in certain circumstances. But to minimize or obscure the author of our unity is to cover the “light shining on a hill.” It is to hide the only source of illumination that can pierce the darkness of the world, and bring clarity of vision to humankind.

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The truth is that the pre-biblical pagan cultures did not care very much for the poor of the world. But it is also becoming clear that society in the modern era has very little use or concern for the poor among us— whether they are poor in material needs or poor in spirit.

By contrast, *it was Jesus* who blessed the poor. *It was Jesus* who offered up his brief life and ministry to bring comfort to the poor in spirit, and relief for the material and spiritual impoverishment of humankind. *It was Jesus*, extending the legacy of the Hebrew prophets, who made these values a central concern for the entire human family—indeed, who made such concerns the very measure of our humanity.

But our Lord was equally clear that any “solution” to the problem of poverty—and all human ills—would only come through Christ himself: through our acknowledgment of Christ’s dominion, our grateful acceptance of his sacrifice and resurrection, and our whole-hearted reply to his loving invitation to “Follow me.”

With this understanding, our Lord established the church, to be the vessel of Christ’s “nearness” in the world. And that is why the theme of this assembly is more imperative today than ever before:

God of Life, lead us to justice and peace, by first and foremost strengthening the mission of Christ’s holy church.

The great problems of the world today are above all problems of human distance from God; often a wilful distance—a prideful resistance to the very idea of a loving and righteous supreme being. That resistance, that distance from God, is nothing less than a license to ignore the rights of one’s fellow man, and to consider any means of reaching a goal as tolerable.

Christianity teaches us another way—leads us along a different road: the road to Emmaus. That miracle reminds us that, even in our moments of apparent defeat, Christ is with us. He is not distant, but eternally near. He is with us even when we don’t recognize him. He sustains us, feeding our spirits and opening our minds. And in doing so, Christ inspires us to share what we have with others in a spirit of generosity, brotherhood, and hope.

Through Christ, we are encouraged to undertake a personal outreach to others—to regard our fellow human beings, without exception, in the full dignity and holiness of their personhood. That is the unique mission of Christ’s holy church, which cannot be replicated by the administrative state or substituted with technology. As the theme of this meeting suggests, strengthening that mission is the first and foremost step on a journey whose destination is a world where justice and peace prevail. And to arrive there, we must be willing—in all humility—to be led by the God of life.

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He leads us to a world of many dimensions: a “house of many mansions,” where many different people, from many different walks of life, can find a true home. But the foundations of that home, its bedrock values, are clear.

First among the foundational values is morality. There are many things to say about morality, but this above all: that it is learned by example; and that this example must come from the church. We—as leaders of the church—must exemplify the moral virtues we wish to see in the world around us.

As the church, our moral preaching must be an extension of Christ’s example of love and compassion. It must not discriminate or set conditions, but rather welcome all in a spirit of charity. We cannot promise that it will result in a society entirely without wounds; but it will promote a society with the spiritual tools to heal those wounds.

A second essential value is education. Education builds respect towards one’s fellow man; a mutual acceptance and cooperation among peoples. It provides previously unavailable opportunities, and thereby cuts across divisions between classes, and ethnic, religious, and social groups. Genuine education allows us to emerge from the dark cave of superstition, violence, hatred, and prejudice: the eternal enemies of a flourishing human life.

At one time, education was a gift for the fortunate few. But the 20th century brought about a transformation with the introduction of universal education in large parts of the world. It was a truly momentous turn, related to the Christian insight into the moral equality of all human beings, and their God-given ability to comprehend truth.

We today must not allow the church to be driven out of the modern educational establishments. We must uphold the church’s identity as one of the great educational institutions in the history of humankind. We must inhabit the halls of higher learning; become conversant in the great fields of human inquiry. And we must guide the fruits of learning—especially technology—in the direction of humane ends, which elevate and enrich human life, and do not demean or destroy it.

A third value—closely related to morality and education—is the fundamental human association of the family. Today we are troubled to observe not only a desertion of societal support for the family, but also a distortion of the very idea of what constitutes the family. Here again, the understanding of the biblical heritage and 2,000 years of Christian civilization is very clear. The solemn union of man and woman; the interplay of generations involving children, parents, and grandparents: these are expressions of the true diversity within humankind. The family, in the deepest sense,

realizes our hope that human beings, in their diversity, can come together in a productive and loving union.

Our faith endorses the family as the “school” to teach us the fullness of our humanity. We should note that this understanding is consonant with the received wisdom of other civilizations and other traditional faiths.

As Christians, of course, we have a unique stake in the promotion of family life—for it gives us some of our deepest insights into our relationship with God. What does the Holy Family mean to a person who has never witnessed a traditional family? How will we understand the mystery of the Christ-child, if childbirth is considered a burden rather than a blessing of hope? What is the meaning of the prayer to “Our Father”—*Hayr Mer*, in our mother tongue—for a society where fatherhood is de-valued?

Most of all, the kind of sacrifice that is so often a part of family life is fully in accord with the Christian call to die to one’s self and to care for the weak. As the family declines, so too does the church. Thus, our role in forming and defending strong, kind, loving families is vital.

Finally, what about the value of peace itself? Peace remains an elusive reality in our world. We believe that this realization is the most terrible and demoralizing surprise of the 21st century. At the turn of the third Christian millennium, we all had more positive, more hopeful expectations for the world, than what we see around us today.

Especially painful are the civil unrest, intolerable violence, and active warfare being carried out in the Middle East—especially in Syria and Egypt. Surely our hearts go out to all the people suffering under lawlessness and violence. We pray for all families regardless of ethnicity, faith, creed, or race; and we implore God to bring an end to all conflicts, so that reason and dialogue can prevail.

As members of the church, we are deeply affected by the terrible suffering of our brothers and sisters in Christ. In recent years, and with increasing frequency, we have seen them singled out for persecution by extremists—at times even because of indifference of the authorities—precisely because they are Christians. Since the time of the apostles, these Christian communities—among them our fellow Armenians—have lived productively and at peace throughout the Middle East, contributing to their adopted lands. Christians have historically played the role of peacemakers in the region. And their treatment is a test of justice in their respective countries: a test of whether basic human rights are honoured by the local authorities and the majority populations. The Christians succumbing to violence in the Middle East are the witnesses of martyrdom in our own day. It is up to us, in our native countries and

through this assembly, to unite our voices and actions to prevent similar acts of violence and contribute to the establishment of peace in the region.

This reality speaks with special force to the Armenians. The torments of our Christian brethren are all too familiar to our people. In the year 2015, Armenians in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabagh, and in every nation on earth will commemorate a tragic anniversary—one hundred years since the greatest cataclysm of our history: the genocide of the Armenians, committed by Ottoman Turkey. Four generations have passed since 1915; but the memory of our time of horror remains alive. And the quest for justice—if only through the simple act of official recognition and universal condemnation—will not die.

This should stand as a reminder that the violence and misery in our world today will cast dark shadows into the 22nd century and beyond. We are grateful that in recent years the WCC, our sister churches, and more than 20 countries have made official statements recognizing and condemning the Armenian genocide. But imagine the pain and misery that could have been spared—not only for our people, but for the later victims of genocides in Europe, Cambodia, and Africa—if the world of a century ago had taken action to prevent the atrocities, massacres, and ethnic cleansings of 1915.

As churches, we must protest the crimes going on before the eyes of the world today. And we must speak forcefully for a universal doctrine of human rights: whether it involves the fight for life itself in Syria and Egypt, or whether it is a struggle for the right to self-determination of a free people in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh. We must assert, with one voice, that the violation of these basic rights will not be tolerated in any part of the world; because without a foundation of justice and human rights, the peace we seek will be only temporary and fleeting.

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The enduring values we have outlined here are the fruit of Christianity's 2,000-year history. They are part of the legacy we, as the church, have inherited. Promoting them within society is part of the mission to which we have been called. We must undertake that mission with the greatest humility; however, we must also be confident that these same human values have always found their highest expression in Jesus Christ, and in the movement he established.

Indeed, we look around the world and see confusion and sorrow everywhere. In our own fearful moments, we may imagine that the world of today would barely even recognize Christ himself. But here again, the miracle at Emmaus instructs and consoles us. For we know that the travellers on the road to Emmaus were likewise confused and despondent. They, too, did not recognize the Lord. But when the risen Christ

approached them—shared their journey and answered their concerns—his words and presence made sense of the world for them.

That is a message we must embrace as the church—as the body of Christ on earth. Our quest to promote justice and peace—and every human good—begins by meeting our people on the road. We must approach them with compassion, share their journey, help them with their burdens. In pursuing the loftiest of goals, we should plant our feet firmly on the ground, viewing our people eye-to-eye: speaking with them in the name of Jesus Christ; acting among them with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Today, it gladdens and consoles our heart to join in the prayer of this assembly, imploring God to strengthen this hopeful mission of Christ's holy church. May that spirit always embolden our hearts and indeed lead us to true peace and true justice, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Savior of the world.

Thank you again for the invitation to address this assembly to share the warm fellowship of fraternal love in Christ. May his grace, love, and peace be with you, and with all humankind. Amen.

# CHURCHES AS BARRICADES AGAINST EXCLUSION

*Michel Sidibé*  
*Executive Director, UN AIDS*

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Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters,

I want to thank the World Council of Churches for the honour of being with you here today in Busan.

We are together, at the right time and at the right gathering, to forge tremendous change in the world. We share a bold and noble dream of global justice and peace. We may use different words, and work in different ways, but this is our common vision and our audacious goal: to end human suffering and to protect hope and dignity. I am convinced we can get there together.

The world is facing seismic political changes. Societies are at a tipping point. We face an array of new global realities in 2013, and each one presents a challenge and opportunity, not only for the global AIDS response, but for our shared ambition for global justice and peace.

The lingering global financial crisis is squeezing resources and good will, pitting health and development issues against each other. Growing political and social conservatism in many spheres threaten hard-won achievements in human rights and tolerance.

We cannot ignore the wave of social unrest and tragic violence sweeping Syria, Egypt, and so many other countries of the Middle East.

There is rising public demand to act on climate change, where the failure to address issues in a few countries can lead to devastating consequences for the rest of the world. Across our planet, human rights, core values of human dignity, and political integrity are threatened when claims to national security are allowed to trump equity.

For these and other reasons, people's confidence in classic models of governance and many public institutions is diminishing. Into the gap must flow a new paradigm of leadership that is more inclusive and more people-focused. The demand for such a paradigm is already fuelled by radical innovations in the democratizing power of technology and real-time communications. Global connectedness is just beginning to show its power and potential to advance social good and human development—but only if it is accessible and deployed equitably by all.

Over three decades of the AIDS response, I can say with confidence that we have learned precious lessons that are relevant to all who fight for equity, dignity, justice and peace. AIDS has shown that we can change the world when we put human beings in their irrevocable, God-given dignity at the centre of our action. The AIDS response has demonstrated the power of bringing those most marginalized to the tables where decisions and policies are made. AIDS has demonstrated the power of engaging a broad alliance of civil society partners to address the challenges of HIV, but also to raise awareness and demand action for issues and communities otherwise silenced in mainstream society.

Progress in the global AIDS response in recent years has been impressive. New HIV infections are declining faster across the globe. No one would have believed just ten years ago that we could extend HIV treatment to millions of people in developing countries. We have been able to demonstrate that the skeptics were wrong. Today almost 10 million people living with HIV are getting treatment in low and middle income countries, compared to just over 8 million in 2011. Seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa have reduced new HIV infections among children by 50 percent in just two years. By the end of 2015, we are working to announce to the world that babies are no longer born with HIV. And we know that HIV treatment also greatly reduces the chance of a person living with HIV from transmitting HIV to someone else, making it an essential tool to end the AIDS epidemic.

But the AIDS epidemic is not over. AIDS still kills 1.7 million people each year. AIDS is still the leading cause of death among young women globally, and the second-leading cause of death for young men. The persistence of the AIDS epidemic is a grim reminder that health is inextricably linked to justice and peace. Social justice is close to your hearts, join us to make a call that no one should be left behind when it comes to access to life-saving services.

Just look at the new HIV infections in high-prevalence countries. Recent data from Rwanda and Zambia shows that over 50 percent of new, heterosexually acquired HIV infections occurred among sero-discordant couples. HIV remains a major challenge for couples, families, and communities.

Yes, we scaled up HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support services to millions of people—but these were many of the people who were easiest to reach. It will be much harder to reach those still in need—the ones whose lives are hanging in the balance because they remain hidden, or marginalized, or criminalized. It will require a mass mobilization of communities to demand HIV treatment, to address the stigma, discrimination, gender inequity, and punitive laws that are so often the barriers to people coming forward for testing, or coming back to receive their results, or even access HIV treatment where it is now available. This requires an even greater commitment to equity, inclusiveness, human dignity, and faith. This is why, more than

ever before, we must strengthen the alliances between organizations of people living with and affected by HIV and religious communities and leaders. This is essential to ending stigma and discrimination and improving access to health and dignity for all.

Our common commitment to the poor will be a critical force to make sure that the funding needed to reach people with HIV testing and treatment is sustained amid the current fiscal crisis.

The AIDS response is the common entry point for so many of the issues of justice and peace that church communities are trying to address every day: pushing for equity for women and girls and an end to sexual violence. There is growing marginalization—people are excluded for their sexual orientation, for whom they love and how they live. I am not here to promote homosexuality, or sex work, or drug use, but I am here to promote the protection of those who are most vulnerable. We must ensure they are not hiding or being forced underground where they cannot access life-saving services. They should have an open door to come to your churches, and mosques, and synagogues to ask for your support.

We must attack the stigma that separates humans into “deserving” or “undeserving” in the eyes of society and the justice system. We must recognize the dignity of prisoners and migrants, LGBT people, sex workers, and people who use drugs. They are members of our families, churches, and communities; they are our brothers, sisters, children, and friends. Many of them are young people—our future and society’s great hope. They deserve to be safe from unjust punishment, bigotry, and violence.

Faith communities have always helped us make progress on these issues. Beginning in 1986, the late Jonathan Mann of the World Health Organization started to work with the World Council of Churches, under the leadership of former General Secretary Emilio Castro. I am impressed and grateful for the innovative work of the WCC’s Ecumenical HIV/AIDS initiative in Africa, which has advanced community dialogues on HIV, stigma, and discrimination and which dates back to 1998.

Thanks to your training and dedication, over 30,000 priests have been equipped to lead these dialogues in their communities and act as agents of change. One hundred and sixty theological colleges are using your books and resources. You have made tremendous strides to increase critical awareness about HIV, expanding the theological-ethical and practical competencies of churches and developing practical tools for faith communities well beyond Africa. This has been key to moving toward dignity for people living with and vulnerable to HIV in more a more just and caring global society.

Over the years you have generated an essential dialogue in faith communities about HIV, sexuality, stigma, discrimination, and rights. Now it is time to push boundaries on these issues. You must be barricades against exclusion.

The proportion of countries with anti-discrimination laws and regulations that protect people living with HIV rose from 56 percent to 71 percent in the last five years. Countries are increasing domestic investments in HIV-related legal services, so people living with and affected by HIV can seek justice from their own governments and communities. And faith communities remain one of our greatest allies in providing HIV prevention, treatment care, and support for people and communities in need. Today we need to be inclusive if we want to achieve justice and peace. Faith communities are the barricades against societal tendencies of exclusion.

This is why I was so pleased last August, when UNAIDS joined the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, the Global Network of People Living with HIV, and the International Network of Religious Leaders Living with and Affected by HIV to launch the “Framework for Dialogue.” This innovative tool provides practical steps to help faith communities and people living with HIV begin or improve inclusive and sustained dialogue and collaboration.

We are seeing results already. Wherever the framework has been piloted, we are seeing that it has triggered precious results. In Ethiopia, Malawi, and Myanmar, people living with HIV and religious leaders are already working together in new alliances to combat stigma and discrimination. The first Asia-Pacific regional dialogue on strengthening cooperation between faith-based organizations and networks of populations most affected by HIV was held in Bangkok this past June 2013. It sparked new ideas and working relationships spanning five countries and four religious groupings in Asia. And this is only the beginning.

I urge the fellowship of churches of the WCC to continue to speak out and reach out. Let me be clear: no one should be afraid when dialogue between faith communities and civil society exposes highly sensitive issues. No one must be silenced by discomfort or doubt. Only through brave, open-hearted discussion can we build mutual understanding and shared objectives.

By working together, UNAIDS and the churches can reinforce alliances between societal actors so that we can act as both translators and conduits of understanding within the community and between the community and government.

People living with HIV in need of spiritual guidance or life-saving health services must be confident to turn to their church for understanding and help. Throughout history, the “power of the pulpit” has moved people and communities from inertia to engagement, from talk to action, and from stigma and discrimination to healing the community and caring for the vulnerable. Faith communities can do more than advocate for justice and peace—they must create an unending demand for it. You are the signs and servants of justice and peace in the world today.

Let me finish by saying that the choices we make today, together, will have a direct impact on the number of people who live and the number who die in the coming years— from preventable diseases like AIDS, TB, hepatitis, malnutrition, and complications of childbirth, and from violence and the consequences of inequity and injustice.

We must not take our foot off the pedal now. We must redouble our efforts. When what we look for is justice, I will refuse silence. We must advocate for those who are still waiting for access to HIV treatment. If we don't pay now as a global community to finish the task we have started, then we will pay forever—both financially and in human lives.

We cannot let shifts in the geopolitical climate throw us off our course or drive a wedge between us. Today we must join our strengths again, take control, and influence the trajectory of our journey. To borrow your language, “We must go the extra mile.” We will travel father together than alone.

Let us achieve our vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths in order to end this epidemic in our lifetime. Thank you.

# **A CRY FROM THE HEART**

## ***Wedad Abbas Tawfik***

### ***Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria***

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“God of life, lead us to justice and peace.” These nine words of our assembly theme have become the prayer of Christians around the world. For Christians in the Middle East region—and we think especially of our sisters and brothers in Syria at this time—it has become a cry from the heart. From the turmoil and pain of my own country, allow me to share with you how the Christians in Egypt continue to bear witness to the justice and peace of the God of life, in our current situation.

## **Historical Background of the Coptic Church**

The presence of Christians in Egypt is as old as Christianity itself. We give thanks for the blessing of the visit of the Holy Family to Egypt. With this blessing Christianity in Egypt was established in the first century when St Mark founded the Church of Alexandria. Yet, this blessing did not prevent this deep rooted church from becoming a suffering church since its start, when her founder St Mark was martyred and the streets of Alexandria were sanctified by his holy blood.

The early centuries witnessed thousands of Egyptian Christians suffering martyrdom. Suffering continued with the church for centuries, but the church never stopped witnessing to the Lord. In every age there are witnesses, active servants of the church, faithful believers, and honest leaders. Indeed, the church is built on the blood of her saints, who believed unto death that the resurrection of Christ turned the cross, the instrument of violence and hatred, into a sign of hope, love, justice, and peace to those who hold to him and follow his way and do his will.

Nevertheless we do remember that peace is not merely something that we do and can accomplish by our own power: it is a gift and a grace from God. Yet our role is essential: to have the intent, the vision, and the ethics to be peacemakers in time of tribulations.

## **The Present Turmoil in Egypt**

Unfortunately, Egypt again lives a new age of tribulations. Many Egyptians have seen their beloved ones killed, injured, arrested, or tortured. Copts were no exception during those difficult times. Copts in Egypt witness to their Lord again by their suffering: seeing their churches bombed or set on fire, their properties robbed or destroyed, their houses burnt, and their relatives killed.

The “Arab Spring,” which began in December 2010, raised high expectations across the region, but it actually did not lead to justice and peace. It rather has generated violence and instability. The turmoil for Egyptian Christians began at the dawn of the New Year 2011, when Egypt woke up to the atrocious bombing of Al Qedissin Church in Alexandria.

Through the deaths of many Christians on that day, and through this strife and suffering, Egyptians were united, Muslims and Christians sharing the mourning together and waking up to a stronger relationship, where Muslims stood guarding the churches in Christmas of that year and protecting the Christians praying inside against any probable attacks.

The suffering that the church went through was only part of a whole picture, for the whole country was suffering. Therefore, shortly after, on 25 January 2011, both Muslim and Christian Egyptians rushed into the streets demanding their rights of dignified life, freedom, and social justice. For several days, violence showed its ugly face against the peaceful protesters, leaving hundreds of Egyptians dead and thousands injured. Yet the strife turned to victory, and the oppressive regime was ousted, leaving behind an elated, victorious, and hopeful Egypt.

Yet darkness gained standing again and continued for two years. So, on 30 June 2013 the people spoke. The Egyptians spilled once more into the streets, only this time more unified, more determined, and more hopeful. Thirty-three million Egyptians came out to the streets, rising against an oppressive regime again.

The successful revolution of the Egyptians for the second time seemed to be a miraculous work of God that united the Egyptians in one noble goal! Yet Christians were aware that it would not be that easy, and remembered the words from the Epistle of St Peter, that “our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5: 8). Worry and fear for the future coloured the celebrations. And the circle of suffering started yet again.

One of our priests in Areesh City was brutally killed in the streets of North Sinai. Christians were killed in various governorates. Eighty-two churches and monasteries were totally or partially burnt, and service buildings, orphanages, schools, houses, shops, pharmacies, buses, and cars owned by churches or by Christians were destroyed. Nuns were pulled outside a school in Beni Suef and paraded in the streets until saved by the Muslims of the neighbourhood.

Sadly, many of these terrorist attacks were perpetrated in the name of Islam. They clearly violate Islamic values and principles, which promote justice and peace for all, as is the case with all other religions.

## **The Response of the Church**

All through this suffering, the church did not forget her role, trusting in the Lord’s promise that even the gates of Hades will not prevail against his church, and sure that he knows our troubles and sees our patience. His power is made perfect in our

weakness through his Holy Spirit, who works powerfully within us and through us for fulfilling his good will for all. With this faith, the church exerts all efforts towards fulfilling its mission of justice and peace.

Witnessing to the God of life amidst suffering is a real challenge, but the church of Egypt has proven its a true witness to the Lord in all circumstances, praying fervently: “God of life, lead us to justice and peace!” With this prayer, the church in Egypt confronts all tribulations and injustices and works for the peace of the whole country. Its weapons in this battle are truth, faith, justice and peace, prayer, and love, the armour of God by which the church is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph. 6:13-18).

Our Patriarch, Pope Tawadros II, who follows on the steps of late holy Patriarch Pope Shenouda III in his efforts for unity and for maintaining good relationships with our Muslim fellow citizens by encouraging dialogue against sectarianism, called on the Christians to bear the insults and attacks and refrain from acts that could trigger further violence. He says that setting our churches on fire does not destroy us, for it is a sacrifice we offer to our nation. Our concern is the people. The churches can be restored or rebuilt, but people cannot be restored. “We believe that divine assistance will help our nation through these difficult moments so that we may attain a better future filled with justice and peace,” His Holiness says.

As true witnesses to the Lord, the churches in Egypt stood, one hand and one mind, strengthening each other, facing injustice, violence, and terrorism, and working for the peace of the church and society.

For this goal they together established last year the “Egypt Council of Churches,” through which the churches work and decide collaboratively, think and take action together in a spirit of love and unity.

In these difficult moments, the solidarity of the WCC and the fervent prayers of the fellowship of churches comforted and strengthened us to continue our journey toward justice and peace.

We teach our people that the solution is not to flee from tribulations by immigration, for example, or by isolating ourselves. Isolationism is not an option for the faithful to adopt. Positive confrontation is the right way, following the Lord’s example and teachings.

## **Conclusion: Prayer for a Transformed Society**

Our prayer to the God of life is for a transformed society in which human dignity is respected, and freedom, equality, social justice, and dignity of the vulnerable are protected. Our hope is to produce a strong constitution that ensures all this. Our hope is a better world. Words spoken are good, but what avails is action and intent to make a change. It is up to all of us to make a difference. It is a continuing task.

We trust that prayer can move mountains, and Coptic Christians remember the miracle of moving Al Moqattam Mountain through the prayers of St. Simon the Shoemaker in the year 979, in the days of the Coptic Pope Abraham the Syrian. We trust that our prayers too are carried by the holy angels before God's throne and he responds in his own way at the time he deems suitable, which we may not recognize at the moment but which certainly works out for our benefit. This gives us hope, comfort, patience, and courage.

To Christians around the world, we say "pray for us." With Christians around the world we pray, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace."

# JOURNEYING WITH THE GOD OF LIFE

*Bishop Duleep de Chickera*  
*Anglican Church of Sri Lanka*

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The harsh realities of our world and our communion in the God of life urge us to endorse our assembly theme as a timely prophetic petition.

It presses our parent-protector to arrest the terrible trends of human degradation and to bring speedy relief to all who groan.

In light of those who promote the ways of aggressive greed, it is a defiant call for repentance and visible change, now.

For the restless faithful within the fragmented body of Christ, it opens a door to a common global witness.

As a fellowship of churches sensitive to the plight of marginalized victims, it is indeed the mother of all petitions.

And, within the framework of this plenary, our theme compels an intervention on behalf of the millions of children, women, and men who, though made in God's image, remain crushed and trapped at the margins of human societies.

## Jesus and Prophetic *Diakonia*

The decisive victim vindicating act of God in Jesus undergirds our theme. It recurs in the behaviour of Jesus, who relentlessly searches out those on the margins—victims who in the biblical narrative long for exodus under violent regimes, suffer untold economic oppression, and are entitled to Torah justice, such as widows, orphans, and stranger-immigrants.

More explicitly, these are persons expected to stay alive without security, be human without dignity, harvest a land no longer theirs, and feed their children from empty plates. They are the unseen real who fill the earth: the “no people” with “no tomorrow” to whom Jesus announced an emphatic “yes.”

Immersed in this world of marginalized victims, Jesus discloses a dynamic re-arrangement of right living and shared obligations acceptable to God, which Jesus called the “reign of God.” His passionate search for the marginalized victim—a sign of this new arrangement—highlights the diaconal character of Jesus.

But the essence of *diakonia* converges on prophetic transformation. The victim must be brought into the middle of the discourse. So a vulnerable woman in the midst of a male mob exposes moral hypocrisy; a child in the middle poses a corrective

against a universal adult obsession; a marginalized woman engages in profound theological discussion on the omnipresence of God; a half-caste in the centre role of a stirring parable shatters the myth of ethno-religious superiority; a despised woman announces the Christ through a stunning prophetic act, and so on.

The system, however, refuses to surrender the gain of its greed to any compromise, and the victim's advocate is eventually victimized. But God, consistent in God's victim-centred decisiveness, restores the advocate-victim to the centre of the human discourse. Humankind since then has been compelled to take note of Jesus' victim-centred thrust and to dare to imagine a world in which the empowered victim and the enlightened violator will sit at the same table. This is the good news.

## Victim Theology

As it was then, the good news is today to be articulated amidst the pharaohs, the Caesars, the Herods, and the chief priests of our times. In the biblical idiom, these are the enemy aggressors who mock righteousness, rob others of their humanity, accumulate the spoils of economic violence, and rape mother earth; to generate the Jubilee Review. Within nations, across the globe, and in a strange mix of fierce competition and subtle collaboration, the common task of the enemy aggressor is to deny the existence of the victims and resist attempts to restore them to the middle.

This is why when change is called for, advocacy is vilified as terrorism, truth silenced through censorship, negotiations humiliated by war, dissent intimidated by force, accountability replaced by cliché, and integrity trumped by impunity. Indeed, attempts to clean the house are cleverly turned around to pack it with more sinister demons.

It is in these circumstances of brazen authoritarianism that victim theology emerges. This theology initially reclaims the centre of the discourse for the marginalized victim; just as Jesus did. It is from here that the enemy aggressors are identified and their obligations and needs discerned, and the ensuing cycle of repentance and forgiveness, truth and mercy, and integration and community are reconstructed to pave the way for justice and peace. The exclusion of the marginalized victim from the centre, as is the case—for instance—in Sri Lanka today, ironically deprives all Sri Lankans of justice and peace.

Victim theology is then the indispensable stance from which justice and peace is shaped and articulated. It exposes the deception of "war for peace" and continues to be the unwavering perspective of all who labour for a just world. It is the ecumenical meeting point of all like-minded partners and the crucible in which peace theology marinates. Consequently, any theology disconnected from victims or supportive of war in a violent world, robbed of justice and peace, amounts to a mutilation of the heart and mind of Jesus.

## Presence and Voice

Victim theology invokes a rhythmic spirituality of sustained pastoral presence among victims and a measured prophetic voice which calls enemy aggressors to accountability, just as Jesus did. It strives to bring the marginalized victims dignity and the aggressors to their senses, thereby reducing the alienation between the two and widening opportunities for justice and peace. This need not be further complicated. Our children teach us to embrace the victim and engage the bully when the stone is thrown.

Pastoral presence and prophetic voice consequently sum up our shared witness. Since wealth and funding are not prerequisites in this witness, it empowers poor churches to serve Jesus with dignity. As a fellowship of churches, it has the potential to free us from the enticement of mammon and enhance our credibility in God's world, overflowing with victims of violence and injustice. It is none other than these early traits in Pope Francis that bring a sign of hope today.

The shift to presence and voice, however, has never been easy. Today's enemy is unimaginably sophisticated. He fights back when the ethic of his treasury is questioned. Market forces and military forces are kindred spirits. The catch words are security and development, but only for those with deadly armaments and questionable wealth.

But our churches have seen too much of the de-humanization of the victim to exchange integrity for cordiality and our youth in particular are growing disillusioned with a neutral witness. So we are compelled to take sides within the framework of an inclusive reign of God, with healing for all. If not, our efforts would be in vain.

If Jesus is the host at our gatherings—as he should be—an investment in victim theology is imperative. It is then that holy impatience will provoke hard talk on justice and peace, every day and not every seven years or seven times seven years.

## Being the Church

Victim theology inevitably redefines the character of Christian community. The church is much more than those who believe and belong. In a world drenched in exploitative violence with a corresponding urgency for freedom and rights, our behaviour more than ever defines our identity. While even passive cooperation with the enemy aggressor amounts to betrayal, presence and voice with the victim demonstrates faithfulness. But the stakes are high and some of us will betray our common calling.

Such a worrying possibility points us to the feet washing enacted by Jesus to induce faithfulness in circumstances of lurking betrayal. This memorable act, which contains the ingredients of a sacrament, must return to the liturgical centre to stir and nourish our spirituality. There can be no stronger symbolic demonstration of Jesus' energy for faithful journeying than to touch and refresh one another's feet: as Jesus did and asked us to do.

As a bonus, the feet washing at the centre will fill the frustrating eucharistic vacuum at our ecumenical gatherings with a fitting alternative until we are ready to break bread together. It may even move more of our gatherings to warmer locations in the south!

## **Conclusion: The Mystery of Kingdom Transformation**

Justice and peace are God's free and priceless gifts. They are beyond the manufacture or manipulation of humans. But within the mystery of kingdom transformation, human endeavour is somehow indispensable for the growth of justice and peace.

Our assembly theme is therefore a moment of grace. It invites us to journey with the God of life who leads us to engage the manifold manifestations of violence and injustice in God's world—not least the rapid resurgence of senseless civil wars, ethno-religious extremism, and different expressions of poverty and disease that simply multiply victims before a bewildered world.

However such an engagement will only make a difference if we strive with the resilience of the world's poor when desperate for water. We are to bring both hands to the shovel, so that the God of life will make justice and peace flow like streams of living water to refresh and renew the whole created world.

# THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH MUST BE PROPHETIC

*Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk  
Chairman of the Department for External Church  
Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate*

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The World Council of Churches (WCC) has a long and rich history. Set up after the Second World War, the Council responded to the expectations of Christians of various confessions who strove to meet, to get to know each other, and to work together. Over the 65 years since the founding of the WCC, several generations of Christians belonging to religious communities that were cut off from each other have discovered for themselves the faith and life of their brothers and sisters in Christ. Many prejudices regarding other Christian traditions have been overcome, yet at the same time that which divides Christians to the present has been acknowledged ever more clearly and deeply. The greatest achievement of the WCC has been the encounters: the well intentioned and mutual respectful inter-Christian communication, which has never allowed for compromises in the field of theology and morality and which has enabled us to remain true to ourselves and to bear witness to our faith, while at the same time growing in love for each other.

The WCC today remains a unique instrument of inter-Christian cooperation that has no analogy in the world. However, the question arises as to how effective this instrument is. We must note with some regret that, in spite of all of the efforts aimed at bringing Christians of various confessions closer to each other, within Christendom not only are the divisions of the past not disappearing, but new ones are arising. Many Christian communities continue to split up, whereas the number of communities that unite with one another is extremely small.

One of the problems the WCC is encountering today is that of finances. It is said that this is connected with the world economic crisis. I cannot agree with this opinion. The experience of other international organizations, whose work is of general benefit and therefore needed, has shown that funding can often be found for noble goals. This means that the problem is not the economic crisis, but how relevant and important the work of the WCC is for today's international community, which is made up of a significant number—and at times a majority—of Christians.

The creation of the WCC was determined by the endeavour to find answers to the challenges of the post-war period. Yet in recent years the world has changed greatly, and today Christians from all over the world are facing new challenges. It is precisely upon how successfully we respond to these challenges that the need for our organization in the future depends. The contemporary situation demands from us more decisive action, greater cohesion, and more dynamism. And yet it also demands a re-orientation of the basic direction of our work, a change in priorities in our

discussions and deeds. While we continue to discuss our differences in the comfortable atmosphere of conferences and theological dialogues, the question resounds ever more resolutely: will Christian civilization survive at all?

## Religious and Secular Worldviews

In my address I would like to focus on two fundamental challenges which the Christian world today faces in varying degrees.

The first is that of the militant secularism that is gathering strength in the so-called developed countries, primarily in Europe and America.

The second is that of radical Islamism, which poses a threat to the very existence of Christianity in a number of regions of the world, mainly in the Middle East but also in some parts of Asia and Africa.

Militant secularism in Europe has a long history, going back to the period of the French revolution. But it is only in the 20th century in the countries of the so-called socialist bloc that godlessness was elevated to the level of state ideology. As regards the “capitalist countries,” they preserved to a significant degree the Christian traditions that shaped their cultural and moral identity.

Today these two worlds appear to have changed roles. In the countries of the former Soviet Union, in particular in Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, and Moldavia, an unprecedented religious revival is underway. In the Russian Orthodox Church over the past 25 years, more than twenty-five thousand churches have been built or restored from ruins. This means that a thousand churches a year have been opened, that is, three churches a day. More than 50 theological institutes and 800 monasteries, each filled with monks and nuns, have been opened.

In western European countries we can observe the steady decline of the numbers of parishioners, a crisis in vocations, and the closure of monasteries and churches. The anti-Christian rhetoric of many politicians and statesmen becomes all the more open as they call for the total expulsion of religion from public life and the rejection of the basic moral norms common to all religious traditions.

## Marriage and Family

The battle between the religious and secular worldview is today raging not in academic auditoriums or on the pages of newspapers. And the subject of the conflict is far from being exhausted by the question of belief or lack of belief in God. Today this clash has entered a new dimension and touches upon the fundamental aspects of the everyday life of the human person.

Militant secularism is aimed not only at religious holy sites and symbols by demanding that they be removed from the public domain. One of the main directions of its activity today is the straightforward destruction of traditional notions of marriage and the family. This is witnessed by the new phenomenon of equating

homosexual unions with marriage and allowing single-sex couples to adopt children. From the point of view of biblical teaching and traditional Christian moral values, this testifies to a profound spiritual crisis. The religious understanding of sin has been conclusively eroded in societies that until recently thought of themselves as Christian.

Particularly alarming is the fact that we are dealing in this instance not only with a choice of ethics and worldview. Under the pretext of combating discrimination, a number of countries have introduced changes in family legislation. Over the past few years single-sex cohabitation has been legalized in a number of states in the USA, a number of Latin American countries, and in New Zealand. This year homosexual unions have attained the legal status of “marriage” in England and Wales and in France.

We have to state clearly that those countries that have recognized in law homosexual unions as one of the forms of marriage are taking a serious step towards the destruction of the very concept of marriage and the family. And this is happening in a situation where in many historically Christian countries the traditional family is enduring a serious crisis: the number of divorces is growing, the birth rate is declining catastrophically, the culture of a family upbringing is degraded, not to mention the prevalence of sexual relations outside of marriage, the increase in the number of abortions, and the increase of children brought up without parents, even if those parents are still alive.

Instead of encouraging by all means possible traditional family values and supporting childbirth not only materially but also spiritually, the justification of the legitimacy of “single-sex families” who bring up children has become the centre of public attention. As a result, the traditional social roles are eroded and swapped around. The notion of parents, that is, of the father and the mother, of what is male and what is female, is radically altered. The female mother is losing her time-honoured role as guardian of the domestic hearth, while the male father is losing his role as educator of his children in being socially responsible. The family in its Christian understanding is falling apart to be replaced by such impersonal terms as “parent number one” and “parent number two.”

All of this cannot but have the most disastrous consequences for the upbringing of children. Children who are brought up in families with “two fathers” or “two mothers” will already have views on social and ethical values different from their contemporaries from traditional families.

One of the direct consequences of the radical reinterpretation of the concept of marriage is the serious demographic crisis that will only grow if these approaches are adhered to. Those politicians who are pushing the countries of the civilized world into the demographic abyss are in essence pronouncing upon their peoples a death sentence.

What is to be the response of the Christian churches? I believe deeply this response can be none other than that which is based on divine revelation as handed down to us in the Bible. Scripture is the common foundation which unites all Christian confessions. We may have significant differences in the interpretation of scripture, but we

all possess the same Bible and its moral teaching is laid out quite unambiguously. Of course, we differ in the interpretation of certain biblical texts when they allow for a varied interpretation. Yet much in the Bible is stated quite unambiguously, namely that which proceeds from the mouth of God and retains its relevance for all subsequent ages. Among these divine sayings are many moral commandments, including those which concern family ethics.

In speaking out against all forms of discrimination, the church nonetheless must vindicate the traditional Christian understanding of marriage as between a man and a woman, the most important mission of which is the birth and upbringing of children. It is precisely this understanding of marriage that we find on the pages of the Bible in the story of the first human family. This same understanding of marriage we also find in the gospels and the apostolic epistles. The Bible does not know of any alternative forms of marriage.

## The Role of the Churches

Unfortunately, not all Christian churches today find within themselves the courage and resolve to vindicate the biblical ideals by going against that which is fashionable and the prevalent secular outlook. Some Christian communities have long ago embarked on a revision of moral teaching aimed at making it more in step with modern tendencies.

It is often said that the differences in theological and ethical problems are linked to the division of Christians into conservatives and liberals. One cannot but agree with this when we see how in a number of Christian communities a headlong liberalization is occurring in religious ethics, as a rule under the influence of processes taking place in secular society. At the same time the witness of the Orthodox churches should not be reduced to that of conservatism. The faith of the Ancient Church which we Orthodox confess is impossible to define from the standpoint of conservatism and liberalism. We confess Christ's truth which is immutable, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 3:8).

We are not speaking about conservatism but of fidelity to divine revelation, which is contained in scripture. And if the so-called liberal Christians reject the traditional Christian understanding of moral norms, then this means that we are running up against a serious problem in our common Christian witness. Are we able to bear this witness if we are so deeply divided in questions of moral teaching, which are as important for salvation as dogma?

In this regard I would like to speak about the church's prophetic vocation. I recall the words of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann who, in volume one of *The Celebration of Faith*, wrote that a prophet is far from being someone who foretells the future. In reminding us of the profound meaning of prophecy, Schmemmann wrote, "The essence of prophecy is in the gift of proclaiming to people God's will, which is hidden from human sight but revealed to the spiritual vision of the prophet" (p.112).

We often speak of the prophetic voice of the churches, yet does our voice actually differ much from the voice and rhetoric of the secular mass media and non-governmental organizations? Is not one of the most important tasks of the WCC to discern the will of God in the modern-day historical setting and proclaim it to the world? This message, of course, would be hard to swallow for the powerful of this world. However, in refusing to proclaim it, we betray our vocation, and in the final run we betray Christ.

In today's context, when in many countries and regions of the world the revival of religion is underway and yet at the same time aggressive secularism and ideological atheism is raising its head, the WCC must find its own special voice that is understandable to modern-day societies and yet which proclaims the permanent truths of the Christian faith. Today, as always, we are called upon to be messengers of the word of God, the word which is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12); the word which is not bound (2 Tim. 2:9). It is only then that we can bring to Christ new souls, in spite of the resistance of the "rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12).

## **Religious Radicalism and Persecution of Christians**

Allow me to speak now of the second global challenge for the entire Christian world, the challenge of radicalism on religious grounds, in particular radical Islamism. I use this term fully aware that Islamism is in no way identical to Islam and in many ways is the opposite of it. Islam is a religion of peace able to coexist with other religious traditions, as is demonstrated, for example, by the centuries-old experience of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Russia. Radical Islamism, known as Wahhabism or Salafism, is a movement within the Islamic world that has as its goal the establishment of a worldwide Caliphate in which there is no place for Christians.

Here I shall not go into the reasons for the appearance and rapid growth of this phenomenon. I shall say only that in recent years the persecution of Christians has assumed a colossal scale. According to the information of human rights organizations, every five minutes a Christian dies for his faith in one or another part of the world, and every year more than a hundred thousand Christians die a violent death. According to published data, no less than one hundred million Christians worldwide are now subject to discrimination and persecution. Information on the oppression of Christians comes in from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, North Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and a number of other countries. Our brothers and sisters are being killed, driven from their homes, and separated from their families and loved ones; they are denied the right to practise their faith and educate their children according to their religious beliefs. Christians are the most persecuted religious community on the planet.

Unfortunately, manifestations of discrimination with regard to the Christian minority can no longer be treated as separate incidents: in some regions of the world

they have become a well-established tendency. As a result of the continuing conflict in Syria, the number of murders of Christians has increased, and churches and holy sites have been destroyed. The Copts, the original inhabitants of Egypt, have today become a target for attacks and riots, and many have been forced to abandon their own country.

Radicalism on religious grounds is growing not only in the countries where the population is predominantly Muslim. It is important to draw attention to the situation in the area of Asia, where today's assembly is taking place. In this region the Christian communities, thanks to the efforts of missionaries, have grown and developed for more than three hundred years. According to data from the experts, over the past ten years the level of discrimination of Christians in the region has increased many times over. Great anxiety is caused by the position of the Christian communities of Indonesia, where over the past two years the level of aggression aimed at Christians has increased considerably. Information on the discrimination of Christians is coming in from other Asian countries, too.

Today we have to be aware that one of the most important tasks facing us is the defense of our persecuted brothers and sisters in various areas of the world. This task demands urgent resolve, for which we must employ all possible means and levers—diplomatic, humanitarian, economic, and so on. The topic of the persecution of Christians ought to be examined in the context of inter-Christian cooperation. It is only through common energetic endeavours that we can help our suffering brothers and sisters in Christ.

Much is done in this regard today by the Roman Catholic Church. There are Christian organizations that monitor the situation and collect charitable aid for suffering Christians. Our church also participates in this work. I believe that of much benefit would be joint conferences and the exchange of information and experience between Christian human rights organizations that are pursuing this problem.

The rights of Christians can be guaranteed only by supporting dialogue between religious communities at both the inter-state and international level. Therefore, one of the important directions of the WCC's work is inter-religious dialogue. I believe that we ought to pay more attention to the development of a deep and interested mutual inter-action with traditional religions, especially with Islam.

The WCC is already working to draw attention to the problem of the persecution of Christians. As an example I can quote the Christian-Muslim consultation on the topic of the Christians' presence and witness in the Arab world, organized by the WCC in January 2012 in Lebanon, as well as the conference held there in May of this year on the persecution of Christians, in which the general secretary of the WCC participated. I would also like to remark upon the work carried out by the council with the aim of reducing the level of tension in Syria, of averting an escalation of the conflict and of not allowing external military intervention.

## **Witnessing on the Path of Faith**

Addressing those who confessed Christianity, St Peter said: “But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed” (1 Pet. 4: 13). Recalling these words, we prayerfully desire that the all-merciful Lord shall grant comfort and joy to those afflicted and oppressed so that they, in feeling the help and compassion of those brothers and sisters who are far away geographically yet close in the faith, may find in themselves the strength, with the aid of the grace of God, to travel further down the path of steadfast faith.

In concluding my speech, I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart the Christian communities of South Korea for the hospitality that they have shown us and the excellent organization of this general assembly. The Russian Orthodox Church sympathizes with the Korean people in its striving to find unity, and in prayer and in deeds supports the processes for the overcoming of tension in relations between the two countries of the Korean peninsula.

To all of you, the participants of the assembly, I enjoin the aid of God in joint labours and those labours that each of us carry out in their churches and communities. May our witness become the word of truth that the world needs so much today.

# CHRIST'S CO-WORKERS FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE: SERMON AT SENDING PRAYER

*Michael Lapsley, SSM*  
*Director, Institute for Healing of Memories,*  
*Cape Town, South Africa*

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Peace be with you. I greet you all as companions on the way—followers of Jesus, the crucified and risen one.

When I was first asked to preach this homily to you today, I felt deeply honoured. But that feeling soon gave way to fear, if not terror—How could I possibly have something worthwhile to say at the end of this great assembly? Would God give me the words to say—words of life—words that would indeed lead us towards justice and peace? Often, God's Holy Spirit is the one who disturbs us when we are comfortable and comforts us when we are disturbed. Can I, too, disturb and comfort you in God's name? After my fear subsided a little, I decided that I would do what I have done before, which was to write to all my friends—people of all faiths and no faith—including my Facebook friends, asking them to share with me their reflections on this passage from their own contexts across the world. God is not limited in the way wisdom is delivered to the human family. For example, I regularly read my NRSV Bible downloaded free on my Samsung phone.

How has been your experience of this assembly? We all came with our own expectations. How was your spiritual state as you arrived—what has happened to you in these days and how are you now? Was it a roller coaster or rather steady? Which stories have imprinted on your souls and pierced your heart? What made you angry? What will you never forget about the 10th Assembly? I pray that all of us will leave here inspired by God's Holy Spirit to be Christ's co-workers in the struggle for justice and peace.

How are things in your life, your family, your local church, your denomination, your society, your country? What is your gender? Do you come from a place of conflict? Do you see yourself as a member of a majority or a minority, tribally, racially, linguistically, sexually? Are Christians a minority or a majority in your land? Do you see yourself and your people as bystanders, victims or victimizers, or would we dare to admit we could be all three at the same time, even if in very different measure?

We all come to scripture from the context of our own lives, as well as the way we have heard passages of scripture interpreted in Bible studies and from preachers and, most importantly, from how the living God has spoken to us at different stages of our own lives. We began this assembly with the account of the resurrection just before this passage from Luke. It was the first time in my life I heard the gospel sung in Aramaic—as the scholars tell us—the language that Jesus spoke. That passage set the tone for our journey during these days.

Now we continue looking at today's passage: Luke 24: verses 36-49. One of the first things that struck me is how much emotion permeates the passage. When Jesus appeared to the disciples, they didn't recognize him. They were blinded by their overwhelming grief. Anyone who has lost one they love dearly knows what it means to be overcome, even consumed by grief. Some never manage to pick up their lives again. I know for myself that losing a limb is like losing a loved one. Having lost both my hands, not to mention one eye, has meant that grief is a permanent dimension of my own life. On a lighter note, some of my friends told me I was always one-eyed.

Verse 37 says that the next time when Jesus appeared they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. Interestingly, two of them had already seen the risen Christ, but it had not taken away their doubt. "While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering."

On our life journey, ambivalence, doubt, and contradictions are not unusual experiences and exist within the journey of faith. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Years ago, a friend said to me, "I can see contradictions in what you say!" "So?" I responded. Even as we grow in faith and confidence in God, it is normal to have times of doubt and uncertainty. Personally, I worry about those who are totally certain about everything. There seems to be little space for the Holy Spirit of God who leads us into all truth.

"Why are you frightened and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" Jesus points to his wounds as evidence both of who he is, but also of the resurrection. In this passage we see the body, mind, and spirit coming together: "Touch me and see"—touch—something that I appreciate keenly in its absence.

A number of the resurrection passages bear witness to the reality that the risen Christ was also the crucified Christ. But the wounds were no longer bleeding; they had healed. Jesus reminds his disciples of what he had told him before his death: that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then enter into his glory.

Jesus identifies himself and his destiny with all that is written in the Hebrew scriptures. Suddenly we are in a Bible study with Jesus as the teacher. "Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures."

What about the broiled fish? I am not sure. But I am reminded of the words of a former Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, that Christianity is the most materialistic of all religions. Our faith journey is not a spiritualized journey—which denies our physicality—nor are we called to escape from or deny the reality of creation and our part in it. Rather, the spiritual infuses the physical and becomes a way of viewing the whole.

Please allow me to bear witness to my own journey of crucifixion, death, and resurrection—a journey we are all invited to participate in through and since our baptism. I appreciate that some of you will already know my story. I was born in New Zealand in a Christian family and brought up to follow Jesus for as long as I can remember. I was what some people in the United States call a cradle Anglican. That discipleship took me to the priesthood of the Anglican Church and into the Society of the Sacred Mission (SSM), an Anglican religious order. SSM sent

me to South Africa in 1973. It was there that I felt I had stopped being a human being and became a white man.

After being expelled from South Africa in 1976, I joined Nelson Mandela's African National Congress and played a chaplaincy role in Lesotho and Zimbabwe. Living with a people in exile brought alive the exilic material in the Bible. "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion."

Some of us will be forever grateful for the prophetic role of the World Council of Churches in setting up the Programme to Combat Racism and the special fund under the inspirational leadership of Dr Philip Potter. No one should underestimate how much hope and encouragement that gave to all those in the frontline of the fight against racism, regardless of their faith journey. Indeed, God was on the side of the poor and the oppressed.

Allow me to fast forward to the events of 1990. Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years. In April of the same year, the apartheid state sent me a letter bomb hidden inside the pages of two religious magazines. As you can all see, I lost both of my hands, an eye and had damaged ear drums and, in the midst of great pain, I felt that God was with me. God had not stepped in and said it is a bomb, don't open it. I opened it. To me the great promise of scripture had been kept—"Lo, I am with you always to the end of the age." I felt that Mary, who watched her son being crucified, understood what it was that I was going through.

Excellent medical staff in Zimbabwe and Australia helped to heal my body. But it was the prayers and love of the ecumenical movement, together with those of many faiths, not to mention the atheists and agnostics, who helped to heal my soul.

Today I stand before you all to say, Thank you: Your prayers, your love was the vehicle God used to help me make my bombing redemptive—to bring life out of death—good out of evil—to travel a journey from being a victim to being a survivor to being a victor.

Just as a rich cross-section of the human family walked beside me on my journey of healing, so today I choose to walk beside others on their journey of healing—through the Institute for Healing of Memories. When I was in hospital coming to terms with the permanent character of my disability, I remembered once seeing an icon which showed Christ with one leg shorter than the other. The icon picked up the Isaiah 52 and 53 passages that the Messiah was marred beyond human semblance. That he was disfigured and that none would desire him.

Many of us with dramatic physical disabilities have had our own experiences of people looking at us with a mixture of horror and pity and then turning away. In reality, those of us with the most visible disabilities—physical and mental—are icons for the whole human family. We illustrate dramatically what is true for all of us—that "messed-up-ness," brokenness, imperfection, and incompleteness are the human story. Just as many of us cannot survive or manage without the compassion and helpfulness of other human beings, so it is true for all of us—that we need one another to be fully human.

When the disciples were on the road to Emmaus and Jesus appeared, the first thing he did was to listen to them, to their pain, grief, confusion, and sadness, before he began to help them make sense of their experience. Perhaps all of us, but especially we who are clergy, need to preach less and listen more. As the cliché goes, it is not accidental that God gave us two ears and one mouth. I have discovered, as I am sure that many of you have, that pain is transcendent and that it can connect us to one another. Especially when we listen to one another.

Our opening worship began with words of lament from every continent—bearing witness to the poor and downtrodden of every land. In the pre-assemblies and in the ecumenical conversations and in the plenary sessions, as well as at the Madang we opened our hearts to hear each other's pain—pain that imprinted on our souls—many bravely became vulnerable. We were also inspired by stories of courage, faith, and compassion, not least by those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence—especially against women and children, though we also heard about rape as a war crime, particularly of women but also of men.

In our context in South Africa, when a black mother sits with a white mother and says that her child never returned from fighting apartheid, the white mother may reply, "My child did return but is still damaged by what they experienced." Suddenly they are both mothers united by the pain they carry.

How many of us have been moved by the images of North and South Koreans meeting each other in the demilitarized zone after decades of separation? The pain is palpable as well as the joy.

In response to my appeal for help with this sermon, a Jewish friend who lives in Israel wrote about the intergenerational pain that many Jewish people still feel, which includes our failure as a Christian family to acknowledge our part in their suffering. As an Institute for Healing of Memories, we belong to an International Network for Peace, which includes the Parents Circle—Palestinian and Jewish mothers united in the pain of having their children killed.

Often when we are able to listen to each other's pain, we can become committed to work together for an inclusive justice. Also, when we listen to one another's pain, the division between "us" and "them" disappears and we all become just "us." Our experience of a common humanity is profoundly deeper than all that divides us or makes us unique and different. My friend Jane Alexander, the Anglican Bishop of Edmonton, put it this way:

I was just reflecting on a recent experience I had at a hearing for the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) here in Canada. I think what resonated with me as I read the reading was the reminder that for true peace and reconciliation even to have a chance you have to be physically present one with another. We had an opportunity to be in a church reflection circle with former residents and family members from the residential schools. In being close enough to one another to hear a breath, to share tears and to make space in the circle for the Spirit to come, there is a sense of

creating sacred space. It seems to me that Jesus comes to the ordinary place of the disciple's lives and makes it holy, by his presence and by his words.

Early in this assembly, His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, reminded us of the deep intergenerational pain caused both by the Armenian genocide and the failure of those responsible to fully acknowledge it. Your Holiness and All Armenians, may I today say from this place, we have heard what you said. Your people did indeed suffer a great wrong. May the great healer accompany you so those wounds may truly heal to enable all Armenians to also help others on their own journeys of healing.

I pray that the new central committee will recognize programmatically that healing of memories is something whose time has come in the human family.

Thank you, Your Holiness, for reminding us “to regard our fellow human beings, without exception, in the full dignity and holiness of their personhood.” In the last few years, many of our faith communities, not least my own, have torn ourselves apart over issues of sexuality and in particular in relation to same-gender-loving persons, not to mention the gamut of other sexual minorities. Some would say this is a sideshow in the face of war and poverty. That is true if we focus on sex and blind ourselves to the elephants in the room. But if this is a matter that affects, according to the most conservative estimates, a minimum of 1 percent if not 4 or 5 percent of people living on the planet, can it really be a side show? Today I want to say as a Christian, as a priest, to all the LGBTI community, I am deeply sorry for our part, as religious people, in the pain you have experienced across the ages. I have a dream that in my lifetime I will hear all the leaders of all our great faith traditions making the same apology.

Some would say that it all comes down to the interpretation of God's word. For me the question is: Do we believe that revelation ended with the closing of the canon of scripture, or does the Holy Spirit of God continue to lead us into all truth?

Whilst we have been here in Busan, it was decided in Germany that children could for the first time be registered as male, female, *or* the space could be left blank—an historic step towards relieving and acknowledging the pain for those who are born intersexed or find themselves to be transgendered. We know, as St. Paul taught us, that in Christ there is neither male nor female.

In the 1970s, the cutting edge of the prophetic witness of the ecumenical movement was the Programme to Combat Racism, which was not without controversy. Where is the cutting edge of the ecumenical movement going forward—however controversial it may be?

While there have been very significant victories, we all need to be seized with the ongoing battle against racism, and the struggle for gender inequality and the end of gender-based violence and violence against children. There can never be peace in the world whilst inequality increases within countries and between countries. Greed is killing us.

But what are the elephants in the room? We have come here to Asia, to the continent where the great religious traditions of the East have much to teach us about the importance of the internal spiritual journey, even as we celebrate our own spiritual treasures.

It should shame all religious people everywhere on the planet that a significant number, some would say a growing number, of conflicts in the world have a religious dimension. If we want the human family to live together in peace, there is a great urgency for what some of my Latin American friends call “macro-ecumenism,” one that brings together not just Christians but all the world’s great faiths with a respect too for Indigenous worldviews. Let our witness be through the depth of our compassion, our willingness to listen and learn, not simply to tolerate but to reverence and respect. As John told us, Jesus said: I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

Our leaders in the faith invited us here to the Korean peninsula, where we have been showered by the kindness and moved by the faith of our Korean sisters and brothers. But we cannot be blind to the reality that the Korean peninsula is a giant armed camp with both sides possessing colossal weaponry. My dream is that this peninsula may become a zone of peace, renowned by its commitment to negotiations and the healing of old wounds. I believe that the cutting edge of our prophetic witness must include lobbying against the arms trade. What a terrible irony that the five countries who are the largest suppliers of arms are the five permanent members of the security council, together with Germany, and that the main recipients are developing countries. As Christians, we are called to be unequivocal that armed conflict as a way of solving international disputes is incompatible with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The crucified and risen one invites us to look at and touch one another’s wounds—to listen and to hear the pain of each other and so become one. But it is not just the human family that is riddled with pain. It is mother earth herself that is crying out more and more desperately. How many more natural disasters have to happen before we realize that the future of human life on this planet is in jeopardy? Surely something that so many Indigenous cultures always understood has to go, as fast as possible, to the top of the agenda for all of us on planet earth.

My dear sisters and brothers, I often ask myself: “Why did you survive a bomb that was supposed to kill you?” So many others deserved to live but did not. I think it was important that some of us survived to bear witness to what war and hatred do to the bodies and souls of people. Much more importantly, I hope that in my own tiny way, I can be a sign that stronger than evil and hatred and death are the forces of justice, kindness, gentleness, and compassion—of peace, of life, of God.

And so as Benedictine Sr. Ruth Fox, OSB (1985) said:

*May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.*

*May God bless you* with holy anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom and peace among all people.

*May God bless you* with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

*May God bless you* with enough foolishness to believe that you really *can* make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen.

**JUSTICE, PEACE, AND  
WORLD CHRISTIANITY**



# The Asian Context

## CHALLENGES TO JUSTICE AND PEACE IN ASIA

*Henriette Hutabarat Lebang,  
General Secretary, Christian Conference of Asia*

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As a speaker of this special plenary session on Asia, asked to reflect on the assembly theme, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace,” let me first say how privileged I am to be part of this session to highlight Asian realities within the context of the assembly theme, more specifically on “Challenges to Justice and Peace in Asia.”

The 21st century is widely considered to be the Asian century. The growing impacts of globalization and the rapid economic growth are forcing several Asian countries to reposition and redefine their roles at both the regional and global levels. The pivot of international politics is shifting toward the Asian region. At the same time, the new century also poses several problems related to justice, peace, and the dignity of the people of Asia.

Asia is a vast region with diverse cultures and a long history of civilization. For many centuries, Asian people have lived in the context of ethnic and religious plurality, where the attitudes of respecting the differences and promoting the spirit of harmony are central to peoples’ way of life. One of the unique characteristics that can be seen in the life of Asian people is their willingness to share whatever resources they have with other members of their respective communities.

However, we notice with great concern the continuous erosion of such community-centred life. There is a growing social disintegration characterized by conflicts, especially along ethnic and religious lines. It is ironic that more and more Asian people are being torn away from the spirit of plurality, which is the very essence of Asian culture.

Asia today faces an ever-increasing trend of multi-dimensional social, economic, political, and security challenges that pose serious threats to peace and security and thus negate human dignity. Many factors and key stakeholders from within the region as well as from outside contribute to the denial of justice and peace to millions of Asians. The churches and the ecumenical movement in Asia face all these challenges in their day-to-day lives while they witness and proclaim the truth of the gospel.

Asia is experiencing economic development. But ironically, at the same time, Asians are experiencing situations of increasing poverty, inadequate health care,

economic exploitation, depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation, natural disasters, armed conflicts and violence, militarization, arms build-up, nuclearization, spread of small arms and light weapons, domination and intervention of major powers from outside Asia, communal violence and political unrest, violations of human rights in various forms (torture, custodial death, human trafficking, violation of rights of women and children, and migrant workers), unemployment (especially among young people), lack of rule of law and democratic governance, and the list continues. This is the backdrop against which Asian churches are reflecting on the real meaning of the prayer, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”

What is the relevance of this prayer and our theological response to situations in the many parts of Asia that are witnessing armed conflicts and violence? Economic, political, developmental, religious, ethnic, and social factors contribute to most conflicts and violence in Asia. Armed insurgency is wide spread. The nature of armed conflicts in certain other contexts concern the power sharing incompatibility over territory and governance as well as exploitation of natural resources by private, state-sponsored, or multinational corporations. When control over natural resources by local and multinationals forces local communities to leave, the original owners of the land are driven out from their ancestral land—this is especially true for Indigenous communities in several countries in Asia.

Recently, about 500 women, one from every family in the village of Dinkia in the eastern state of Odisha, India, participated in a “sit-in” to strongly express their concern about a project promoted by POSCO, a South Korean firm, to produce 12 metric tons of steel a year for export. These residents protested against the impact of this project on their land and livelihood. The building of the Xayaburi dam in the banks of the Mekong in Laos, which is presently in full swing, has stripped the forest and mountains, and thousands of people have been displaced. All these create fears among the people, especially as their resistances have caused many forms of enforcement and violent actions.

Militarization and the escalation of arms build-up have been on the increase in Asia. The rise in defense spending has now become a wider Asian phenomenon. Last year, military spending in Asia, for the first time in modern history, overtook the European members of NATO. Despite the negative impact of the global financial crisis, almost every country in Southeast Asia is now involved in the build-up of arms, mainly imported from Western arms manufacturers, which makes Asia one of the fastest-growing regions for defense spending in the world. With the new strategic initiative launched in November 2011, widely known as the “pivot to Asia,” the US is recognizing the increasing strategic importance of the Asia-Pacific region. This is considered a shift of US global strategic posture, from Afghanistan and Iraq toward the Asia-Pacific. This transformed US strategy with regard to Asia has already raised eyebrows and anxiety in Asia, as it might affect peace and security of the people and it will deny justice to millions. The Asia-Pacific region holds seven of the world’s ten largest armed forces, and five of the seven are involved in US mutual defense treaties (these are Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia).

Growing trends of religious intolerance and religious conflicts are other things that hinder peace with justice in Asia. The politicization of religion and the challenge to religious freedom are increasing. The blasphemy law in Pakistan continues to be an ecumenical concern. Discrimination of people on the basis of caste and religion and denial of their human dignity continue to cause social deprivation and marginalization.

Asia has been witnessing massive movements of migrant workers from the economically weak communities to the emerging new economic zones, within countries and beyond their borders. Even though these migrants contribute to the economic growth of the country in which they work, they continue to suffer from abusive and discriminative attitudes. In recent years the flow of migrants and asylum seekers from the Asian continent to Australia and New Zealand has increased.

Violence against women and children is increasing in different Asian countries. Rape normally reflects the imbalance of power in society. These inhuman incidents result in women suffering both physical and mental trauma, due to their biological vulnerability and their fear of being stigmatized for life, while the men go scot-free. In our Asian context, we realize that gender justice cannot be fully achieved by empowering women only.

In interpreting the present reality of injustice, violence and war, and life in peril that we find in the many communities of Asia, one can say that this is due to the “imbalance” brought on by excessive human greed, the collapse of “harmony” in the relationships among communities, peoples, and with nature, and the domination and subjugation of non-Asian forces in Asia.

Churches in Asia and the Asian ecumenical movement have been trying to respond to these issues in various ways. They continue to advocate for the emerging peace concerns in Asia, including in the Korean peninsula, and express their prophetic witness in a time when the peace and security of the people are threatened. Upholding the dignity of children, building the culture of peace especially among young people, and the partnership of men and women are some of the ecumenical priorities in Asia. Encouraging and accompanying the churches in their response to the emerging issues—such as migrant workers, asylum seekers, and HIV/AIDS—are very much emphasized. Increasingly, churches and local congregations have integrated the issues of ecological justice in their ministries. From time to time they express their solidarity in prayers, pastoral visits, and concrete actions to the churches affected by natural disasters and communal conflicts.

Other contextual realities of Asia are the religious diversity and traditional wisdom in which the adherents of all religions, including the Christian church, lives. The teachings of the various religions and the traditional wisdom of our cultures inform and shape how Christians bear witness to the gospel of life in Jesus Christ. The efforts for contextual theologizing continue to shape the life and ministry of the churches, especially in the context of Asian plurality.

The inter-religious relationship is part of the daily life of Asian people, as we have been living in a multi-faith society. We believe that many of the pressing issues in Asia

today and present tensions among the different religious groups can only be solved by improving the relationship and cooperation among people of different faiths. The role of Asian churches in responding to these challenges is increasing day by day. Recently the CCA and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) were instrumental in facilitating a Conference of Muslim-Christian Religious Leaders in Asia, which became a joint initiative of religious communities of Asia to bring "The Common Word to Common Action for Peace and Justice in Asia." At the same time, the Asian Movement for Christian Unity has provided a platform for an ecumenical conversation of various Christian families, especially in witnessing Christ together in the pluralistic Asian context.

Asian realities are not disconnected from the rest of the world. The changing situation in the world affects Asia tremendously, and vice versa. The churches in different parts of the world need to work in partnership to heal the wounds and promote reconciliation, peace, and justice for all, thus restoring life in the household of God even in the face of the brokenness of our world today.

In the midst of these negative forces that deny justice and peace, we need to find hope—hope, in the midst of despair. We, the Asian Christians, believe that God of life will show us the path and lead us to peace with justice.

# MULTICULTURAL ASIA: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

*Ya-Chi*

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My name is Ya-Chi. I am from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. My great grandparents and the whole family became Christian when they encountered foreign missionaries on the street. I was raised by Japanese-speaking grandparents who had inherited a Japanese lifestyle and values. I speak Mandarin and Taiwanese. I am the goddaughter of an Indigenous tribe from southern Taiwan. The outfit I am wearing today and the necklace are from the tribe, but I am wearing it for fashion. This is me, and this is Asia. Like most Asians, we experience different traditions at the same time. I love Asia for its vibrant and colourful features. Its uniqueness comes from the encounter of various heritages and the re-interpretation and transformation of these traditions. Multicultural Asia is a testimony of God's creation. By recognizing the differences and multiple identities within us and our societies, we recognize the abundant and vivid creation that God has granted Asia.

Starting from a consensus of a "diverse Asia," we have always understood that our neighbours may enjoy a very different tradition or lifestyle from us. One very distinct difference that exists in Asia is religious difference. In most Asian countries, Christians are the minority. But we also have many other minorities, such as other religious minorities, sexual minorities, and Indigenous people. Some of these people suffer from discrimination and oppression because they have chosen to embrace and preserve their own identities. In some cases, internal conflicts or military confrontation are severe across ethnic or communal lines, as well as within single communities. Social exclusion drives many minority groups into enforced silence, coercive subjection, and continued marginalization. In such situations, the churches in Asia must stand with people who are voiceless. This is not an option or a choice. It is a must. They are our neighbours, whom God loves, and in most cases we are part of them and they are also part of us.

As a young person in Asia, I also see many people from our continent move across boundaries. Sometimes they move from rural areas to urban cities, and sometimes they cross borders to another country. These people are known as marriage migrants, migrant workers, internally displaced people, stateless people, and refugees. They leave their hometown for different reasons but with a common wish—in pursuit of a secure and better future. However, crossing borders can be risky. It strips them of any remaining layers of protection that might have been available in their own country and community. Churches usually serve as a transnational shelter for those who are away from home. When the borders dividing us become more acute, the church must step forward to bridge the gap and to break down barriers, as Jesus Christ did. Church unity must go beyond ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and political obstacles. Churches should open their doors and make themselves as welcoming communities

to practise the gift of hospitality. Standing firm in the belief that we are one in God's kingdom, churches in Asia must learn to live, work, witness, and serve this world in solidarity.

For many of us in Asia, the experience of colonization has not ended. The empire did not simply dissolve due to political transition and democratization. Wearing multiple and changing masks, the new empire rises and sustains itself in the context of globalization and neoliberalism. In a consumer society, the challenges we face as churches today are even more severe. We have many options, each of which seems to be glittering and glamorous in both developed and developing countries. We are unconsciously being driven by quantitative rules of growth and development. The better future that we dream of does not appear automatically. On the contrary, the pursuit of profits results in both ecological disasters and economic crisis. Among those natural disasters, the Fukushima nuclear disaster is a brutal warning to human beings that the consequences of a nuclear crisis are beyond states, generations, and our human wisdom. On the economic level, Asia serves as one of the biggest factories in the world. At the front of the production lines, people work overtime in sweat factories under poor conditions in exchange for minimum wages. Some of them suffer from psychological diseases, and many are children under 18. These are the people who produce our mobile phones and daily supplies. Young people are facing high unemployment rates even though some of them are university graduates. Some are fortunate enough to obtain a job, but the salary cannot sustain them with a promising future. Neoliberal capitalism is eroding all aspects of our values and Christian belief. However, some churches even support and integrate the idea under the concept of prosperity theology, which highlights success in secular life rather than reconsidering the oppression brought by neoliberal capitalism.

Sometimes economic progress and growth is used to mask the violation of fundamental human rights by both the state and large enterprise, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, right to housing, and right to life. We are living in a world where more and more people have access to various tools to express and broadcast themselves. It looks like we are living in a closer relationship with our neighbours than ever before. However, we have to be aware that there are still many people who are denied full access to the internet, who are put into jail simply because they post their opinions on-line, who are being forcibly evicted from their lands, who are being executed under unfair trials, and who are facing enforced disappearance under the name of unity and peace. Jesus never looks down on human suffering. We, as followers of Jesus, must stand together with these people who are oppressed.

As I look at the rainbow-like diversity in Asia, it always reminds me of the legend from one of the Taiwanese Indigenous tribes. In their tradition, the rainbow is the bridge towards the land of ancestors in the afterlife. Our ancestors build churches on different identities and traditions through God's love. Churches of Asia in the multicultural context communicate with people in different beliefs and ideologies every single day. We are bridges among nations, religions, ethnic groups, castes, and

political parties as peacemakers. I want to share a quote with you from the confession of faith of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan:

We believe that the Church is the fellowship of God's people, called to proclaim the salvation of Jesus Christ and to be the ambassador of reconciliation. It is both universal and rooted in this land, identifying with all its inhabitants, and through love and suffering becoming the sign of hope.

I believe that this is the mission that churches of Asia are carrying and will continue to carry in the future.



# Unity in Christ: The Journey of the Fellowship

## OUR VISIONS OF UNITY

*Dame Mary Tanner*

*European President, World Council of Churches, and  
Member of the Faith and Order Commission*

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Dear sisters and brothers,

Welcome to this plenary on unity: “Unity in Christ: The Journey of the Fellowship.”

Those who prepared this presentation want our time together to be reflective and prayerful. We want to draw you into a community of reflection on what unity in Christ means for us today. We want each of us to bring our hopes and longings for a more whole, more just, more united fellowship of Christians—a fellowship that faces outwards to the world and that really does, through the quality of its own life, through its witness, through its service to the poor and victims of violence, and through its care of creation, show forth something of the unity and wholeness that is God’s intention for the whole world, for all creation.

*(Image projected on screen: The El Greco painting of the Agony in the Garden)*

On the night before he died Jesus prayed in the garden for the unity of his disciples then and for the unity of all who would follow them. So, Jesus prays for us: “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21). Our unity as sisters and brothers in Christ is inextricably bound up with the unity God desires for the whole of humanity.

*(Image projected on screen: The Rublev Icon of the Trinity)*

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed that our unity would be like the unity he shares with the Father—“may they be one like us.” In the prayer we glimpse something of what that means as we see the complete conformity of wills, of hearts and minds as Jesus accepts what lies ahead—“not my will but yours be done.” But Jesus also prays, “May they be one in us.” Our unity is not of our own making. It is grounded in the communion of love—the giving and receiving, receiving and giving love that flows between the persons of the Holy Trinity. The ecumenical community has often found this wonderfully captured in a Russian icon of the Holy Trinity, an image that speaks of unity more powerfully than any words can do. The Rublev icon is a gift we receive from our Orthodox brothers and sisters in an ecumenism of gift exchange, where the gifts we each bring enrich our common life. The icon speaks of the encircling love, the communion (*koinonia*) between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus' prayer has been the inspiration of the ecumenical movement since the very beginning. It is expressed in our constitutional documents. The "primary purpose" of the WCC is for us

to call one another to visible unity in one faith, and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world and to advance to that unity so that the world might believe.

Our constitution embodies Jesus' prayer for his disciples—that we might be one so that the world might believe. It means that God's precious gift of unity has to be seen in the way we live together. It has to be recognizable in our lives, heard in our words, and seen in our deeds. Our conviction that God desires unity is grounded in the scriptures we all share.

At many assemblies we have tried to describe together what kind of visible unity God calls us to live in and for the world. At New Delhi we spoke of all Christians in each place united with all Christians in every place and united with all Christians through time—the unity of the church that is expressed both locally and globally and unites us to the witness of the faithful through time. At Nairobi we emphasized the global aspect of Christian unity, when Christians would meet in council, and speak and act together. At Vancouver we began to understand that unity entails more than knocking divided denominations together. Unity has everything to do with becoming a community in which human divisions of gender, colour, race, age, culture, power, and status woven in its own life are constantly being challenged and overcome so that we become a credible sign to the world. We might overcome all doctrinal differences, but without repentance and deep renewal of our own life, unity will be a false unity. At Canberra we insisted that visible unity was not uniformity but a rich diversity in which the gospel flourishes in the language, images, and dance of different cultural, ethnic, and historical contexts. Diversity contributes to the richness and fullness of catholicity of the one church of God. And in Porto Alegre we reflected on the creedal marks of the church—one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—and we emphasized the need for mutual accountability and mutual responsibility as characteristics of unity. We affirmed the importance of the recognition of a common baptism that manifests the reality that we belong together and that calls us to walk together even when we are in disagreement. Throughout all our statements, we affirmed the same essential features of visible unity: a common faith grounded in the scriptures, one baptism, the eating and drinking together at the one table of the Lord, a ministry recognized by all, and a common mission witnessing to the gospel of salvation for all people.

As we travelled from one assembly to another describing together the unity God calls us to live together visibly, we began to urge one another to take whatever steps, with whatever partners, we could to live into that vision now. Some of us have taken bold steps and entered into closer relationships on the journey. Some of us have come to acknowledge that a "certain degree of communion" already exists between us. This is the fruit of the active presence of God's Holy Spirit binding us to one another in

love. We have come a long way together on our ecumenical journey, but we still have a long way to go. It remains a scandal and a deep wound that we do not eat and drink around the one table of the Lord.

So what shall we say here in Busan about unity? What vision of united life for God's sake and the world's sake will motivate us and impel us to closer relations with one another as we continue our ecumenical journey?

The presenters in this plenary—His Eminence Metropolitan Nifon from the Orthodox Church of Romania; the Reverend Dr Neville Callum from Jamaica, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance; Alice Fabian, a young theologian from the United Congregational Church in Southern Africa; and Bishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada—speak with passion for Christian unity, for the unity of the world, for the harmony of creation. The theme of our assembly, “God of life: lead us to justice and peace,” has helped us to understand more clearly that the unity of the church, the unity of the human community, and the harmony of creation belong together in God's plan. The unity of the church requires a life of justice and peace within the Christian community, a life that builds us up and strengthens us to work for justice and peace in God's beautiful but hurting world. There is so much more we could and must do together now, locally, nationally and at world level, to confront together injustice and violence in our world and to promote a culture of dialogue for peace. As Christians work together now, discovering a unity in service, they recognize a unity in their common faith and in the one baptism, and they long to express this in eucharistic fellowship. As we act together we find hope renewed and energy to go on facing remaining doctrinal issues that were the cause of our divisions. We discover a new humility to receive together God's precious gift of unity, a fragile treasure in our human hands so that at last we come to eat and drink together at the one table of the Lord. This is the eucharistic vision that will guide us on our ecumenical journey.

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As we come to the end of this presentation we want to re-affirm our commitment to unity by owning the words of the constitution of the WCC:

We 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 to that unity so that the world might believe.

**Metropolitan Nifon:** Let us pledge ourselves to become a church turned outwards, intensifying our work together for justice and for peace and for the healing of creation and modelling the way of dialogue.

**Neville Callum:** Let us make common cause, wherever we can, with those of other faith communities.

**Alice Fabian:** Let us work together for more just, participatory, and inclusive ways of living our own lives, so that we become a more prophetic sign to the world of its own possibility.

**Mark MacDonald:** Let us open ourselves to receive the gifts that other traditions offer to us and offer our gifts to them in an ecumenism of generous gift exchange.

**Metropolitan Nifon:** Let us continue our doctrinal conversations together, giving attention to new voices and different methods of approach, so that we may be helped to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

**Neville Callum:** Let us endeavour to live out the consequences of our theological dialogues in the renewal of our lives and the transformation of our relationships.

**Mary Fabian:** Above all, let us pray unceasingly for the unity of the church and the unity of the world.

We began our time together by remembering Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. We invite all of you, repenting of the scandal of our continuing divisions, to pray with Christ and in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit:

**ALL:** May we all be one, so that the world may believe.

# CHALLENGES AND HOPES FOR UNITY: AN EASTERN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

## *Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste*

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*H. E. Archbishop Prof. Nifon of Targoviste is professor of Missiology at the State University of Targoviste, Romania. He is a member of the executive and central committees of the World Council of Churches and on the editorial board of the International Review of Mission.*

It is both an honour and a great responsibility to address you on this occasion. In our many meetings, the joy of encountering one another, seeking the truth in faith and love, is in itself an act that invites in our midst the Lord himself: “for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matt. 18:20). We are therefore accomplishing, through these ecumenical meetings, a divine theophany. We give testimony of our common faith in friendship and charity, the marks of apostleship and discipleship. Understanding, acceptance, and charity are on the lips of those Christians who truly seek unity.

Our greatest hope is that together we come to a better understanding of our faith by holding on to the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), dialogue, and unity. This is an expression of the conciliar nature of the true church as it was from the very beginning (i.e., as seen in the first apostolic council, Acts 15).

The unity statement paints an accurate picture of the world today, caught in between hope and despair. Emerging from it is the urgency of united action to save our planet from ecological disasters and its people from medical, social, political, and economic tragedy. In this light, we need to reconsider our relationships with each other, with the surrounding world, and with our Creator. As the statement worthily affirms, the divine-willed oneness does not only include humanity but the whole world.

The Eastern Orthodox tradition, with its ancient teachings and practices, is a valuable source of inspiration and renewal in the ecumenical encounter. However, more involvement and input is needed from our side. I will now turn to the challenges we face from within in regard to our ecumenical involvement and activity, and I will then present some directions of engagement that are some of our hopes for an ever more fruitful cooperation.

## **The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism**

Our greatest challenge comes, unfortunately, from within our own constituencies. There are voices, and they are getting louder and louder, that speak against the

ecumenical movement, seeing it as a heresy that the Orthodox Church needs to confront. There is fear that our centuries-old traditions and teachings are being corrupted by foreign teachings. This attitude is, to some extent, understandable for an Orthodox context, where change and innovation is perceived as heresy and priority is given to the preservation of Orthodox doctrines, teachings, and practices as they have been received and passed on from generation to generation. However this view is mainly a result of ignorance and a fundamentalist approach to faith. Christ loved all the people that he met regardless of their religious affiliation. All human beings are brothers and sisters, the handiwork of God, who is the Father of us all. Through baptism this kinship is sacramentally strengthened and taken to a higher level. How can we ignore our brothers and sisters in Christ who are actively seeking unity? In a global world that involves mass emigration of Orthodox populations in the West, this is a shame. Many Eastern Orthodox Christians now live in foreign countries and enjoy the hospitality of other Christian communities throughout Europe and other continents.

For a better understanding of what ecumenism means, we have to explain thoroughly what we do in our meetings, to assure our people that nothing of our precious traditions are lost, changed, or watered down. We always remind them, and we should remind ourselves too, that we should defend our traditional moral values, particularly the value of the Christian family.

We need to explain how distinctiveness and otherness are preserved, even required, by coming together in realizing the much-desired communion of all churches. The mystery of the church and of our oneness is based on the unity and distinction to be found in the Holy Trinity and in the person of Jesus Christ, who is both divine and human. This mystery is unfolded into the extended body of Christ, the church.

As with regard to the life of the world, we believe that the life of the church engineers the life of the whole world. The church is, in the teaching of Saint Maximus the Confessor, for example, the dough of the universe. The church is holy because of its head and its sanctifying means, despite the fact that its members are sinners. There is no contradiction between the two.<sup>1</sup> The church is not a mere human institution; it is the kingdom of heaven on earth. In its sanctifying means, the church is, I would dare to say, as powerful as God is.

Our greatest hope and a sure sign of unity is the confession of our trinitarian faith and of our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior as expressed also in the constitution and rules of the WCC. One of the most important contributions of the Orthodoxy in a world marked by the sin of violence, terrorism, disunion, and egoism is the *spirituality of koinonia*. To be Christian means to live for and through the *divine koinonia*. An authentic Christian life is a life in communion with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit for the glory of the Father. According to St Irenaeus of Lyon, the

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1. For more on this, from an ecumenical perspective, see points 35-36 in *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order paper no. 214 (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 22; Daniel Ciobotea, *Confessing the Truth in Love: Orthodox Perspectives of Life, Mission and Unity* (Iasi: Trinitas, 2001).

Son of God became man that we might be able to embrace the Spirit of God and to participate in the glory of Father. Jesus Christ is the source of the new life, because he enables us to participate in the life, the freedom, and the glory of the trinitarian communion. As *imago trinitatis*, the human being already has an ontological connection with the Trinity that is as important for his life as is breathing. The belief in the Holy Trinity belongs to the essential basics of Christianity.

The Holy Trinity is the source of the new life, our social program, our orientation for the continuous transformation of the human beings of the world. The paradigm of trinitarian perichoresis as a paradigm of perfect love, and perfect communication justifies neither oppression nor discrimination in society.

## Communion, Ecumenism, and Theology

Our biggest challenge remains ecclesiology: Which is the true church born in Jerusalem and spread all over the world? How have we come to have so many churches that have so much, but also, in some cases, so little in common, barely bearing any resemblance to one another? Whether we like it or not, the situation in which to look for a new vision of the *koinonia* of the churches is one of division and separation. The whole question of reunion depends on a tension between unity and division. We must do our best to accept the tension and continue, together, along the way to the visible unity in which division will finally be overcome.

The unity of the church has been lost. Our task is not to create a new church but to restore the one church in its unbroken continuity and its sacramental fullness. The time defining the final form that the one church, once restored, would take is not yet here. Meanwhile, although many of us can no doubt imagine all sorts of new forms of fellowship, it is premature and unrealistic to spend our time drawing ideal pictures of the future church. That must wait until we have genuine possibilities.<sup>2</sup> We therefore need to be realistic, to look back at the critical points in history when divisions were created, and thus work at the very root of the problems. Change is contrary to God's unchanging nature. Christ, who is both divine and human, is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Adaptation and enculturation is one thing, change is another. In the first case, the essence of the church remains unchanged while, in the second case, it transforms into something else.

From our perspective, although the call to be one in Christ is imperative, we cannot yet be one. The eucharist is a declaration of faith laden with theological statements about Christ's divinity and humanity, his work of salvation, and the deification or sanctification of Christians. Sharing the same cup requires ecclesial unity based on a common confession of faith. It is free to book a place at Christ's table, and there is no restriction on who can come, but a code of dress may be required (Matt. 22): clothes of light, a confession of belief in what we consume (the real body and blood

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2. I. Bria, "Living in the One Tradition: An Orthodox Contribution to the Question of Unity," *Ecumenical Review* 26:2 (1979), 227-28.

of Christ or only a symbol of it), etc. Hence, more talk is needed about the ecclesial framework of the banquet.

Liturgy, theology, and pastoral practice are areas of utmost importance for our Christian identity. The revival of liturgical worship inspired by ancient liturgies is ever more encouraging. The turn to the teachings of the church Fathers of the first millennium is a valuable resource of academic research with implications for understanding the real task of theology, namely to speak about the God we know personally rather than theoretically. The church Fathers are sure guides, genuine models for living out our faith. Like them, we are looking back while reading the signs of the time.

The ecumenical meetings and the documents they produce bring out into the open our church teachings and practices in order to test them. An area of possible further discussion for us is the relationship between theology and lived faith. A maximalist approach, of the kind the Eastern church proposes, namely that the scope and final aim of Christian life is our deification, becoming like God through his grace, calls for holiness of life. The end of all theology is also the aim of Christian life. The saints past and present are perhaps the most qualified to indicate our Christian vocation through their life of holiness. Holiness is surely one of the most powerful uniting factors: “deep calls to deep” (Ps. 42:7).

A theology-free approach cannot transform human existence. The higher theology is, the loftier is one’s way of life. The relationship between *orthodoxia* and *orthopraxia* (right doctrine and right practice) is therefore of utmost importance, as good practice in the church is based on sound *theology*.<sup>3</sup> As we advance in issuing our common theological statements following years of ecumenical hard work, the light of full theological agreement glitters into a distance. The further work we may need to do involves putting theology into practice. We should remember that the 5<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the WCC in Nairobi (1975) underlined the meaning of the spirituality for the ecumenical unity of the church: “We long for a new spirituality which penetrates our planning, thinking and action. The diaconical-work contributes to overcome the confessional borders and promotes the action in communion of one serving church.”<sup>4</sup>

From our perspective, we endorse the hard work of unity even in the face of skepticism, indifference, and hostility from within and from the outside. Patience, passion, and hard work for our cause will surely produce the much-desired unity in our Lord and God.

I cannot end without mentioning the suffering of our Christian brethren in the Middle East, especially in Syria. The changes there seem to have no place for Christians who are dislocated, persecuted, and killed for being Christians. In our search for unity, we should not forget those who suffer most. Let us keep them in our prayers and do everything in our power to help them come to a peaceful solution.

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3. In relation to this, asceticism, the hallmark of Eastern Christianity and an integral part of holiness, makes a good stand against consumerism and it corresponds to a responsible approach to the resources we have.

4. I. Bria, “Living in the One Tradition,” 229-31.

# IN THANKS AND HOPE

## Neville Callam

### General Secretary, Baptist World Alliance

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A vast gap exists between the church's endowment with the precious gift of unity and the lived experience of that unity. The church continues to have the vocation "to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom."<sup>1</sup> Our ecclesial divisions provide a compelling sign of our failure to be faithful to our calling to be one. We face the scandal of disunity.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the triune God for the progress registered in overcoming the barriers fencing off the church from its vocation to unity. For what God has enabled, we have good reason to celebrate.

## Celebration

We celebrate the sincere prayers and patient engagement that have yielded the theological convergence expressed in that historic report on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*,<sup>2</sup> and the texts it inspired both in bilateral and multilateral theological contexts.<sup>3</sup>

We celebrate the result of years of prayerful reflection resulting in study documents such as *Church and World*<sup>4</sup> and the texts on ecclesiology and ethics it inspired.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Canberra Statement on Unity 1.1. See Günther Gassman, ed., *Documentary History of Faith and Order, 1963-1993*, Faith and Order Paper No. 159 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993), 4.

2. Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1982).

3. Especially, we call to mind *Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith as it is Confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)*, Faith and Order Paper No. 153 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991); *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 214 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013). Some of the studies and consultations that contributed significantly to the text on the church are reflected in the following publications: *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: An Instrument for an Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics*, Faith and Order Paper No. 182 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998); Peter Bouteneff and Alan Falconer, eds., *Episcopé and Episcopacy and the Quest for Visible Unity: Two Consultations*, Faith and Order Paper No. 183 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999); Tamara Grdzeldidze, ed., *One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic: Ecumenical Reflections on the Church*, Faith and Order Paper No. 197 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005); and *One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition—A Study Text*, Faith and Order Paper No. 210 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2011). Appreciation must be given for the process leading to this text, not least the Faverges Conference on Becoming a Christian. See Thomas Best and Dagmar Heller, eds., *Becoming a Christian: The Ethical Implications of Our Common Baptism*, Faith and Order Paper No. 184 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999).

4. *Church and World: The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community*, Faith and Order Paper No. 151 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990).

5. See especially the following: *Costly Unity, Costly Commitment, and Costly Obedience*, available in Thomas Best and Martin Robra, eds., *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church*. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), and *Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology*, Faith and Order Paper No. 199 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005).

We celebrate the increase in understanding resulting from agreements minted out of prayerful theological dialogue. This helped to reduce the distance between our ecclesial unity as gift and as demand. Appropriation of the fruit of the convergence achieved has facilitated responsible rapprochement between Christian communions. Zeal for the full communion of the church should not prevent us from celebrating the salutary developments taking place in relations among and between churches today.

With confidence, we raise prayers of thanksgiving to the triune God, giver of our unity and author of all progress towards its manifestation. Yet, we have reason to lament.

## Lament

We acknowledge that painful divisions still remain. We are the body of Christ and we should reflect the *koinonia* inspired by the vision of that perfect unity existing in the Godhead. We are not what we should be.

We lament the persistence in cherishing our peculiarities and failing to draw sufficiently from the well of divine provision that is able to quench our thirst for the truth.

We lament our penchant to seek in other expressions of the church a replica of the church to which we belong. We have not been content to seek in other churches, as much as in our own, signs of the one church of our Lord Jesus. Furthermore, we have not been sufficiently vigorous in giving expression to the degree of communion that already exists.

We lament our failure to agree on an adequate theological anthropology, which is partly responsible for the powerful dragon of racism that continues to rear its ugly head even in the church. Credible witness to the unity of the church requires attentiveness to racism in the church and in the world. Our too feeble efforts in the defense of justice have failed to ameliorate situations of poverty, exploitation, and disease. Nor have they resulted in the removal of policies and structures that support injustice.

We lament the self-centredness that weakens the appreciation of our oneness with all of creation and the ungenerous spirit that undermines our stewardship of the whole creation that so wonderfully reflects God's uncreated glory.

We lament the compromise in our faithfulness to the mission the triune God has committed to the church caused by our failure to heed the call to unity.

We lament the negative impact of our disunity on our capacity for respect for peoples of other faiths, who are all creatures of the one God and inhabitants of a shared planet.

Again and again, we need to repent the sin of our divisions, petition God's forgiveness, and pray for the joy of communion.

## Challenges

While we celebrate and offer lament, we take note of three challenges the church faces as it deals with church unity:

First, the conflicting positions churches take on certain moral issues, and their implications, pose great difficulty for the unity of the church. Churches are actually participating in the entrenchment of divisions in society by offering disparate teaching on matters of ethics and morals that are of concern to many people. The current situation is intolerable.

The churches' embrace of opposing positions on critical moral issues rests partly on our failure to find convergence around the sources of authority in the church and on our disagreements over how properly to interpret the sources we acknowledge. Efforts underway in Faith and Order to address this critical subject are most welcome. We anticipate the insights this process will unearth.

Second, the church needs to take intentional action to promote, among young adults—pastors, theologians, and other church members—the importance and urgency of the church's unity agenda. Fostering participation of young adults in theological dialogue at every level is an urgent need.

Third, our fixation on textuality alone, rather than on textuality in tandem with orality, has limited the avenues we employ to spread information on how God is enabling churches to overcome disunity. It is also restricting our capacity to canvass opportunities for further engagement toward the visible unity of the church. Beyond this, if a vast proportion of the world's population comprises people who are oral learners either by necessity or by choice, it is clearly important for us to consider the forms of our effort to spread the message concerning the unity of the church. Faith and Order may wish to give fresh consideration to ways of reaching those whose primary vehicle for understanding is not textual.

## As We Go Forward

As we go forward, I encourage churches to recommit to careful study and appropriation of insights arising from dialogue reports at the bilateral and multi-lateral levels. Let us ensure that good stewardship prevails in relation to the fruit of the dialogues undertaken by local and regional organizations, Christian World Communions, and the Faith and Order Commission. To assist this, Faith and Order, as a service to the churches, could consider creative ways in which to make available to the churches a resource that harvests the convergence emerging from international dialogues and grouping these by subject matter. This resource could also prove indispensable for persons involved in bilateral dialogues, especially at the international level.

As we go forward in the pilgrimage of unity, may we never disconnect the search for unity from the search for justice and peace! Only so will the church be faithful

to God's great mission to gather the whole of creation under Christ's lordship into communion with God.<sup>6</sup>

The challenges are daunting, but the opportunities are immense for us to go forward with passion for the unity of the church. May our prayer continue to be: "O God, holy and undivided Trinity, give us who are still divided the thirst and hunger for communion in faith, life, and witness. Keep us restless until we grow together into the fullness of the whole body of Christ, in accord with Christ's prayer, that we who believe in him may be one."<sup>7</sup>

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6. Canberra Statement on Unity 1.1. See *Documentary History of Faith and Order*, 3.

7. *Orders of Worship for the Sixth International Consultation of United and Uniting Churches*, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 22-29 March 1995, p. 4.

# UNITY OF CREATION, HUMANITY, AND THE CHURCH

*Alice Fabian and Bishop Mark MacDonald*

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*Alice Fabian is a candidate for ministry in the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. Mark MacDonald, a bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada, was elected at Busan as the WCC President representing North America. They spoke together in the Unity plenary.*

## God of Life

**Alice:** We in this assembly have called out to the *God of Life*, the God of *all* life. And therefore our yearning for unity needs to follow this thought. Our desire and hope for unity needs to be a part of a bigger vision which invites all people, and all of creation, to work for justice and peace for all.

And we become ever more conscious of this need to be united together, as we look at areas of disunity and we allow ourselves to see the pain that it has caused, whether in our own lives, the communities that we live in, or throughout all humanity. Wars, violence, racism, gender, poverty and selfish greed are just a few examples of areas of disunity amongst so many others. Unfortunately, these are areas which most of us—if not all of us—are familiar with, and we know the tremendous heartache they cause.

But we serve a God of hope and a God of life who beckons us to work with him towards a world characterized by peace and justice. We trust that the God who created can recreate. And so like Abraham in Romans 4: 18 “Against all hope, [we] in hope believe.”

**Mark:** Preparing for this assembly, thinking about our situation—here and now, in this world and time we live in—I thought of a story I first heard long ago:

In the 1800’s, Father Baraga, later Bishop Baraga of Sault Ste Marie, worked among the Ojibwe People in Northern Wisconsin. Stationed on the south shore of the massive Lake Superior, he once began a journey to the north shore—the place where I grew up—travelling with clergy, religious, trappers, and the Ojibwe, who paddled the canoes and guided the party toward safety.

A great storm appeared out upon the lake, creating an overwhelming fear in most of the travelers. The storms of Lake Superior are famous for their power to destroy. The trappers cursed their horrible luck, the religious prayed out loud, but the Ojibwe did something completely unexpected. Though Baraga knew them to be unaffiliated with any church, they put their paddles across their laps and began to sing a Christian hymn as a means of prayer. Overcome by the unexpected, the other travelers were

soon even more overcome by the success of the hymn-prayer. The Ojibwe began to paddle again, as if nothing strange had happened.

This story speaks to something that we easily forget: the militant presence of the living word of God in creation and history. God establishes a relationship with the individual heart, but also with communities of people. This is often hidden from our eyes, hidden from our perception. Though many of us have perceived this presence in our personal lives, we often have trouble believing in its presence in others.

The gospel dynamically unveils this saving presence of God in creation and history. Awaking from the sleep of our disunity and a damaging complicity with the world of money, we can remember that the living word of God has a destiny in creation, a destiny in history. As the church, it is our destiny, as well. As with the story, however, we are struck with our unity in our urgent need, our unity with the rest of humanity and with creation, as well as our unity in the living word of God, which is our only true hope in this hour. As we go from the place, as we go back to a largely indifferent and sometimes hostile world, let us look to meet our savior and God, in the places and people we least expect, in the creation that is forever and only God's possession, and, perhaps most surprisingly, in each other.

## Our Experience of Unity

**Alice:** In all 24 years of my life, a lot has changed. The world is more accessible to us as travel has become easier and easier. Even if we never leave our own countries or communities, we can still be exposed to the different people and around the world through things like the TV and internet. We can glean insight into their different cultures and traditions.

And then there is the development of social networks, which give us direct access to millions, even billions, of people with only the click of a button. I was given the opportunity to join webinars, and the "WCC youth pre-assembly" Facebook page, and enter into conversations with strangers on specific topics, offer encouragement, or organize certain logistics. And yet, although in many ways we now appear to be interacting with each other and becoming more familiar with each other, we have to be careful not to mistake the access and knowledge that we have with each other and our different communities for "unity." Knowing about someone, or even interacting with them, is not the same as being united with them. We must not confuse this.

So what is unity for me? I need to begin with my context as a South African woman in my early twenties. At home, we know despair, as entire age groups have been obliterated by AIDS, where violence and corruption are ever present. We know division, as our government enforced disunity through the apartheid laws which separated different race groups in every sphere of life. But in contrast to this bleak picture, we live in the real tension between celebration and sorrow. For within my lifetime, we have claimed our rainbow nation. The change has been astounding, even humbling, especially because all this change has taken place since I started school less

than two decades ago. In South Africa, we now see people of different race groups living in the same neighbourhoods, working alongside each other, playing together, and calling each other “my brother,” “my sister.”

The beginnings of unity are here; but they are only the beginnings. We do not yet know full, visible unity. There are still people of different race groups, genders, and classes who are selfishly seeking their own comfort at the expense of others. We live in this tension of hope and despair.

Earlier this year I served in a small Congregational Church which conducted itself in English. Each Sunday, after our Sunday service was complete, the hall was rented out to a large group of Zulu speakers, *also* from the Congregational Church. So these two Congregational churches ran absolutely parallel to each other, never ever crossing or interacting with each other. This situation was a remnant of the apartheid government, which forced different race groups to live in designated areas under the Group Areas Act. This act required the “Blacks, Colours, Indians and Whites” to reside in different residential areas allocated in order to maintain the segregation.

As apartheid has been overthrown, and race integration in this area is slowly starting to take place, this year the time seemed appropriate and right for the Zulu and English churches to become one. They merged the membership lists together and established a new leadership structure as they began a new and united way of doing church.

Even though this united church is what both churches had prayed for, I would be lying if I said that it has been a completely easy transition, free of any anxiety. For the English service (which is for whites, Indians and non-Zulu blacks) has released full control over the building, and is now very obviously the minority. The significance of this lies in that, like democracy, the decision-makers are the congregation, so this was a risk taken for what was perceived as a vulnerable group.

But a couple months on from this merger, I can say that I’m overjoyed and encouraged to see that trust had not been misplaced. There is such excitement in the church, as old resentments and hurts are being addressed and healed, as the pooled resources have allowed the church to begin to put all that it had been planning into action, and as our church family has tangibly grown. We sing with new gusto, with greater hope, as we see this example of what was once unimaginable come together with great love. “Thy Kingdom, come on earth as it is in heaven.”

**Mark:** My perspective on unity is shaped by my experience of communion in Christ in the far north. For ten years, I was a bishop in Alaska. For the past seven years, I have been the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop of Canada. These lands have great beauty—beyond words to describe. But there is a harsh edge to them—a human edge, an environmental edge. They have produced massive wealth for others, mostly in the south, mostly far away. But, among the Indigenous people there is great poverty and misery, largely the bi-product of a colonial economy and mentality. The Indigenous peoples are, therefore, still in the midst of an on-going and accelerating

dispossession from their land and their God-given relationship with the land. Despite the deep and visible pain of this dispossession, the wealth of those who creates these conditions continues to mask a great injustice and the condition of the people. In recent years the very harsh conditions of life in the North has been amplified by the front-line effects of climate change.

In the face of such a beautiful and threatening majesty, creation and our place in it looks quite different. In this improbable place, this place of unimaginable cold, something warm and healing finds a place to grow. If you live there, you find that difference and disagreement between Christians begins to melt at 50 below zero. This does not mean that when difference and disagreement narrows there is mushy compromise instead. The heart of Christian faith is unveiled in a manifold and awesome simplicity.

In Alaska, where the Orthodox Church is the spiritual and historical elder to the other churches, an incarnational faith, a vivid and tangible experience of the presence of God, has been a pattern for the Christian faith of Native people on the margins. This is the experience of others across the north. Today, in a rapidly secularizing North American population, the most Christianized population, in Alaska and Canada, are the people of the land, the people of the North. This is despite the lingering pain of complicity of Western churches in the attempts to destroy Native culture.

In one of the great reversals divinely engineered into history, the Native peoples of the North prophetically remind the rest of the earth's nations of God's call to faithfulness upon the land, to the God-given living relationship between vreation and humanity. As in the North, in the face of urgent need and great opportunity, our disunity is placed in a context that makes it look quite different. The unity and reality of our faith are revealed in a new way. The unity that is Jesus our Saviour in our midst is revealed as our only hope, our only option.

## Where to from Here?

**Alice:** I am still in the early days of my walk with the ecumenical movement. Yet, despite this relatively brief introduction, I am greatly encouraged by all that is going on—both in the greater movement and here with the World Council of Churches—and the more that I come to understand, the more I know there is to embrace.

As we see so many people gathered today, we trust that we are building further on the work of spiritual giants. As we are here together in Busan, we are aware of the legacy and the process that has been made. We know that lives have been dedicated to getting us to this point, but we are also conscious that we are not yet fully there. There are those who are not yet sitting amongst us.

Yes, there are those who have prepared the way for us, but it is us who now have to carry on with the journey towards unity, justice, and peace. We need to engage with this history, with all that has been achieved already—celebrating it, and being encouraged by it. We need to make ourselves, as individuals, the WCC, and the whole

church, accessible and relevant to all people, not just to those hearers who are intimately familiar with ecumenical jargon. We cannot be static, removed, or detached from the world around us. We need to reflect our creative Creator God, speaking into our contexts, simply being real with where we are as people, as a church. We need to acknowledge our collective hopes and struggles, turning to the scriptures to be encouraged, inspired, and challenged. We need to find our role in the quest for unity, to confess and commit to working together toward unity. Our search for unity is incomplete without our involvement. The idea of unity, no matter how well it is described or presented, is worthless unless it is a lived part of our experiences. Within our contexts, there will be areas where the fight for the unity we long for has been victorious, while there are other areas, where the struggle has yet to even begin. When we see all that has been done, and we see all that can still be done, how can we not be inspired? How can we not want to make our contribution to the uniting of all of creation?

**Mark:** To say that we live in a time of unprecedented change is perhaps too obvious. We seem to miss certain things. For one, we live in a time when the growth and expansion of local forms of Christian faith and community are beyond our capacity to adequately document or comprehend. These Christian communities have little awareness and even less connection to our Eastern and Western forms of Christian faith. By the time of the next assembly, should God will it, these will have become a matter so obvious that it will not be ignored.

Secondly, we live in a time when the societies around us are rapidly going through what they call “secularization.” Though secularization brings some things we can affirm, its most pervasive reality, from a Christian perspective, is that it provides a dense cover for the idolatry that, more than anything else in our estimation, deforms and distorts all of life, all of creation. Though salvation from a too-rugged religiosity is proclaimed, a slavery of the human spirit is the product. The victims of this spiritually shaped reality—a spiritual reality that is destructive to women and children, the poor, the people of the land, and creation—cry out and seek to be heard, seek a voice of justice. Where are those who say that they are the people of God?

To respond to these will require vision and courage that very few of us have felt called to develop. But, more important to our immediate context, they will call for and they will demand a unity among us that has never been our immediate experience. Vision, courage, and unity, wherever we can find them among ourselves, is the way that may allow us the capacity to receive the truth of God that will guide us in this hour.

**Alice:** The quest for unity is a challenge, because it means we have to let go of ourselves and our selfish desires. We can no longer simply consider ourselves. We have to trust, we have to be trustworthy. But ultimately, unity is a gift, for as we share

together we realise joy in walking together, taking comfort that we are not alone and believing that united justice and peace can be a reality.

I long to see a world that is united and working together, as one, for the good of everyone. I long to see a world that has no divides as we celebrate each other's diversity, where we commit to live in harmony, creating a just and peaceful world. The unity statement you are considering at this assembly tells us about a journey towards unity and why we're on it. It then invites us to join in by contemplating our role in unifying all of life, and then putting it into action.

This journey towards the unity of creation, humanity, and the church is one that I want to be a part of.

**Mark:** We may expect, we may believe, we may trust that God will reveal to us the truth that will guide us. The revelation of the unity that is the living word of God in creation, history, and the church is, without doubt, the clarity and substance of that guidance. Our context, this moment of challenge in the trajectory of God's word in creation, our moment, is surely one that will reveal the urgent and saving call for us to find our God-given unity.

# Mission in Changing Landscapes

## OPENING REMARKS

*Kirsteen Kim*

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*Kirsteen Kim is Professor of Theology and World Christianity at Leeds Trinity University, UK. She is a member of the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies and the editor of Mission Studies. She has been serving as vice-moderator of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches.*

It is my great honour and privilege this morning to introduce this first thematic plenary of the assembly. As a missionary, mission theologian, and vice-moderator of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), it is also a source of pride to moderate this session where *mission* will be the focus of attention. And as the wife of Sebastian C.H. Kim from Korea, as one who has lived here and has family here, it is a particular pleasure to welcome you all in Busan.

Mission is integral to the ecumenical story, and one of the four core goals of the World Council of Churches (WCC) is to promote the common witness of the churches. So it is that we devote this first thematic plenary to the topic. It is especially appropriate that we consider the theme of mission here in Korea. The Korean churches are known worldwide for their efforts to evangelize the peninsula in terms of spreading the good news and growing churches; and Korean Christians are also known as martyrs for the faith and advocates of freedom and justice. Today there is a vibrant overseas missionary movement from Korea, and Korean churches give generously to enable gospel proclamation, social service, and unity around the world.

Today's plenary on mission is informed by the new WCC statement on mission and evangelism, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*. You have all received a copy of this statement together with a study guide. In keeping with the theme of this assembly, the new statement declares, "The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> In order to bring about justice

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1. Jooseop Keum, ed., *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, with a Practical Guide (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), 4-6, ¶2.

and peace, it calls the church “to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ with persuasion, inspiration and conviction.”<sup>2</sup>

This plenary has two objectives. The first is to highlight common challenges and new opportunities in mission in light of new global developments. The second objective is to inspire renewed commitment to the call for common witness. To address these we have planned an action-oriented reflection that is intended to enhance ecumenical cooperation in future mission work. The plenary will comprise three presentations from the platform interspersed with two short videos and a cultural performance.

The presentations will reflect on, first, mission as participation in the work of the life-giving Spirit. Rev. Professor Stephen Bevans will take a theological approach giving the big picture of the changing landscapes of world mission today and emphasize the dynamic, transformative nature of mission in the Spirit. In the second presentation, Rev. Cecilia Castillo Nanjari will explore new ways of witnessing together to the gospel of life. In response to the needs of our time, she will point to concrete action points for doing evangelism among youth in contemporary contexts. Third, Bishop Dr Geevarghese Mor Coorilos will introduce the new mission statement as a holistic view of mission towards fullness of life in justice and peace. He will illustrate some of the concrete life-affirming changes that this kind of mission has made in multi-religious contexts.

The first of the two videos will be a production of the CWME that focuses on mission in changing landscapes. The second short video will come from CWME partners and share inspiring contextual examples of mission work in line with the new mission statement. The cultural performance will illustrate dramatically the meaning of *Together towards Life*. It is by the same Filipino group that so enriched the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Manila last year. The plenary will conclude with a call to churches and partners to strengthen our ecumenical cooperation in mission.

In keeping with the ethos and working practice of the CWME, the presentations come from among ecumenical partners, the CWME commission, and the wider constituency, representing the diversity we so much value in mission.

During and after the plenary, we invite feedback on your thoughts and experience. You can send your comments directly to the organizers in any of the ways suggested on the screen. In addition, you are welcome to interact through the two related “ecumenical conversations” on mission and on evangelism, to participate in the workshops on mission, and to view the mission exhibits.

So without further comment from me, we offer our reflection and call to action in mission.

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2. *Ibid.*, ¶109.

# MISSION OF THE SPIRIT

*Stephen Bevans*

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*Rev. Prof. Stephen Bevans is a priest in the Catholic missionary congregation of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), US. Ordained in 1971, he served as a missionary from 1972 to 1981 in the Philippines. He is currently professor of Mission and Culture at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.*

*“The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of the whole of the church’s mission.”*

*“Mission is finding out where the Spirit is at work, and joining in.”*

These two lines are from two of the most revered religious leaders of our time. The first was written by John Paul II in his landmark encyclical, “The Mission of the Redeemer.” The second is from a speech to evangelical Anglicans by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.<sup>1</sup>

It is with the same conviction and the same faith in the Holy Spirit that the document, *Together towards Life, Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, we present to you this morning has been written.

It is with the same conviction and same faith in the Holy Spirit that this document proposes a fresh, dynamic approach to engaging in the work of mission and evangelism in today’s changing landscapes.

Mission, the document proclaims, is rooted in the overflowing love and world-embracing communion of the triune God.<sup>2</sup> God is mission. That mission is the creation, protection, and redemption of all creation.

Mission is about cosmic flourishing.

God’s mission works with and within all creation to lead it to justice and peace.

God’s mission works with and within all creation to lead it to life in abundance.<sup>3</sup>

God’s mission is God’s holy mystery calling the entire creation into life-giving communion through Jesus the Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

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1. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html), §21; Rowan Williams, “Fresh Expressions” website, <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/guide/about/principles/transform>. Cited also in Kirsteen Kim, *Joining in with the Spirit: Connecting World Church and Local Mission* (London: Epworth Press, 2010), 1.

2. Jooseop Keum, ed., *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes, with a Practical Guide* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), 4-6, ¶2 and 19. Hereafter, TTL.

3. TTL, ¶1, ¶102.

4. Ibid., ¶105.

The Spirit is God's power present and active from the first nanosecond of creation (see Gen. 1:2).

The Spirit is God's power guiding the formation of gases and countless numbers of stars.<sup>5</sup>

The Spirit is God's power guiding the process of emerging life—microbes, koalas, elephants, trees, human beings on this tiny planet in an average size galaxy, and perhaps life on so many more than we can imagine.<sup>6</sup>

The Spirit is God's power at the origins of the world's religions,<sup>7</sup> and the creative, healing, prophetic, and life-giving presence of God in Israel's history.

The Spirit is God's power taking flesh and a human face in the life and atoning work of Jesus of Nazareth.

It is the Spirit who anointed Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan.

It is the Spirit who worked through him in preaching good news to the poor, healing the lame, giving sight to the blind, proclaiming forgiveness to sinners in a year of favour of the Lord (Luke 4:18; Matt. 11:2-5)—he came that humanity might have life, and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

It is the Spirit in whom he cried out Abba, Father (Luke 10:21-22), and it was surely the Spirit who gave him the courage to endure his passion and death on the cross for our salvation.

It is in the Spirit that the Father raised him from the dead (Rom. 8:11), and it is the Spirit that Jesus breathed on the disciples, sending them as the Father had sent him, so that they would be agents of life as well (John 20:22-23).<sup>8</sup>

That same Spirit anointed those fearful, timid disciples at Pentecost, in the same way that Jesus himself had been anointed.<sup>9</sup>

And it was the Spirit, as we read in the Acts of the apostles, who expanded the early community's vision to see that all peoples, all nations, all cultures, all lands are included in God's offer of abundant life (see Acts 2-11).<sup>10</sup>

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5. See Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2004), 48, 172.

6. See Thomas F. O'Meara, *Vast Universe: Extraterrestrials and Christian Revelation* (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2012).

7. See Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Missionary Nature of the Church* (Ad Gentes), §6, with special attention to the first footnote to this paragraph. See also Vatican Council II, *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* (*Nostra Aetate*), §2; RM §28.

8. TTL ¶13, ¶14.

9. See Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Complete Three Volumes in One Volume) (New York: Crossroad, 1997), Vol. I, 19.

10. Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2004), 10-31.

The Spirit leads us—together—towards life.

Together in the Spirit we commit ourselves to lead our world towards life.

That life comes in its fullness when women and men accept Jesus' identity as God's true icon among us (Col. 1:15), who has poured out life-giving forgiveness in his ministry, death, and resurrection, and who has shared his Spirit with us.

We acknowledge that it is the Spirit who is the principal agent of communicating that good, life-giving news, and that our task is first of all to find out where the Spirit is at work in the world, and then to join in that life-giving work.

What this document proclaims is that the Spirit is at work in movements of eco-justice throughout the world, from tree-huggers in India to tree-planters in Zimbabwe, from green seminary projects in the US. to Green Parties in Europe, from efforts to save species in the Brazilian rainforests to efforts to save the whales in our oceans.

Mission is recognizing that here the Spirit is at work and calls Christians to join in.<sup>11</sup>

What this document proclaims in that the Spirit is at work in movements throughout the world that privilege the poor and the marginalized.

It proclaims boldly that mission is not so much *to* such poor and marginalized peoples as *from* them to those of us at the privileged centre. They are where the Spirit is working, and the task of all Christians is to join in in action and solidarity, resistance and struggle.<sup>12</sup>

What this document proclaims is that the Spirit is at work among all cultures, all peoples, and all religions, and that the work of contextualizing or inculturating the gospel—as well as the hard, difficult, and sometimes dangerous work of inter-religious dialogue—is where the Spirit is at work, calling us to join in.<sup>13</sup>

What this document proclaims is that the Spirit is at work in the hearts of all women and men, calling them gently yet persuasively to the way, the life, and the truth found in Jesus of Nazareth, the Savior and Redeemer of the world.

It is Jesus who shows us the face of the Father, especially on the cross, where he gave up his Spirit (John 19:31), and in the resurrection, when he shared his Spirit with us, the church.

It is the work of spreading this good news of the true face of God that the Spirit calls us to join in.

When we see the true face of God, our hearts are stirred to conversion and repentance, our sins are forgiven, we turn to one another in peace, we work together for justice, we band together to protect creation, we recognize God's Spirit in all peoples, cultures, and religions.<sup>14</sup>

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11. TTL, ¶¶19-23.

12. Ibid., ¶¶36-54.

13. Ibid., ¶¶93-100.

14. Ibid., ¶¶80-85.

The Spirit is the principal agent of mission. Mission is finding out where the Spirit is working, and joining in. *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*. Come, Holy Spirit. *Ven, Espiritu Santo*. *Vien Sant Esprit, oh so seo seong lyeong nim!* Lead us together towards justice and peace! Lead us together toward life!

# NEW WAYS OF DOING EVANGELISM

*Cecilia Castillo Nanjari*

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*Rev. Cecilia Castillo Nanjari is from the Pentecostal Mission Church in Chile. She is the coordinator of the Ministry of Women and Gender Justice (PMJG) of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). From 2000 to 2007, she was a member of the Joint Consultative Group between the WCC and Pentecostals.*

*“I am laughing on the outside,  
While inside I cry;  
And so I’ll have to live,  
Until the day I die.”  
(Baguala)*

I come from a long narrow country “at the ends of the earth,” according to the traditional geography that I was taught at school.<sup>1</sup> I come from the land of Gabriela Mistral, Violeta Parra, and Isabel Allende. I come from a country of women trade unionists and women’s rights activists, of women members of parliament and rural workers, of Indigenous women. I come from the land of the many “Marías of life” who daily struggle to find alternative ways to live and resist. I come from a continent where women are noticeably empowered. I come from Latin America and the Caribbean—lands of ethnic mixtures, of native peoples, and Afro-descendant communities, whose diverse cultural threads make up the fabric of this continent.

Latin America and the Caribbean are constantly struggling with monstrous contradictions, not the least of which is the enormous economic wealth of the few and the hand-to-mouth existence of the vast majority.

Migrations and forced displacements show us the faces of women, alone or with children, suffering the pain of exile from their land and in search of a land that can ensure their survival from day to day.

The trafficking of girls and women in that modern form of slavery shows a shameless lack of respect for human life. For the sake of easy money, our wills and our consciences are bought and sold.

Gender-based violence against women, domestic violence within families, and femicide are publicly prosecuted in the courts of law, but, for the vast majority, they have become everyday items in the news that the media sensationalize in order to hold their audiences. At times these cases are mentioned in timid, soothing prayers in our churches, affirming that it is God’s will that we should just accept.

Hunger that continues to plague the world; wars waged in the name of peace; the market-centred approach to everything, in which human beings and the environment

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1. Translated from the original text in Spanish.

merely serve as a pretext; technology presented as an object of consumption rather than as a service—these are part of a landscape that is familiar to all of us here today in this plenary, in one way or another.

People talk of post-modernity in Latin America, but I ask myself: Has modernity ever actually arrived in this continent? And, for whom, how, and for what? Everything today is more complex; but the basic human problems remain, only in a different guise.

Losing time, losing friends, losing one's voice and memory. We have already become accustomed to losing so much that it is no longer possible to speak about living: we simply survive.<sup>2</sup>

So, what about the churches? Sadly, they too are part of this scenario.

Many of them take advantage of simple faith, turn it into a commodity, and then market it as just another consumer item: quick and with no relationship to reality. They try to dress up evangelism in a new way in order not to lose ground, distancing themselves from the essence of the gospel and from human problems.

As regards women, the churches continue to try to control their sexuality, bodies, and reproduction and promote a single image of the family that is not true to real life. I cannot accept that in Latin America even today the full recognition of women's rights is still debated among the churches and not fully adopted.

And, in the midst of this scenario there is the gospel, and the question that will not go away: How can we witness to the gospel in the midst of it all?

In the context of Latin America, as well as in other regions of the world, we know that water, bread, work, and a life with dignity are precious goods. That is the good news to which we wish to witness, and we just cannot do this if our understanding of evangelism is based on consumption, profit, and greed. We need to condemn this kind of commercialization in the churches, as Jesus did in the temple when he lashed out with a whip. Jesus was severe toward commercialization, and always focused on the community, on the context, on humaneness, on healing, on justice, and on sharing bread—something that is very old, but still relevant today.<sup>3</sup>

It seems to me that the necessary first step is that we evangelize ourselves and not evangelize others. We need to rekindle our enthusiasm and believe in it as we proclaim the good news of Jesus. Evangelizing ourselves means being in close dialogue, in close solidarity—looking into the eyes of others as Jesus did when speaking with the Samaritan woman and with his followers.

In order to witness to the gospel, we have much to learn from the ancestral cultures and spiritualities of Indigenous peoples. In Indigenous cultures, living a good life involves recovering another view of life, one in contrast with the capitalist system of consumption that does not enable us to live a good life. As an ideal sought

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2. Paraphrased from *The Bible and Education*, by Rev. Nancy Cardoso.

3. These thoughts come from a dialogue with Rev. Haidi Jarschel.

by men and women in Indigenous cultures, living a good life means the fullness of life, the social, economic, and political well-being that people desire. Understood as the complete development of peoples, living a good life implies fundamentally questioning the contemporary idea of development, in particular its association with economic growth, its inability to solve the problems of poverty, and its obliviousness to poverty's severe social and environmental impact. The attitude of development constitutes a challenge to our life and mission, for there can be no living a good life and coexistence without a permanent attitude of dialogue.

Would this not also be witnessing to the essence of the gospel of life?

Witnessing to the gospel of life has to do with the experiences of youth, who, through campaigns against abuse and workshops on reproductive and sexual rights, are condemning antiquated bad practices in our churches and patriarchal societies and announcing paradigm changes and a new age of intergenerational relationships. Witnessing within life has to do with experiences of pastoral work among women, who meet in small groups to socialize, reflect on the word of God, pray in sisterhood, learn from each other, share bread around the table, and especially grow in spirituality through their dialogue as sisters. These women are also witnessing to the gospel of life by raising their voices to draw attention to bad practices within churches and their denial of gender justice. They do this through advocacy in the political arena and in civil society for a better quality of life, and through demonstrations in the streets denouncing crimes against human rights.

For women, witnessing to the gospel of life means collecting the “smallest coins” in each faith community around the world, a solidarity effort supporting experiments and projects by other women and young people seeking to live a good life (*Hermanidad de la Moneda Más Pequeña* / the Fellowship of the Smallest Coin).

As I was reflecting upon all this, a news release came through from the Latin American and Caribbean Communication Agency (ALC) stating that the Cuban pastor, Héctor Méndez

has structured his pastoral work so as to give it a practical dimension within the area of activity of his church community, one of the most populated and deprived districts of the Cuban capital, and distinctly working class. His work includes such important projects as the creation of a public library, a telephone hotline for counselling and help on sex-, drug-, and alcohol-related topics, and even the creation of an amateur baseball team, which has been a means of bringing children and youth in the congregation closer together and of giving witness to the fact that the church is not an antiseptic place within its physical context, but, rather, needs to become “infected” and “infect others” with its sense of hope and be a source of motivation for living.<sup>4</sup>

Those are concrete examples of witnessing to the good news in the midst of life.

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4. *ALC News*, 10 October 2013.

Let's put an end to stereotyped forms of evangelism that are out of context and disconnected from the political, social, and cultural context in which we are living.

I believe that we in the churches, united as we are first and foremost in the triune God and invited to live harmoniously and happily together, cannot limit ourselves to compartmentalizing the gospel or selling it to the "highest bidder." Our mission is to make the gospel a way of living—living a good life—for the entire world.

On the basis of our reflection this far, I ask the following questions: How has our work as Christian churches—how has our way of exposing ourselves to the gospel—contributed to living a good life? How do we appear to others? What is our attitude to them?

From the document, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, it is worthwhile noting the following statement:

Evangelism is done in self-emptying humility, with respect towards others and in dialogue with people of different cultures and faiths. It should, in this landscape, also involve confronting structures and cultures of oppression and dehumanization that are in contradiction to the values of God's reign.<sup>5</sup>

It is in this way that the working of the Holy Spirit empowers us to witness with our actions that living a good life, living life in its fullness, as the gospel proclaims, is lived out as a community. For that is where people meet one another, can dialogue in close contact, share their problems, and find solutions together—in small groups where other forms of spirituality spring up, in sisterly and brotherly solidarity and fellowship.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, our small communities continue, through new actions and with new eyes, to strive to achieve life in abundance, as Jesus proclaimed. We continue to search for our roots for the sake of healing these sacred lands. We continue to strive to recover our spiritualities as expressed through our physical selves. We bless our ancestors and continue to be determined to expose ourselves to the gospel, evangelize ourselves with God's blessing, transformed into a space for living in fullness.

In the words of Violeta Parra, a rural Chilean woman, let us give *thanks to life, which has given us so much*.

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5. Jooseop Keum, ed., *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes, with a Practical Guide* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), 39, ¶106.

# MISSION TOWARD FULLNESS OF LIFE

## *Metropolitan Geevarghese Mor Coorilos*

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*Bishop Dr Geevarghese Mor Coorilos is Metropolitan of Niranam diocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India and also the moderator of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.*

The World Council of Churches' (WCC) new mission and evangelism statement, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, prepared by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), is about seeking "vision, concepts, and directions for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism in the changing global landscape."<sup>1</sup> Given that there has been only one official WCC mission and evangelism affirmation<sup>2</sup> since the historic integration of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the WCC in 1961 and that the global scenario has significantly changed since then, a fresh look at the world mission context and its ramifications for contemporary mission thinking and praxis was imperative.

Some of the contextual changes that are addressed in the new mission affirmation include the shift of the centre of gravity of global Christianity from global North to global South; the sweeping influence of neo-liberal economic ideologies across the world; the impact of migration; new forms of oppression of people and environment; novel ways of being churches; and the phenomenal rise of Pentecostal and charismatic movements. The new mission affirmation aims to stimulate creative mission reflection and encourage discernment of action by WCC member churches, affiliated bodies, and related agencies. It is also expected that the new mission affirmation will provide a renewed appreciation of the mission of the Holy Spirit, itself understood from a trinitarian perspective. It articulates a new understanding of a prophetic missiology—"mission from the margins"—that affirms life in its fullness vis-à-vis justice, inclusivity, and integrity of creation. This essay is an attempt to look at some of the key affirmations of the new WCC mission and evangelism statement.

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1. See Jooseop Keum, ed., *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), 3. Hereafter, TTL

2. The previous official WCC mission affirmation, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*, was adopted in 1982.

## Mission Is Affirmation of the Life of the Holy Trinity

According to the new mission statement, mission is essentially affirmation of trinitarian life. In this sense, what the document offers is *missio trinitatis*. It affirms that the triune God is the God of life and that we are called to participate in the life-affirming mission of the Holy Trinity, itself the source and fountain of mission. As the document itself puts it, “Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation.”<sup>3</sup> Mission, in this sense, may be defined as the outpouring of love, justice, mutual sharing, and equality that characterize and bind together the Holy Trinity. The trinitarian life that is affirmed here is the result of *perichoresis*, the mutual indwelling and sharing of love, justice, and peace among the members of the divine trinitarian community. Trinitarian life or fullness of life, therefore, is in clear contradiction with “luxurious life,” which is being privatized and enjoyed by an elite minority, often at the expense of the vast majority. It does not view “goodness of life” in terms of greedy quest for accumulating wealth, possessions, armaments, and hegemonic power to exercise mastery over others.<sup>4</sup> Trinitarian life is derived from a trinitarian economy, which fosters sharing, justice, and fairness: fullness of life for all.

The act of the triune God is characterized by an egalitarian, interdependent, communitarian, and inclusive way of operation. However, economic globalization today has effectively supplanted the God of life with its own “ungod” of Mammon—the god of free market capitalism that propagates a “soteriology” of “saving” the world through creation of undue wealth and prosperity. Countering such idolatrous visions and denouncing the economy of greed in the strongest language possible, the new mission statement offers a counter-cultural missiology. The prophetic dimension of the new mission statement therefore also lies in its outright rejection of the idolatry of Mammon in a world of free-market economy.

It also affirms in no uncertain terms that “a denial of life is a rejection of the God of Life.”<sup>5</sup> It implies that a trinitarian mission is one that affirms *all* life. Life is essentially a theological principle and an ethical postulate, as Paulos Mar Gregorios maintains. According to him, “All life is God’s gift. Recognizing our lives and those of others as a sacred gift from God will have crucial ramifications on how we make our moral choices (ethics) and also how we perceive witness in the world (mission).”<sup>6</sup> Life is treated here in its holistic sense, inclusive of biological, human, non-human, and

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3. TTL, 4, ¶2.

4. Quoted from “Economy of Life, Justice and Peace for All: A Call to Action” (WCC, 2012) p. 1. This document is the result of a six-year process of consultations and regional studies linking poverty, wealth, and ecology.

5. TTL, 4, ¶1.

6. Paulos Mar Gregorios, “Nuclear War and Human Life,” in *A Textbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Robin Gill (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985), 404-10.

eternal dimensions of life. This is an inclusive vision of mission that would challenge all forms of discrimination on any basis.

We affirm life with dignity and intrinsic worth when we confront those systems and structures that discriminate people on the basis of caste, race, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, HIV status, sexual orientation, and so on and thereby deny dignified life to people. In other words, to affirm our faith in the triune God is to choose life in its fullness, and to do that is to participate in God's mission of life affirmation. To use the words of the new mission affirmation, "God invites us into the life-giving mission of the Triune God and empowers us to bear witness to the vision of abundant life for all in the new heaven and earth."<sup>7</sup> As the book of Deuteronomy urges us: "Choose life so that you and your descendants may live" (Deut. 30:19). *Mission, therefore, is to turn to the triune God of life.*

## Mission as Transformative Spirituality

The missiology of the new mission statement is Spirit-centred. A distinct focus on pneumatology is one of the salient features of the document. The Holy Spirit is discerned wherever life in fullness is affirmed; where the oppressed are liberated; where broken communities are reconciled and healed; and where creation is restored. Thus, the scope of the mission of the Holy Spirit is not confined to the ecclesial community alone, but is encountered outside the church as well, where struggles for fullness of life and justice take place. The economy of the Holy Spirit that is highlighted here is one that considers the Holy Spirit as the source of Jesus Christ and the church as the eschatological coming together (*synaxis*) of the people of God in the reign of God. "Mission as going forth is therefore the outcome, rather than the origin of the church, and is called 'liturgy after the liturgy.'"<sup>8</sup>

Another major highlight of the mission statement is the specific accent on *mission as spirituality*. Spirituality is what accords our lives their deepest meaning and provides dynamism and energy. Christian witness is not only what we *do* in mission, but also *how we live out* mission. In other words, the *being mode* of mission is as important as the *doing mode*. Authentic mission is sustained by spiritualities that have deep roots in trinitarian community of love, justice, and integrity of creation. Put differently, mission as *askesis*, expressed in authentic Christian life styles, is what accords mission of the Spirit credibility. To the extent that our lives in the world around us match with that of Christ, we witness to Christ. In other words, when there is no mismatch between what we proclaim and how we live out the gospel, mission is authentically and powerfully exercised. In our own times, the influential example of the present bishop of Rome, Pope Francis, is a great manifestation of mission as *askesis*—mission as spirituality. Transformative spirituality reconnects us to others. It is about following Jesus Christ who reveals life in full communion with God, with

7. TTL, 4, ¶1.

8. Ibid., 9, ¶17.

neighbour, and with creation. Our participation in the *missio Dei* is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (*ruah*).

The mission spirituality that the new mission affirmation articulates, as part of the mission of the Spirit, is transformative. Mission spirituality, therefore, would confront those systems and values that destroy life, wherever they are in operation, be it the realm of politics, economics, or even churches.

The mission statement reinforces this radical dimension of mission as transformative spirituality by echoing the similar challenge expressed in the Edinburgh 2010 common call: “Our faithfulness to God and God’s free gift of Life compels us to confront idolatrous assumptions, unjust systems, politics of domination and exploitation in our current world economic order.”<sup>9</sup> This means, as already maintained, that mission of the Holy Spirit also necessarily entails discernment of evil spirits where forces of death and destruction of life prevail. *Mission, therefore, is to turn to the Holy Spirit who transforms life.*

## Mission Is Creation-Centred

The new mission statement affirms a missiology that is creation-centred. It articulates a missiology that begins with creation. The belief that God created humanity as part of a larger web of life and that all life was given intrinsic worth by God is a fundamental assertion of the biblical faith. In fact, the very act of *missio Dei* begins with the act of creation. As Samuel Rayan opines, “The earth is God’s daughter and the creation accounts evoke in us the spirit of a birthday celebration.”<sup>10</sup> Creation and celebration of all life is deemed a missionary activity of the triune God. The document affirms gospel as “the good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society.”<sup>11</sup>

God’s mission therefore is cosmic. When the planet is facing such serious threats as global warming, climate change, and the exploitation of nature due to excessive greed and undue profit motives, mission as quest for eco-justice is hugely important. Here again, the new mission affirmation breaks new grounds in that it goes beyond those understandings of mission that tend to understand and practice mission as something done *by* humanity *to* others. We tend to forget that in many ways *creation is in mission to humanity*.<sup>12</sup> For instance, nature and its resources have the power to heal. In other words, the mission statement does not present creation as a mere object of human concern, but as an active agent of God’s mission that channels divine grace and blessing.

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9. *Ibid.*, 13, ¶30.

10. Samuel Rayan, “The Earth is the Lord’s,” in *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, ed. David G. Hallman (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 131.

11. TTL, 2, ¶4.

12. *Ibid.*, 10, ¶22.

The life dictum of Indigenous peoples—land is life—(*Macliing Dulag*)<sup>13</sup> represents a world view that recognizes the integral oneness of human life with nature. In the same vein, the mission statement here affirms that “the creation’s life and God’s life are intertwined” and that God will be in all (*pan-en-theism*) (1 Cor. 15:28). Thus the new mission affirmation overcomes the dualism of creation–history (nature–humanity) and adopts an approach that brings them together. This is also the biblical vision as there is a constant movement, back and forth, between the poles of history and creation. The mission statement, in much the same vein, would affirm that “mission begins with God’s act of creation and continues in re-creation, by the enlivening power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>14</sup> *Mission, therefore, is to turn to God in creation.*

## Mission from the Margins

The section “Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins” figures at the very centre of the new mission statement. This is hugely important, as “mission from the margins” is indeed one of the defining features of the statement. What makes the new mission statement distinct is the affirmation of the agency of the marginalized in mission. This is a missiology where the hitherto “receivers” of mission reclaim their status as subjects and initiators of mission. In this sense, the delineation of the paradigm “mission from the margins” here is groundbreaking. In today’s world, all life is imperiled. The most crucial threats to life today are manifested in the form of social, economic, ecological, and nuclear injustice. Life is valued hierarchically in contexts where systems of social and economic hegemony are in control. This is where “mission from the margins” as an alternative missiological paradigm that “seeks to counteract injustice in life, church, and mission” assumes great pertinence.

It challenges the conventional missiological wisdom that mission is always done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, by the global North to the global South, and by the centre to the margins. As the mission statement would put it,

People on the margins have agency and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view. People on the margins ... often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival and can best discern the urgency of their struggles. ... Through struggles in and for life, marginalized people are reservoirs of the active hope, collective resistance, and perseverance that are needed to remain faithful to the promised reign of God.<sup>15</sup>

Through the pain and pathos of daily experiences of life-denying forces, the marginalized come to know their God of life. This is the unique epistemological faculty

13. “Economy of Life,” 1.

14. TTL, 37, ¶103.

15. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

of the marginalized that the mission statement considers as important in discerning the life-affirming Spirit in mission. To borrow the words of Gopal Guru, a leading Indian sociologist, only the marginalized have the moral stamina to effect social change and transformation. This is the dynamic agency of the marginalized that the mission text advocates through “mission from the margins.”

This is mission from the margins, not *to* the margins or even *at* the margins where the marginalized are treated as mere recipients of charity. Mission from the centre, motivated by paternalistic attitudes and superiority complex, has often been complicit with life-denying and oppressive systems.<sup>16</sup> In its place, the alternative missionary movement of “mission from the margins” claims active agency of mission for the marginalized. God chooses the vulnerable and the marginalized—those at the margins—to fulfill God’s mission of establishing justice and peace. People at the margins are thus the primary agents of God’s mission, as Jesus said, “The last would be the first” (Matt. 20:16). The purpose of mission here is not simply to move people from the margins to the centre, but to challenge those (systems and people) who remain at the centre by keeping people on the margins. This has implications for churches, as they are challenged to transform their own power structures. This is an urgent challenge that the global church, mission agencies, and the ecumenical movement as a whole need to address urgently. *Mission, therefore, is to turn to the margins*

## Mission as Dialogue of Life

One of the areas where the new mission statement has not been able to focus sufficiently enough is that of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation and their implications for mission. However, the life-centric, trinitarian pneumatological framework of the mission statement opens up new vistas for meaningful encounters of inter-faith cooperation and dialogue, especially for “dialogue of life.” Much of what we call inter-religious dialogue in ecumenical theology has remained at the intellectual and academic level. To borrow the words of Stackhouse, the need of the hour is to explore the concerns of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation at the level of *poiesis* rather than *theoria*.<sup>17</sup> Genuine dialogue between and among faiths should take place in meetings of hearts rather than minds. This is precisely the kind of dialogue that the new mission statement would enhance through its trinitarian pneumatology of life.

The Holy Spirit, the wind of God, blows where it/she wills. This implies that we cannot confine the work (mission) of the Holy Spirit to certain realms alone. We cannot comprehend the mysterious ways in which the Holy Spirit operates in the world and therefore cannot set limits to the salvific work of God. God’s Spirit can be encountered in all cultures and faith traditions where life in its fullness is affirmed. The mission statement therefore would acknowledge and value the spiritualities in

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16. *Ibid.*, 16, ¶41.

17. Quoted in David G. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2006), 607.

every faith tradition as long as they are life enhancing and life affirming. Hence the statement would boldly maintain that “authentic mission makes the ‘other’ a partner in, not an ‘object’ of mission.”<sup>18</sup>

The mission affirmation tends to adopt a theocentric position in its approach to inter-religious encounters. It assumes that God is encountered in all faiths in some way or other. God is there before we come (Acts 17). Therefore, the mission challenge in a pluralistic context is not to bring God along, but “to witness to the God who is already there.” This would enable dialogue partners to hold honest encounters where everyone can share with one another in an open and mutually respectful manner. This of course would raise the question of whether dialogue is an alternative to evangelism. The mission statement would answer the question by maintaining that evangelism and dialogue are distinct and interrelated. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ is done authentically when it is done in humility. Such authentic evangelism happens in the context of “dialogues of life and action.” Evangelism, in other words, would entail both “proclamation of our deepest convictions as well as listening to others and being challenged and enriched by others” (Acts 17).

Appreciating and sharing the divine in other faiths is a gift of God. This divine gift makes one’s religiosity and spirituality mature and genuine. The daily life encounters of ordinary people, particularly those of the poor and the marginalized provide us with more meaningful starting points than abstract concepts of God for our common witness and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. As the author argues elsewhere, it is at the interjections of lived-out experiences of people of all faiths and no faith that one encounters religiosity and spirituality in their profound sense.

Our participation in the common struggles for human dignity and rights is therefore a genuine form of witness and dialogue. This is often called *diapraxis*—synthesis of dialogue and witness. No one is excluded from participating in God’s mission of affirming life. Hence the new mission statement would affirm: “Joining in with the Spirit we are enabled to cross cultural and religious barriers to work together towards life.”<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

Churches are called to meet the triune God of life at the margins where the victims of oppressive and life denying forces have already taken over the agency of God’s life-affirming mission. This should also challenge the church to join civil society initiatives that are already engaged in struggles for human rights, justice, and fullness of life. What can and must challenge the ecumenical movement today is nothing but the cries of people at the margins for life.

The new WCC mission affirmation will hopefully help member churches and related agencies to make meaningful sense of the global ecclesial and social milieu

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18. TTL, 34, ¶93.

19. Ibid., 40, ¶110.

from a contemporary missiological perspective. The statement, being “life-centric,” will challenge churches to assume the role of a servant rather than master of God’s mission and not to conceive of mission in colonial, expansionist, and triumphalist terms. It will have implications for the way mission and evangelism are carried out by churches, as the new mission affirmation advocates authentic mission and evangelism that promote values of humility, hospitality, justice, inclusivity, integrity of creation, and dialogue of life.

# Lead Us to Do Justice

## ROUNDTABLE: JUSTICE, INJUSTICE, AND THE CHURCHES

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*This conversation took place as part of the plenary session on justice during the World Council of Churches 10th General Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, on 6 November 2013.*

Looking at the injustice that prevails in the world and the Christian imperative for justice, the justice plenary focussed on social (discrimination, gender justice, marginalized communities), economic, and ecological justice in order to mobilize resources to tackle in a more concerted way some of the defining issues of our times.

The prevailing globalized culture seems to accept and legitimize social, economic, and ecological injustice. So much so that human and ecological abuse, exclusion, and impoverishment of the vulnerable and the denial of rights and dignity of many (and particularly of people with disabilities, women, children, and people with HIV and AIDS) are increasingly seen as inevitable fallouts in a world gripped by the logic of dominion, growth, and greed. Injustice has always been a part of human history, but the injustice of our generation to the Earth and to our own brothers and sisters does not seem to have parallels.

Amidst this, churches need to recognize the moral imperative of confronting injustice as an integral part of “costly discipleship.” This is an area where churches can make a difference within themselves and their inner life, in areas of public engagement and in being the conscience keepers in the wider society by working with people of other living faiths and ideologies committed to the cause of justice. The plenary explores Jesus as the justice of God in a world marred by division, greed, and destruction of life, building on the testimony of resilient communities from various regions that are advocating for economy of life and eco-justice.

Moderator and talk-show host **Rev. Dr Angelique Walker-Smith**, United States, is a Baptist pastor, a television journalist, preacher, author, and speaker. She is the executive director/minister of the Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis. Her talk-show guests included the following:

Mr Martin Khor, Malaysia, is the executive director of the South Centre, an inter-governmental policy research and analysis institution of developing countries, based

in Penang, Malaysia. He is an expert in issues of international trade justice, globalization, and development.

**Dr Julia Duchrow**, Germany, is the head of the Human Rights and Peace Desk of Brot für die Welt in Berlin, Germany.

**Bishop Iosif of Patara**, Argentina, Ecumenical Patriarchate, is the General Vicar of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires and South America.

**Rev. Phumzile Mabizela**, South Africa, Presbyterian Church of Africa, is the executive director of INERELA+, Interfaith Network of Religious Leaders living with or personally affected by HIV and AIDS.

Stories from the audience were presented by: **Rev. Tafue Lusama**, Tuvalu, General Secretary of the Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu; **Dr Lukas Andrianos**, Madagascar/Greece, Ecumenical Patriarchate; **Ms Shyreen Mvula**, Malawi, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.

## Martin Khor

There are two ways of looking at justice. You can do justice when something has gone wrong—you wipe up the mess, try to give money to the poor, and so on. But that doesn't really get to the roots of the problem. So what we need to do is to look at the policies that have been designed to lead to poverty and injustice. And then we need to tackle those policies at the root if we are really to solve this problem. So I just want to bring out four major issues.

- 1. *The world financial crisis.*** We are all suffering from it and the reason is that the governments, particularly in the United States and Europe, have designed the economy in such a way as to give priority to the financial institutions. It wasn't like that before—after the Second World War finance was relatively tame and regulated. You couldn't transfer money abroad unless you were trading and so on. But today they have deregulated so that finance becomes a monster in itself that needs to be reregulated. So because of the greed of those who control these financial institutions and work on them, they have disrupted the whole global economy including in the developing countries, including the unregulated flows of funds from the developed countries to the developing countries. When the funds come in, it causes a lot of problems. And when the funds flow out, it causes devastation, because interest rates have gone back up in Europe or in the United States. So the re-regulation of finance is something that is very important that we need to call for; we need to understand the issues and we need to call for reforms.

**2. Trade rules.** We have rules in the WTO and new free trade agreements—for example, we are negotiating the trans-Pacific partnership agreement in this specific part of the world—and they contain many provisions, many rules that are very unfair. For example, the rules on agriculture allow the rich countries to continue to subsidize their agriculture sector to the tune of 400 billion US dollars a year when developing countries are not allowed to subsidize.

I did a study on Africa, and I found that the African countries were doing very well in agriculture and food production. But then when the World Bank and IMF came in because these countries fell into debt, they were asked to cut their tariffs down to almost zero and withdraw their subsidies to agriculture. As a result, the efficient farmers of Africa could not compete against the cheap imports coming in that were being sold below production cost—whether chickens from Europe or rice from the United States or tomatoes from Europe. Africa is not able to produce its own food. And what do we do? We say, “Oh these Africans don’t know how to produce their own food.” And we soothe our conscience when we donate food as food aid. We say that it is justice. It is not justice.

Another very bad rule in the WTO that is made worse by the free trade agreements concerns intellectual property rights and patented medicines. They are selling the AIDS medicine for \$15,000 per patient per year until an Indian company was able to produce it and today they are selling it for \$60 per patient per year. But new medicines are being sold very expensively. If you have cancer, you need \$6000 to treat a cancer patient per month. Now fortunately an Indian company is able to produce it for \$200 but then you need a compulsory license. It is very, very cumbersome. Many millions of lives are being lost that way. We have to re-examine intellectual property rules in relation to essential medicines like these.

**3. Bilateral investment treaties.** All of our governments were signing these treaties thinking that they would bring in foreign investments. But now it is shown through the tribunals that the investor—the foreign company—is able to sue the government for loss of future profits. And what is the loss of future profits? If the government introduces a new policy—environmental or health or economic—that affects the future revenue of this company, the company can sue and claim back all the compensation in relation to future losses in an international court, thereby bypassing the international laws. Many of our countries are now being sued. Ecuador had an award against it for 2.3 billion dollars because it cancelled the contract of an American company that had violated the contract by selling itself to another company. The court said, “Yes, that company violated the contract, but nevertheless it has lost money, so please pay it 2.3 billion dollars.” We have similar cases being taken up against Indonesia, against India, against many other countries.

4. And finally—on the environmental side—*climate change, biodiversity*, and so on. The rich countries have already violated their own environment and damaged the global environment through the industrial revolution and all the policies they have had since then. We have very limited environmental space left, whether because of climate change or lack of resources. This environmental space has to be shared in a fair manner. *Those who have already grown rich by exploiting the world's resources must now change their lifestyles.*

When I was a student, I was in the young Christian students' movement and we had a big debate among ourselves: Is it enough to pray? Is it enough to do good work? And of course we came to the conclusion that we have to do both: be church and act. Look at Jesus Christ himself: he did pray of course, but he also acted. He went to the temple and he saw that there were greedy people who were making excessive profit by selling things. He said, get rid of these things. He went into action himself—spontaneous action.

Similarly he said, "I pity all these rich people because it is more difficult for them to go heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle!" Now I don't think he was saying "You people are finished and condemned." I think he was saying, "You have to reform! You have to reform the system itself!"

The people have to reform the system. What is important is for the church—whether it is ordinary people or the leaders—to keep pace with current events as they take place and to analyze the root causes, so that we are able to address these root causes, rather than allowing the situation to deteriorate and then we just do good by helping the poor through charity. *The poor do not need charity—they need us to tackle the structural causes and structures that give rise to this very sinful situation that we have today.*

## Julia Duchrow

Human rights are of utmost importance to create an equal and just society, because they create accountability for state policies and state activities. I think it is nothing new to the World Council of Churches (WCC) to work on human rights and enforce human rights. Especially with its Programme to Combat Racism, in the past it has done really big work to shape the human rights perspective there. *I think it comes from the faith-based perspective that human beings are made in the image of God and that human dignity exists for all human beings—no matter which faith they come from, no matter which race, which group, etc.—and even if they are persons with no faith.* The idea of the protection of human dignity is also at the core of human rights.

Human rights spelled out in different conventions and resolutions are the obligations of states to protect this human dignity by protecting not only civil, political

rights, but also economic, social, and cultural rights. That means, for example, for the local levels—local governments, local authorities—have to provide for equal access to education and equal access to health. On a global level, it puts obligations on states to create a good new framework for sustainable development goals in 2015.

Human rights don't fall from the sky. They always have been the result of struggles of people, not only to implement human rights but also to create new perspectives and new instruments of human rights. I think that this is the role we have as church—to support these struggles to create new human rights instruments and to ask for the implementation of human rights.

There's a new field to pay attention to: the activities of private corporations. We see that many private corporations—multinational corporations or companies—do violate human rights. For example, we have this example of the Posco company in Orissa in India, where about 30,000 people will lose their livelihood just because a company will construct a steel plant and create deforestation there.

It's really important to find ways to make private companies accountable to human rights, and we have to support organizations and civil society. We have to stand beside civil society organizations and unions and churches, despite the fact that at the moment there is a perception that NGO laws are entrenched and that people are being put into jail. The political space for civil society activities to create a better human rights framework and to ask for implementation and fulfillment of the state obligations is shrinking, and I think this is where our responsibility lies—to support these.

I think that we see that many people who fight and question the root causes of the structures, who fight for better environmental issues, who demonstrate against nuclear plants, or who question injustices are under pressure at the moment. Look at those who fight for justice and who fight against the ecological crisis and who question the system. They are under pressure. Stand beside them. Support human rights defenders, protect them, and show that you support that struggle. I think that's what we have to do.

## **Bishop Josip of Pathara**

Someone once asked the teacher, "What is the greatest commandment?" And the teacher replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all of your spirit, your mind and your heart." This is the greatest commandment, but there is another that is similar. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." And the teacher gave us another commandment in another part of the gospel that relates to the first one. It is the new commandment: "that you all love one another as I have loved you."

According to our perspective, that is the foundation of justice—the commandment of God, the commandment of love—because there is no justice without love, there is no justice without God.

Our God, who since the beginning of all things, created with love. Our God who maintains all of his creation with love; our God who redeems that creation with love and endlessly perfects it until the second coming of Jesus Christ—all of that is God's justice. All of this is God's love to which we are called. Because of this, we cannot achieve justice, we will not have peace, if we do not have God. It is because of this that there is only one path to true justice and true peace—to return to Christ.

In the end, the issue of justice in this world is not a moral or ethical issue. Ultimately, it is a spiritual issue. *If we want justice and peace, we must accept Christ. Without Christ, there will be no justice. Christ is hope. Christ is God's justice incarnate. Christ is with us, and if Christ is with us, we are the images of Christ in this world.*

This world has many injustices. This world of injustice seems very difficult to change, almost impossible—perhaps for us it is. But for God, it is not impossible. If God is with us and above all things (and I will be bold) with God in us, nothing is impossible. That is why, if we want justice, we need to return to Christ. There are many ways, all the ways the Holy Spirit has allowed and allows, in all the religious spheres in which the presence lives. The Spirit is freedom, the spirit is diversity and because of this we have many ways to do it. Do we have it in us or not to choose if we want Christ, if we want peace and justice? If this is what we want, the course will take us first to Christ, then to peace and justice through love.

What is the way towards justice? I would like to finish with just this brief meaningful wish. I wish that Christ be with you all—nothing more. That when we leave this assembly, we all keep Christ in our horizon and we all identify with him and go and ignite Christ's presence in us. And not only with words, but with courageous, prophetic actions, without losing ourselves but also leaving behind all the preconceptions that tie us to ourselves, to our confessions, perhaps, to our own religiosity as well—in order to be free and to serve Christ in the world. Christ be with you all.

## Phumzile Mabizela

As a religious leader who is openly living with HIV, I would like to congratulate the WCC for giving me a platform to speak for myself. *I think that one of the injustices that has been perpetuated by the church is taking and using our authority to speak on behalf of those who are not in the forefront.* And it is important for us as people who are directly affected by issues to be able to speak for ourselves. We also have this gift of dignity and we have a lot to share with the church.

*The issue of justice should not be an optional extra for the church. It should be the core of our ministry.* It's not only the responsibility of NGOs to understand some of these governmental frameworks and policies, but we as a people who believe in a God of justice should understand them and hold our governments accountable.

On the issue of healing—we as the church have lied to people. We have privatized the whole idea of healing and we have told people that if you don't have faith, you

shall not be healed. We need to be prophets and say to people, “You have a right to healing,” and give people appropriate, accurate information.

*Therefore it is our responsibility to empower ourselves with comprehensive strategies that have been developed all over the world to help us fully understand HIV not only as a medical issue but also as a social justice issue.* It is very sad that in this meeting, almost 30 percent of us are from rich countries and these are the very same countries that have deprived people like myself who are living with HIV of the right of access to medicine. This is greed and we need to refer it as such. We need to challenge them and the advocates and make sure that all the people in the world who need to have access to medicine, have access to medicine, because medicines are a gift from God. Medicines need to be seen not as a curse. We know that there are pastors who are telling people, “Stop taking your medication, you will be healed if I pray for you, you can treat these conditions, but it’s only God who heals.”

Then there is the issue of gender injustice. We, as the church, have used our sacred text to justify gender injustice. That is why women continue to be violated. That is why we have such high rates of rape within our countries—it’s because the church is silent and has actually influenced people’s attitudes towards how we view women. I would like to say that *we as women are the backbone of the church. If we were to walk away from the church, there would be no church.* Therefore, it is important for our leaders to reinterpret the gospel so that it makes sense to me as a village woman who is living with HIV. *This patriarchal and androcentric language we have used for a very long time is very destructive and has diminished the image of God within me.*

As the church, we have the responsibility to be advocates. When we get invited to important meetings that are organized by the UN agencies, let us use those opportunities to hold them accountable and to challenge them to remember the poor and the poorest who also have a voice and who can be agents as well.

Prayer is very important, and that is something we can do very well. However, prayer on its own shall not bring us justice; it needs to go together with action, where we speak out as advocates and as prophets. *We need to go out of our safe ministries and distress those who are comfortable and comfort those who are in distress.* I really believe that important issues like our sexuality—whether it is heterosexuality or homosexuality—should be right in the centre of our mission. *We cannot ignore the fact that we, as the body of Christ, are diverse, and we need to embrace that diversity and actually use it to strengthen our voice to strive for justice.*

## Tafue Lusama

I would like to talk about justice and injustice and climate change. I come from Tuvalu—a small independent island country in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean. The highest point in my country is four meters above sea level—and mind you, this is just a point. The rest of the country is below that. My people are facing the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change. Their very lives are being challenged and are

at stake. The traditional way of life of the people, which they have depended on for survival, has been challenged. Every sphere of life is threatened—from food security to health to our very identity. In fact, the totality of our very survival and existence as a people on the face of this planet is at stake.

I am not only speaking about Tuvalu here—I am speaking about every individual country in the Pacific. The low-lying vulnerable countries in the world are facing the same threats from climate change. This also challenges our spirituality, because if we look at the flood narrative, we see that those who caused the problem were the ones who were swimming in the sea, and the victims—or those who did not take part in creating this problem—were the ones who were on the ark of salvation. *In the face of climate change, the question always comes up—why us? Why do we have to face the consequences of something that we have no part in? Why are we being punished? And where is justice in this?*

How do we ensure the people who are being affected by climate change are given unassailable rights and assurance that their lives, dignity, and identity will continue? *For me personally and for my people, we don't want the pity of the world. We want you to stand in solidarity with us in action.*

## Lukas Andrianos

I live in Greece, and Greece, as all of you know, is suffering from the economic crisis in Europe. So I would like to share with you the story of my life in that context. I want to thank God for this moment. It is historical for eco-justice. I want to thank also our Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Green Patriarch, Holiness Bartholomew, for taking part as delegate for eco-justice issues.

I was born in Madagascar in a family that was very Christian but mixed with Catholic and Protestant. I was granted a scholarship for doctoral studies in ecological economics and sustainable development in Crete. During my studies, my mother came to visit me, but she passed away and I experienced the kindness of the church—a Greek church—at that time. I married a Greek lady and we have now three small children and I am very concerned about their future.

Before the economic crisis in Europe, life in Greece was simple, normal—but beautiful. After the economic crisis, life is very difficult in Greece. Many people have lost their jobs. My wife is jobless since the economic crisis. I also lost my position at the university and they stopped funding my job at the Orthodox Academy of Greece. Many, many people are suffering from hunger and homelessness, not because they don't have food but because they don't have money because of bankers—because of all the rich institutional, financial systems with their taxes, structural greed, and power.

Many people are just killing themselves. We hear every day about suicides. People are hopeless. These people find money is everything. If you don't have money, there is no meaning to life. The economy of greed promotes hate, promotes hunger.

So I would like here to challenge the WCC and to thank the WCC for raising the issue of eco-justice. But that is not enough. I would challenge the WCC to undertake more actions and concretely denounce the economic and financial greed that is governing our lives. I pray that the WCC and all of the churches will be the living hope for this world. We will not serve the gospel of prosperity, but rather will live the gospel for the poor, the gospel for humanity, and the gospel for the economy of life.

## **Shyreen Myula**

“My name is Shyreen Mvula. I would like to talk about some of the things that we, as young people who are living with HIV, want from the church. I was born with HIV. I am 19 years old. As young people who are living with HIV, we want something to be done in the churches, not only in the hospitals. We want to be counseled spiritually. We want to be healed. We want healing ministries through our churches. I want something to be done in our churches.

Second, we also want sex education to be done in our churches, because now sex education is only done in the hospitals. We don't want this. We want sex education to first be done in the churches.

Young people who are living with HIV have a lot of questions. I wonder if I may get married and have children. So it is very important that reproductive health should be discussed in our churches, because some of the questions we have can be answered by our church leaders.

I am HIV-positive, but I don't want to have children who are HIV-positive. I want to have children who are HIV-negative.

And lastly, I would like to end on this—HIV and AIDS are not a punishment from God. They are just a disease. So join us in the fight against this disease.

# HOPE AND DIGNITY FOR AFRICA: ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

*André Karamaga*

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On the basis of contemporary statistics that indicate that the centre of gravity of world Christianity is gradually shifting to the African continent, and given the fact that Africa is often described as “an incurably religious continent,” we are faced with a dual dilemma. In spite of intense inclination toward “God,” the continent is full of shocking suffering and the scandal of poverty undermining human dignity. We therefore have to interrogate the depth of contradiction that shows, on one hand, the massive response to the call from the gospel for the fullness of life and, on the other hand, the abundance of misery. What is the content of the hope that the church preaches where is hopelessness? Why and how, then, should this continent full of believers seem to be “forgotten by God”? Does religion flourish best where there is misery? This would seem to be so, especially if we take into account the phenomenon of secularization faced by wealthy societies. However, this tempting logic seems to be wrong if we rightly observe the role of the growing church on the African continent and how faith remains a driving factor for resistance and survival through the tragic steps of the African journey.

The African spiritual experience takes shape in the context of a complex environment. This is an invitation for Africa toward the self-assessment of our hidden capacities for transforming our own reality and that of the world. We are moving from an outside-oriented way of experiencing our spirituality towards a life-centred style of relationship with God that does not compromise with whatever is unacceptable. Jesus invited his disciples to the mountaintop to witness a very short-lived contemplative moment with the ancestors of their faith (Abraham, Moses, and Elijah) to reinforce hope. Immediately after this experience, Peter asked Jesus if they could pitch a tent and prolong the experience. Peter wanted to escape from the world by embracing the wonderful experience of the transfiguration. But Jesus reminded his disciples that they could not enrich their faith or even change the world through this wonderful experience alone. They had to go back and confront the conditions of the reality in which the people of God live.

## The Right Time for Right Choices

Today, a growing number of young people are leaving the continent in search of greener pastures in the Western world. They leave en masse, risking the agony of sinking in the Mediterranean seas or perishing in the Sinai desert, victims of human organ traffickers. It is as if there is no more hope for our young people on the continent; they do not see any possibility for a better life. Even in our churches, the songs of many choirs reflect a deep sense of alienation from the world. Most of the songs express the desire to leave the world and go to heaven, as the world is seen as a place full of evil and suffering.

On the other hand, the reality of poverty in the midst of wealth in the continent reflects a shocking contradiction. Every individual aspires for change and seeks to improve his or her skills through education toward entrepreneurship and a dignified life. This can be witnessed in the growing number of associations, especially of women, engaged in capacity-building initiatives for self-reliance. They are not escaping from hardship, but are confronting the realities and contradictions of life with vitality and a profound sense of determination. Moreover, we have witnessed a critical move through the signing of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), when many heads of states in Africa recognized that the future of the continent cannot improve without good governance and real democratic dispensations. As we may remember, they have shown commitment, and their consent to a peer-review mechanism—exposing themselves to transparent assessment and mutual vulnerability without hiding their weaknesses and remaining focused on the positive outcomes of this exercise—is a major milestone.

The current global financial crisis is a further indication that even those who appear to be rich and powerful, who have been benefiting from economic globalization, remind us that it is not possible to live and prosper on speculation and injustice. Power and wealth alone in the midst of poverty cannot guarantee the survival of humanity. Moreover, the current global dynamic shows very clearly that this is the right time to make the right choices for change, especially in Africa. Indeed, in the book of Deuteronomy, we have clear conditions for restoration and blessing that we need to take seriously if we want to reverse our situation based on strong ground towards dignity and justice for our people and our beloved continent.

Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between LIFE AND DEATH. If you obey the commands of the Lord your God which I give you today. If you love him, obey him and keep all His laws and then you will prosper and become a Nation of many people. . . . I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God's blessings and God's curse, and I will make heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose Life. Love the Lord your God, obey him and be faithful to him, and then You and Your descendants will live long in the land that he promised to give to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Deut. 30:14–26, GNT)

In 1991, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) produced a document entitled “The Right Time for Change,” which was prepared as a response to guide the emerging democratic movement. This culminated with the famous National Conferences, especially in Francophone Africa, which coincided with the introduction of a multiparty system on the continent. Prior to this, the continent was dominated by military rule and successive coups d’états. The question that arose in the context of events sweeping the continent about the AACC’s call for change was at that point “Change for what?”—because indeed there could be changes for good or for worse.

This time around, the change we are seeking must be grounded on the non-negotiable values of human dignity and justice, which are the epitome of human rights. The time has now come for us on the continent to make the right choices. It is a matter of life and death, for whichever choice we make defines our fate and to some extent is irreversible. And in our case, during and after the post-independence crisis, leadership of the continent did not have time to make either right or wrong choices, because in essence they were living the reality of colonial heritage.

Africa has largely been a victim of choices made on its behalf, without the consent of its own people. The fact that we are consumers of ideologies and even theologies conceived in other contexts robs us of our own capacities to make choices that are relevant to our own reality as Africans. Biblically speaking, we have to confess and repent for having allowed others to reflect for us and make choices for us as if God had not given us brains like all others he created in his image. The church has a duty to enable people to reach the degree of autonomy needed for making the right choices in order to reclaim their dignity and live in hope. By making right choices at the right time, we must face our current deep challenges and deal with them through the inspiration of our values enriched by the inclusiveness of the gospel.

## **The Challenge of Ethnicity**

For example we know that ethnicity has been exploited by the colonial system of control of resources by manipulation of peoples’ identity through the logic of divide and rule. In some parts of Africa there is even confusion as to what may be termed a “tribe” in the original sense or what was initially just a dialect of a certain ethnic group that, for inexplicable reasons, was later declared to be a “tribe.” There are many examples of communities with different dialects that had a common identity under a particular authority. During the 1990s, when most countries in sub-Saharan Africa embraced multiparty systems, there were still weak institutions with no legal instruments to guarantee stability in times of transition. Moreover, power politics manipulated ethnicity through monopoly of state resources.

The churches in Africa are called to deepen the values of nationhood by promoting dialogue that enhances peaceful co-existence among people. Again we are reminded by St Paul when he said that as Christians we are neither Jew nor Gentiles, neither male nor female: that is, we all share one common humanity in Christ. The message

of Paul is that our identity as human beings is ultimately spiritual. We are created not in the image and likeness of our tribes, but ultimately in the image and likeness of God. Moreover, from the biblical story of the tower of Babel, we experience the conflicting paradoxes of a global human project that suppresses diversity instead of celebrating it. However in the New Testament, the Pentecostal event among the disciples affirms that diversity of identities within the community as an expression of difference is a manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. Our common humanity as people is informed by the diversities of our cultures, traditions, religious conviction, and heritages. For this reason, ethnic identity as such is a God-given reality.

## **Where Are We Now?**

There is an adage that when you ask Africans where they are heading to, they start by telling you where they are coming from. In this spirit, it is necessary to build our reflection on the vivid memory of the long journey that we have covered. Without going very far into our history, in which we have experienced the dehumanization of slavery and colonialism, let us limit ourselves to our recent past, which has been exceptionally rich in events. We started the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the total occupation of our countries by colonial powers, and we reached the end of that century with more awareness of our problems and challenges. The decision made by young Africans in the Pan African Congress held in Manchester, England, in 1945 to liberate the continent from colonial powers has been achieved in less than 50 years precisely in 1994 with the election of Nelson Mandela as the president of South Africa—the last colony submitted to apartheid. We can now identify negative forces that are taking advantage of the confusion of globalization to keep us under their domination. We recognize that it was during the same century that the sons and daughters of our continent struggled, as in a dream, against colonial powers until our countries regained their independence in the 1960s. Even though there is a great deal still to be done to gain our real and total freedom, no one can convince us that we are unable to achieve anything. On the contrary, just as the fathers and mothers of our independence, we should carry on the struggle by taking advantage of today's advanced means of communication, which give us the possibility for better mobilization of our people.

You understand that I have chosen to be optimistic by recalling that we have come a long distance, from slavery, from colonialism, and from the ideology of apartheid. It is not wrong to say that we have travelled from dream to reality, although this does not mean that I am not fully aware that there are vital challenges still. We can say that we are coming from the dark night and we are stepping into the light of day. However, we are reminded of the platonic adage of a people chained for years inside a cage who arise out of it into daylight: they find the heat of the sun too scorching for their eyes to visualize reality. There is a great temptation, just like the Israelites having been liberated from oppression, to become nostalgic and imagine that it is safer to go back to the land of oppression than to face the challenges of being free

from bondage. That is why some of our people risk death trying to escape from the continent, without fear of what is waiting for them during the trip or upon arrival at unknown destinations. We cannot enjoy the light of the day because we are now in a free market of everything, which is like a large forest in which we find ourselves. We are like the people of Israel, who were told to sing a song of hope in a hostile environment, when they finally said: "How can we sing a song to the Lord in a foreign land?" (Ps. 137:4, GNT)

At the heart of this profound sense of alienation and estrangement of the African soul is the question of authenticity. In most cases, our way of life and even thought processes succumb to political, cultural, and spiritual reassignment of the Western mode of being. How can we find a language of expressing our innermost sense of identity in God when such expressions do not correspond to our own symbols and cosmology? The divisiveness of colonial Christianity and its fragmenting effect on our psyche is a problem that we must face and confront spiritually. Moreover, we ought to embrace the biblical notion of God, who is named through ancestral encounters and heritage. In our context, the names of God are also attributes of God that signify our cosmology and ethical concerns for the well-being of humanity: Nzambe, Leza, Mungu, Nkulu, Ngai, Andriamanitra, Imana, Modimo, "Kikwembn, etc., are aspects of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, the God of Jesus Christ. From our African religious background, which is similar to the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, it is not possible for believers in one God to compete or to fight in the name of that God. That is tantamount to reducing that God to an idol that needs to be protected by its creatures: "There is one body and one Spirit just as there is one hope to which God has called you. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; there is one God and Father of all mankind, who is Lord of all, works through all, and is in all" (Eph. 4:4-6, GNT).

In a deep sense we are therefore confronted by two concerns: the intrinsic value of African spirituality and Western Christianity, the hermeneutical peculiarity of African cosmology and ethics in relation to Western Christian theology. For example, the type of revelation being acclaimed in Western theology relates to the powerful notion of original sin that necessitates the coming of Jesus into this world to rescue humanity from eternal damnation. You will recall that in earlier anthropology, the African was perceived to be at the lowest end of the chain of modernity and our communities' belief systems were considered to be backward, if not evil. In a sense, then, the coming of Jesus reinforces the grand project of rescuing Africans from their own self, that is, the collective memory and identity of a people is mutilated and replaced with a new template. Let me give an illustration of this phenomenon using information technology embodied by the computer. If you change the motherboard of the computer or interfere with the basic gadgets that constitute its functions, then you redefine the content and capacity of the entire computer. Obviously a computer has no soul, and it can be programmed to deliver information according to the instructions fed into it. Moreover, the key issue here is that there is need for radical re-interpretation of the message of Christianity within our African reality and context.

For example, the God who loves all his children equally would not have made such exclusive provisions for the salvation of only a small fragment of humankind while condemning the vast majority to poverty and marginalization. The hegemony of power and authoritarian system imposed in the name of Jesus must be rejected. In present-day pluralistic African society, each community ought to be evangelized on the basis of its own unique values and authenticity.

We are coming from the night of colonialism; we cannot enter into the daylight of freedom and rejoice in hope if we do not accept to go through a metanoia, a deep conversion from the scandal of divisions we have inherited. Concerning the vivid memory on which we have to build our hope, our metanoia would not consist of turning to another God, as if we can believe that there is more than one God. There is one unique God, and other deities are idols.

We are called upon, therefore, to turn to the God of all times, *Ie Nkulu Nkulu* (the Greatest) as the Zulu people of South Africa call him. A God that helped our ancestors to make this continent a continent of abundance without the need for technical assistance and humanitarian aid—a continent to which the children of Israel came in search of food and water. (Gen. 42). We have to turn to this marvelous God that the Kikuyu of Kenya call *Ngai* or *Mulungu* (the link of everything), a God that made our continent, a continent in which security prevailed without the help of peace keepers, a continent on which the Son of God found refuge at the crucial moment: when King Herod's genocide of infants took place (Matt. 2:16-18). From time immemorial, our people have had extraordinary relational experiences with this God to whom we have to turn. The slavery and colonialism that have disorganized and traumatized us so deeply are mere short steps in comparison with the numerous centuries of independence and self-determination that our continent has experienced.

The night of slavery and colonialism plunged us into a crisis that touched all areas of our existence, including our dignity. Nevertheless, *Andriamanitra*, as the Malagasy call him, the God who created everything, has not abandoned us in spite of our resignation and the sin we committed by allowing others to think on our behalf. Through Jesus Christ, God became present in our suffering, up to the heart of genocide, which was perpetrated on our continent and which is the most eloquent expression of our crisis and the crisis of the whole human community. This is where we are coming from: from the immemorial relationship with God through the night of slavery and colonialism toward the day of freedom after having paid the very high price of genocide. The dawn of a new Africa is not without its burdens of debts, with a multitude of creditors whose landing has been a curse rather than a resource. In fact, a large amount of the money being lent to Africa finds its way back into the Western banks.

It is a rope around our neck that will tie up our children and the children of our children if realism and reason do not prevail over selfishness and a short memory. Because the chain of debts reminds us of the chain of slavery, and our creditors are not willing to admit that they owe us more than we owe them. They know, at least, that we know, because the night has been replaced by the new day. We have also said that the night of slavery and colonialism has plunged us into a deep crisis. We are

stepping into the daylight bearing the scars of a crisis that are manifested in all areas of our lives. This crisis is so deep that we can sink no lower. We can either keep turning at the bottom of the abyss, or we can climb out of it.

African governments are under two kinds of pressure to democratize. First, a range of opposition forces are harnessing their energies in a variety of actions that are becoming ever more forceful. Second, a rather more problematic orchestration of political conditionality by foreign governments and agencies are urging Africa to seek better “governance” and more respects for human rights. The genuineness of these pressures is questionable, but they cannot be ignored. But it is the internal pressures that mainly preoccupy African regimes, challenging their legitimacy and sometimes their very survival. The demand for democracy has now struck a chord deep in society. Two decades of political silence is being broken by a period of activism that is spreading across the continent as the power and exuberance of politics is discovered by new generations.

There is also considerable significance in the fact that calls for democratization from official bodies have intensified in response to the increasing marginalization of Africa from the world economic order. Not only are attention and resources being diverted to Eastern Europe, but protectionism and inter-North trade are on the increase. Africa’s needs are now receiving scant attention, forcing Africa’s leaders to realize that a new path must be struck that necessarily includes the participation, rather than the suppression, of the masses. A proverbial wind of change is sweeping across the continent, removing dictators from office and providing scope for popular opinion to surface for the first time in decades. There are also signs that Africa’s leaders cannot face an increasingly unhelpful world economic order without the support of their own peoples. Hence we see the promptings for popular participation in development and decision-making and a new emphasis on self-reliance.

As the former general secretary of the AU, Dr Salim Salim, once said, “No matter how many political parties an African state may have, it will not change the price of coffee, cocoa, cotton, sisal or copper.” Nor will it reduce external dependency or provide more consultation over the price of the commodities or interest rates in the world market. It will also not stop the injustice of the South subsidizing the rich of the North. Isn’t it time to link the demands for democratization of the African societies to the democratization of the international system?

For more than 30 years, we have been struggling with God, who has been trying to pull us out of the abyss at a time when we seem to be eager to sink even deeper. However, we know where we are and God knows that we know because we are continuously crying to him. We can no longer accuse the colonizer, who is taking advantage of us and still looting our resources. When we waste our time worshipping ethnic belonging or our denominations instead of putting the light of the new day to use to rebuild cohesion and communion, our sense of responsibility becomes questionable. We know where we are and God knows that we know, because we are continuously crying to him.

Our turning to God means that we should seize all the opportunities for starting afresh that he continuously puts within our grasp. I don't know whether it is out of naivety or out of exaggerated optimism, but I am convinced that the Africans have learned a lot from our suffering and from the long distance we have covered, that we have had enough of extreme misery and that we have enough human and material resources, and that we can, at last, come out of our crisis. However, all of this requires that we should turn to the living God, who has never stopped trying to get us out of the abyss.

## **Where Are We Heading?**

In order to embrace the light that cannot be consumed, we must turn away from the idols of ethnicity, disunity, and violence and the spirit of resignation among us. We must be committed to initiate a number of processes that are aimed at deepening the values of dignity and hope for the continent. The opposite would mean that we shall remain forever entangled in confusion, turning in circles and getting deeper into the abyss of poverty and marginalization.

I have the deep feeling that as we enter into the 21st century, the greatest challenge is how to live in dignity and with hope in God as far as moral and spiritual values are concerned. No single honest person can claim to be above the others. In fact, we all have reasons to be ashamed together! Indeed, each continent came to the end of the 20th century with a genocide on its records. All our societies are functioning on the basis of violence and the exploitation of the poor. It is only at the organizational level of this violence or of this exploitation that differences can be seen. The right to life for many groups of people is violated by powers that project themselves as defending champions of human rights. This violation of the right to life for many groups of people has been used as a pretext by the violators in many poor countries, especially in Africa, to the extent that life itself, as well as elementary laws of morality, have been despised.

Our globalized world is inherently conflictive. The competitive logic of the market and the confrontational logic of power politics are manifestations of a culture that considers the rule of winning and losing to be a "law of nature" from which there is no escape. The process of globalization has greatly increased this potential for conflict. It has led not only to a massive concentration of power, but also to a diffusion of power, rendering many of the traditional forms of control and legitimization ineffective. In addition, globalization has extended the range of economic, financial, and media power to the whole world, thus multiplying the points of potential conflict. A violent manifestation of these conflicts is not inevitable; but any exercise of power that lacks legitimacy is in danger of provoking violent responses from those affected, especially those who have nothing more to lose. Intrinsic to current demands for democracy is the need for government and the state to reflect the will of the people—and not be a substitute for the will of the people. Although the state in Africa has

almost developed into a coercive instrument, it is generally accepted that the state will remain an important institution. The state must retain an important defensive role against external economic exploitation, but it must also facilitate and intervene in the internal structures of the economy and it must lead in the provision of public services and social welfare.

The overblown post-colonial state has, however, become a serious obstacle to development, since one of its main functions is to satisfy the interests of a self-serving, parasitic bureaucracy. Hierarchism and complex procedures of delegating responsibility have made the system prone to corrupt practices. In multi-ethnic countries, the state becomes the site for serious ethnic conflict, as different groups try to bolster the privileges and positions of their own. As resources dwindle, so the state apparatuses become less efficient and civil servants lose their commitment to public duty.

There can be no hope of transformation without a serious assault on the power of the bureaucracy. It is now well understood that development cannot come from above but must find its momentum from below. While there are many examples of economic growth being achieved by coercion from the state or from a strong capitalist class, this does not benefit the people as a whole, nor is the achievement sustainable in the long run. Indeed, one of the severest lessons of the Marxist legacy is that state-centred growth may build the productive forces over the short term, but it cannot build an all-round economic system that will expand steadily and evenly, serving the people as a whole. Development is about extending the all-round capacities of the people and building resources in an integrated manner. It is a total process.

## Conclusion

The task of theological reflection is to try to discern the plan of God in historical situations. Our reflections so far might well incline us to feel that the scale is heavily weighted toward the side of disgrace as an expression of African reality. But is that really true? How does theology know that what appears as disgrace in terms of social analysis is also disgrace in theological terms? This question compels us to consider new ways of theological reading or interpretation of the African reality. The issue is a complex one calling for extended treatment and reflection.

To begin with, there are not two separate realities: one the object of sociological/political consideration and the other the object of theology. Reality is one. Hence the church and the world do not have two different ends or goals. The eschatological goal of the world is also the eschatological goal of the church. So we can conclude that grace and disgrace are dimensions of one and the same reality; they are not isolated dimensions immured within confines of the church.

Christian awareness has always adverted to the universality of liberating grace. The one God we believe in is a God of love for all human beings (1 Tim. 4:10). In the life of every human being, God shows us love, goodness, hope, and a future offering infinite fulfillment for the human heart. This, then, is the pristine sense of God. God

is the mysterious, all-embracing reality that offers fulfillment and complete meaningfulness to human existence. The New Testament is filled with expressions that convey the experience of God's love and indiscriminate offering to all: "For he wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). The universality of human decadence finds its counterweight in the universality of God's "salvific offering" (Rom. 3:23-26).

As all died in Adam, so all can receive life in Christ (Rom. 5:12-21). Light is shed on the meaning of all history in the journey of the resurrected Jesus Christ. He is the personal mirror reflecting the collective destiny of humankind and the cosmos (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26). All that exists in heaven and earth has been placed under one head, as it were, taking on meaning in the light of what happened to Jesus (Eph. 1:10). Thus meaningfulness and salvation are ensured for reality as a whole.

The good news is precisely this affirmation of God's offer of salvation. All are lovable in God's eyes and hence all can reach him. However, we do not reach him through some magical step or some merely physical mechanism. Salvation is a human reality, and so it is realized within the horizon of human freedom. God's love does not do violence to the latter; instead, it invites a loving response from human beings. The hope and dignity of Africa lie in God's and the AACC's role to mobilize churches to discover them through dedication to God under his guidance.

## SHARED STRUGGLE FOR GENDER JUSTICE: STATEMENT FROM THE MEN GATHERED FOR THE WCC WOMEN'S AND MEN'S PRE-ASSEMBLY

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We the men in the first WCC women's and men's pre-assembly express our immense gratitude to women who have enabled us to understand the pain and injustice of patriarchy and gender inequality. We have experienced transformation in our lives, by the grace of the God of life, which has begun to open our hearts and minds to a shared struggle for gender justice. Yet we are painfully aware that we men still have a long way to go on our journey toward a true community of women and men in the churches and in society at large.

The Spirit beckons us into a just community of equals. The Spirit is speaking to the churches and is calling us to listen. Today, as men committed to gender justice and a life-affirming community of women and men, we listen and respond to the Spirit's call. We joyfully celebrate the advances of the women's movement, we appreciate the participation of men who have journeyed with the women, and we look forward to a full community of humans together.

As men, we are aware that almost every culture around the world accrues privilege to us. We acknowledge that this unequal allocation of privilege deprives many from living life in its fullness.

Unjust gender relations have not only dis-empowered women but also distorted us as men and limited the way we, as men, relate to others, nature, and ourselves. Patriarchy as a social structure affects both women and men; it causes pain to both men and women.

Men have been the perpetrators of overt and covert violence against women, children, and other men alike. Many men continue to idolize violence at home, on the street, or within communities. Militarization and the glorification of violence create a culture that endangers all of life. We acknowledge that we are socialized into aggression and have used culture, ideology, religion, and theology to justify our violence.

There are many forms and practices of masculinity, and we have not honoured the diversity of men. We express our solidarity with men who have been outcast because of their sexual orientation and suffer from the violence of homophobia.

Men have been absent from movements for gender justice within and outside of the church, even when we have claimed to be struggling for justice.

We pledge to stand in solidarity with movements for gender justice, by rethinking our theologies and our liturgies to be inclusive of gender concerns and to speak for justice. We will continue to re-evaluate ourselves and our own understanding of masculinity. We heard the pain of women in the pre-assembly who find their gifts and calling to leadership rejected by patriarchal attitudes in the churches. We recognized

the divided denominational views about ordination but still believe justice calls for the equal participation of women and men in the leadership of the churches.

We call on all the churches to dare to work together toward just gender relations, promoting the life of peace and justice that this will bring. Together as men and women, we will play our part in being churches that are places of solidarity, affirmation, and welcome of a new society of justice and life for all.

# **GOD OF LIFE, RENEW THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND: MESSAGE FROM THE PRE-ASSEMBLY GATHERING OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

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To our brothers and sisters,

We have gathered from the Four Winds, People of the Land and Seas, to listen carefully to the voice of God in our midst, to consider the theme of the larger assembly, and to prepare ourselves for the effective expression of the voice of Indigenous peoples in the general assembly. We have, already in our theme for our pre-assembly gathering, phrased the overall theme of the general assembly in terms of the fundamental reality of our identity as Indigenous peoples: God of life, renew the people of the land. In our preparations and in our gathering, we have noted the urgency of this moment, for creation and for all our peoples. We have also noted that, for us, the issues are whole and one: the spiritual and physical renewal of our people, their survival on the land, and their hope for the future. It has been a pleasure and honour to be together, to affirm and proclaim life, despite the very real pain and death that are all too present in many of our communities.

## **Our Time, Our Context**

Besides spiritual and theological colonialization, Indigenous people continue to experience various forms of oppression, exploitation, marginalization, and suffering a vast number of nations. The ancestral lands and sacred forest, the grounds of Indigenous people, are being commercialized, desecrated, and abused through unmindful extractive developmental activities. Many Indigenous communities have been displaced, dispossessed, uprooted, evicted, and even annihilated on a genocidal scale. Indigenous peoples cultures, practices, and customary laws have been abused, misused and misrepresented, and commercialized without respect. Today Indigenous People constitute the poorest section of the society. Many of them are poor, landless, homeless, and hungry. Those Indigenous peoples who organized themselves to resist for their right and justice are being killed, harassed, and persecuted. The theme, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace,” will have little relevance without addressing the ongoing and historical oppression of Indigenous people, and mobilizing solidarity among Indigenous peoples to collectively resist unjust systems, forces, and institutions. Affirmation of the God of life, justice, and peace involves reclaiming of our identities, wisdoms, and language, re-possession of our lands and sacred grounds.

In our conversations at the pre-assembly, we noticed a remarkable convergence of our concerns and vision. We are from many different contexts, languages, and

histories. We have joyfully experienced a common and unshakable understanding of the God-given living relationship we have with creation; a reality that all creation and all of humanity shares. We have also experienced, in the presentation of the various urgent concerns from our diverse contexts, the commonality of an on-going and accelerating displacement and dispossession of the Indigenous peoples from the land. This, we believe, is directly and intimately related to the alienation of so many societies and economies from the land and an inability to acknowledge or even perceive the God-given moral and spiritual communion that humanity has with creation. It must be admitted that a globalizing culture of money has captivated the minds and hearts of much of the world and many in our churches. This was a great part of the history of colonialism. It is a devastatingly present reality in our contemporary global economy, especially in regard to the welfare of Indigenous peoples. Virtually all of us had stories of intense conflict with the forces of so-called development, especially in mining and other extractive industries. Modern development amplifies the destructive legacy of colonialism. Among us, the trail of this development is poverty, suicide, human trafficking, and the despair of our youth. Often, Indigenous Peoples face illegal and immoral seizure of their lands, paramilitary and extrajudicial violence and death, and a marginalization that increases the already unacceptable pace of the disintegration of our families and way of life.

Global climate change has added a new level of threat to Indigenous peoples—disappearing islands and lands, stress on wildlife and subsistence lifestyles, and an increased dispossession from the land. This threat is real and direct to Indigenous people, but we feel that we must also point to the larger threat that looms to the whole of creation and, with it, the spiritual and physical well-being of our human community and the community of creation. Though we make this witness for creation in love and compassion for mother earth, the communion of creation, and the human society sustained by it, we feel it necessary to remind the general assembly of the urgent, pressing, and unavoidable reality of this for Indigenous peoples. Again and again in our gathering, we have witnessed a direct connection between Indigenous justice, environmental justice, social justice, and human rights. One cannot be dealt with adequately without dealing with all.

## **Our Call Together**

Indigenous Christian communities constitute a significant population in World Christianity. As Indigenous Christians, we affirm our peoples distinct earth-centered view of God and spirituality, cosmology, and ancient traditional practices of making communities of justice and peace. We discussed the resonance of this spiritual legacy with the gospel of Jesus. In this gathering, we have felt a call to return to the deep values of the gospel. We believe that the Indigenous spiritually oriented understanding of the communion of creation—the cosmology of the peoples of the land and seas—is a perspective that can assist the renewal of the whole church's relationship

with creation and the Creator. Further, Indigenous theologies continue to provide a new paradigm of a wider ecumenism by challenging the occidental, anthropocentric, androcentric, and white character of “normative” theology, as well as its continual North-Atlantic point of reference.

Despite their cultural and ethnic diversity, the Indigenous communities all over the world uphold a similar earth-centered spirituality and cosmology. They perceive their cosmology in an organic way. In this organic understanding, everything is organically related to each other. Everything is linked together, even values. The sacred power affects each one and all creatures. Humans see themselves as an integral part of the total cosmic life. Though the sacred power and the Spirit(s) are understood as Creator and sustainer of all living beings, they are also perceived, though distinct, as part of the total cosmic life. This organic relationship is possible because of Mother earth. Mother earth is the foundation of cosmo-centric spirituality. From the giving nature of mother earth, Indigenous peoples have learned to share and show hospitality as the foundation of a culture and community of humanity and creation. This view of life gives a concrete and wider vision of justice and peace that need to be explored for ecumenical engagement.

In the past, the churches have often joined with the principalities and powers that have de-humanized Indigenous life, placing it in a category of pre-civilization that has allowed this dehumanizing of Indigenous peoples and the destructive exploitation of creation. In faithfulness to the God of creation, we must all participate in a new community and economy of creation, a practical and living expression of our communion with God, each other, and creation. This will involve both repudiation and repentance from the systems of thought and action that lead to the destruction of Indigenous peoples and the harmful exploitation of the land. It will certainly require a careful and critical examination of our church communities’ participation and investment in the worldwide economic system.

We ask you to join with us, in promoting a worldwide partnership of Indigenous peoples and a church related network of peoples dedicated to the self-determination of Indigenous peoples and to the renewal of creation. To this end, the pre-assembly expressed its desire that the World Council of Churches (WCC) keep the Indigenous desk operating. The WCC could express solidarity by denouncing the oppression of Indigenous peoples, by sponsoring an Indigenous Sunday once a year and supporting the work of the Indigenous ecumenical community. The church must stand with Indigenous peoples and advocate and promote respect for their culture, their land, and their way of life. In this, there must be a commitment to create a space for them in the WCC and in the family of nations and peoples around the earth.

Though we have spoken with alarming terms of the many threats to Indigenous life, we must close with a reminder of God’s presence and grace among us and the resilience of our peoples in the face of a massive development aggression, of unbridled globalization, and formidable racism and dehumanization. Despite this on-going conflict, the churches of the people of the land have developed a theological and

spiritual history of both substance and promise. They still stand as a prophetic witness to the communion of creation.

The churches must admit and confess that, for many, the goal of ministry with Indigenous peoples was their disappearance. The nations have proposed an ungodly end for Indigenous peoples, too often with the cooperation of those who call themselves Christians. But God, in justice and mercy, had a different plan. Our elders still give us guidance and, despite the challenges, we are trying to live as faithful members of our clans, families, and nations. Indigenous peoples rightly and equally belong to the household of God. The communities are sustained by their determination to assert their human rights and protect their dignity. We claim our place in the wider worldwide ecumenical community and place upon ourselves the responsibility to enrich that community when our place is acknowledged and given space.

# The Work of Peace

## PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

### *Interview with Ms Leymah Gbowee*

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*Leymah Gbowee is a Liberian peace activist responsible for leading a women's peace movement that helped bring an end to the Liberian Civil War in 2003. She was recognized for her work by receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011.*

*Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, host of the plenary: When did you feel that you had a vocation to be a peacemaker?*

**Gbowee:** Thank you, Bishop. First let me say thank you to the general secretary of the WCC, Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, and his team for making my time here possible, and to all of you wonderful people from within the Christian community for coming.

My story is a complicated one, as is the story of anyone who has survived conflict. I have a lot of anger in me, because the civil war in Liberia started when I was 17. I grew up in a community. When I say a community, I mean I grew up in a space where everyone cared for everyone's child, everyone disciplined everyone's child. I grew up in a typical African community. I grew up knowing that everyone was the same. We shared a common oneness. And then all of a sudden, we went to war where everything you have been made to believe changes. Suddenly someone is telling you, you can't interact with that ethnic group because those people are supposed to be the enemy. So I have a lot of anger about my world being turned upside down. I had a lot of anger directed at child soldiers and at adults—it was just a mess.

I started interacting. I think God had a divine plan for my life—to work first with child soldiers and then with women who were victims. Gradually, as I interacted with these people, I realized that something in me was unlocked, or the anger went away. Or it increased. Not in a negative way, not so that I wanted to get back at them; but I want to make something right. I want to change the situation. I want to be part of a community of people who are working to ensure that our young children are no longer given guns at nine years old and drugs at eight years old. I want to ensure that women are not brutalized. That was the beginning of a journey for me. It also began a

journey of healing for me, because I realized that there is no way you can engage this vocation of peacebuilding if you do not have that personal healing.

So I had to go through the whole process. God brought me down. First he made me aware of the complexity of his world, and then he broke me down, and then gradually he helped build me up. I am still a “work in progress,” but I had to come to that place where I understood that I had to be healed if I had to engage in a peace movement.

So I think the evil of our times, the complication of my world, and God’s own word to me really brought me to the place where I realized that this is the vocation for me—and not social work, which I have a degree in.

***Makgoba:** The metaphor of a journey has been used to describe an element of peace. You move from one point to a desired position—a sense of metanoia. What should the people of Liberia—those who have been wronged by Taylor and what he represents—leave behind as they pursue peace, including the wrong towards themselves?*

**Gbowee:** Thank you, Bishop. Liberia is one of those countries in Africa that has a complicated history. I think ours is complicated plus complicated. Our history itself begins with a lot of contradictions. I think in order for us as a people to pursue peace, we first must go back to our history and right all of the errors.

If you open a text book about Liberia, or if you Google it today, the first fact you will read is that Liberia was a country established by freed slaves in 1847. This is a huge error, because there were Indigenous people in Liberia before the coming of the former slaves. We have a parable in my native language which states that in order to braid a new sleeping mat (the kind made in villages) you have to look at the pattern of the old mat. For Liberians to be able to move forward to peace, we have to look at the old mat that we have been sleeping on—which is the mat loaded with conflict, discrimination, hate, and abuse—and see what the trends are in those mats that we need to take out.

One of the things that we need to leave behind, to answer your question, is the ethnicity issue. We have 16 tribes and then we have the “descendants of the freed slaves.” We need to come together to really understand that it is not those 16 tribes that make us a country. Being Liberian is in your blood. That is the first realization we need to come to.

The second thing we need to understand is that—just to mention to the group here, we are 3.4 million people, we are not a lot of people—the piece of space that we inhabit is a space we will continue to inhabit, whether we hate or love each other. God is testing us to be in that space.

In terms of the crisis that we face, when I do training in reconciliation, I tell people to offer forgiveness and to accept it. Together, these make a circle. So either

you can decide to forgive someone or the person can come to you and apologize. Forgiveness and apology are a circle.

We need to get to the place where we are not waiting for someone to apologize. In some instances, we need to step up and offer forgiveness if we are to move forward. It begins with forgiving ourselves and then forgiving our political leaders. Because until we do that, all we will have to give our children is a country full of conflict, mixed-up history, and a lot of hate.

***Makgoba:** What challenge do you have for those of us who have heard your story and your research and who want to do something about peacemaking. What do you suggest?*

**Gbowee:** Bishop, thank you so much. When I go back to Liberia, I have to attend a peace meeting with the Liberian Council of Churches. Recently, I was very critical with them. I am happy that the assembly of the WCC has the theme “peace and justice.”

When I was growing up, my first engagement with the social justice movement was in the Lutheran Church in Liberia. As a little child, I went to church every Sunday. They would ask us to pray for South Africa, and pray for the release of Mandela, and make an offering for the All Africa Conference of Churches. I remember asking my mother, “Why is this man in prison? Why can’t he be just a good man and get out of prison? Why do we have to pray for South Africa?” I grew up with this, seeing a strong church and a strong social justice movement.

What I see today breaks my heart. Churches have either been co-opted by government and do not function the way we see them, or they have become bystanders, silent. And who is the church? We are the church. And for each and every one of us—including our leaders—who stands by in the face of injustices, in the face of conflict, and refuses to take a stand, you might as well just join those who shoot people, because you are part of the problem.

***Makgoba:** What do you think is meant by “blessed are the peacemakers”?*

**Gbowee:** Jesus in his wisdom really knew that peacemaking meant speaking the truth to power, and sometimes keeping your emotions in check in order to speak the truth. When everyone else is picking up arms, you are choosing to use the right word and you are choosing non-violence. In my belief, Jesus will say that, for you to be able to do that, all of those things, you must be blessed. You have to be blessed.

# EXODUS TO A NEW EARTH

*Yoon Jae Chang*

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From the faith perspective of the Korean people, peace means “exodus journey.” And if we are to arrive at peace, we need to make three related exodus journeys.

## **Exodus to True Peace in Korea**

The first is an exodus into new peace, here in divided Korea, where the Cold War has still not ended. The Armistice signed in 1953 stopped the immediate fighting, but it did not end the war. Today we are the pivot for the Obama administration to contain China. We are caught up in a new Cold War, in an arms race that includes nuclear weapons. The consequences of this will be catastrophic. The US Department of Defence has estimated that an outbreak of another war in Korea would result in 1.5 million casualties within the first 24 hours and six million casualties within the first week.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Armistice, and no peace treaty has replaced it. These past 60 years have been a time of great anxiety, knowing that war can break out again at any time. I don't want to live with the constant fear of war any more. Sixty years of this uncertain armistice is enough! Sixty years of pseudo-peace is enough! Koreans now need an exodus—an exodus from an unfinished war to a permanent peace, for Korea and for all of East Asia. I know we can look to the WCC as our partners in this. I remember with gratitude that the central committee of the WCC met in Moscow in 1989 and adopted a statement on the Korean peninsula which recognized that Korea's situation is a microcosm for the division of the whole world. The realization of peace and reunification in Korea will be an eschatological event, a sign of the coming reconciliation of all humanity.

## **Exodus to a Nuclear-Free World**

Second, I'd like to invite us on an exodus into new light. This is an exodus from the blinding flash of nuclear bombs and deadly glow of nuclear reactors to a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants. Northeast Asia has become the “global ground zero” of nuclear dangers. First, we are the only place in the world where nuclear weapons have actually been used. Hiroshima and Nagasaki lie just across a strait from Busan. Second, more than 1,000 nuclear tests have been conducted in adjoining areas of Asia and the Pacific, all with no regard for the local inhabitants. Third, all states in Northeast Asia either possess nuclear weapons or are protected by an ally's nuclear weapons.

Since the last WCC assembly held in Asia, which met in New Delhi in 1961, the number of states with nuclear weapons has more than doubled. Unbelievably, Asia has become the home to six of the nine states recognized as being in possession of nuclear weapons, and the four biggest armies in the world. In 1961 there were no nuclear power plants in Asia at all. In East and South Asia today, however, there are 117 in operation, and 344 under construction or planned. All these nuclear plants are powering our growing economies and consumerist lifestyles.

I believe that nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants are two sides of the same coin. The distinction that nuclear weapons are for military use and nuclear power plants are for peaceful, civilian use is a false one. Nuclear energy was first developed for the purpose of manufacturing atomic weapons. Countries develop nuclear weapons under the cloak of so-called peaceful, civilian, nuclear energy programmes. If we regard nuclear weapons as problematic, we must also regard nuclear power plants as problematic. Nuclear weapons and nuclear power cannot co-exist with peace. It is hard for me to understand why we have allowed them to coexist with Christian faith.

This 10th WCC Assembly is taking place in the most dangerous part of the world in terms of nuclear threat. South Korea has the highest geographic density of nuclear power plants in the world. We are here at the centre of a nuclear minefield. In preparation for this assembly, pastors and peace activists in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan have been holding a 40-day “fasting prayer” in front of the Busan City Hall. (Now they have moved their prayer tent into the Madang Hall of this assembly.) This 40-day fasting prayer began on September 30 and will end tomorrow, November 8, the very last day of this assembly. They are speaking out against the dangers of nuclear radiation and demanding the closure of South Korea’s oldest and incident-prone Kori Nuclear Power Plant, which is located only 20 kilometres away from here. This 35-year-old Kori Nuclear Power Plant has broken down 120 times already. There are 3.4 million people living within 30 kilometres of the Kori Power Plant. One simulation attests that if an accident happens in Kori such as happened in Fukushima, about 1 million people would die. Fukushima is enough! Chernobyl is enough! And Three Mile Island is enough!

To be free of the dangerous light outside us, however, we must liberate ourselves from the nuclear culture, which is based on our own greed and fear. Since the nuclear industry is deeply related to our own avarice, comforts, and worldly desires, we must make changes in our hearts and in our own lives. To turn off the dangerous light outside us, we have to turn on a light inside us. May I suggest that we have a moment of staying in darkness as a symbolic action against our captivity and dependency to the electricity produced by the Kori Nuclear Power Plant? In order to see the light inside us, we need to turn off the deadly nuclear light outside us. May I ask our crew members to turn off the light provided by the nuclear reactors, so that we may be able to see the light inside us? [*The speaker lights a candle.*] And as we sit in the darkness, I want us to sing: “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” Letting a light shine inside you is the spiritual awakening which frees us from our greed and obsession, as well as from temptation and illusion.

## **Exodus to a New Earth**

Thirdly and lastly, I'd like to invite an exodus to a new earth, i.e., an exodus from the industrial age to an ecological age. We all know of the problem of climate change; however, methane is even more dangerous than CO<sub>2</sub>. This methane is being emitted into the atmosphere as the permafrost melts due to global warming. This is a time bomb. Methane is being emitted at the fastest rate in the earth's history and could result in the extinction of human life, even all life.

We are now experiencing a global-scale Auschwitz that victimizes all kinds of species, and some of the poorest people. And yet the challenge is this: While human beings co-operate when they are faced with temporary disasters, like floods or earthquakes, they compete and go to war when faced with long-term emergencies, like the food or water crisis caused by climate change. The challenge is how to get humanity to cooperate in the face of climate change and to work together to make peace and enhance life. This question is posed to the whole of humanity as well as the church. Those victims of the so-called carbon civilization, especially those who live in small islands in the Pacific, Caribbean, and Bay of Bengal, are "the least" of our times, and the justice they ask for is the key to peace. We need civilizational change not climate change. The present civilization of greed and conquest, which is based on fossil and nuclear energy, is no longer sustainable and justifiable. We need an exodus from the industrial age to the ecological age. This, I believe, is a global exodus, and the church should be the sign that points the way along this exodus to the new earth.

## **Now Choose Life!**

Sixty years of mere armistice is enough! Seventy years of nuclear captivity is enough! Two hundred years of this industrial age is enough! It is time for the world to liberate itself from this fossil- and nuclear-based civilization with its endless greed for power and energy. The Fukushima nuclear catastrophe is a clarion call from God alerting humanity to the urgency of transformation. We must exodus out of these regimes of war, death and injustice and make a pilgrimage toward peace and justice.

A pilgrim, I think, is someone who walks the land on foot. You get out of the car and walk on the land. Pilgrimage, however, is not wandering, nor is it a picnic or a morning walk for leisure. We leave home on pilgrimage, we leave behind our comfortable and familiar places. Pilgrimage is a journey toward God's peace, which, according to Philippians 4:17, "surpasses all [human] understanding." We have all been captive to our times, and our imagination of peace is always limited and self-centred. St. Paul admonished us not to be conformed to this age, but we are all entrapped in a system of injustice, war and greed. We are walking through the valley of death indeed. Therefore, our pilgrimage is an exodus to life.

Before the Israelites entered Canaan, after surviving in the desert for 40 years and crossing the Jordan River, God said, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so

that you and your descendants may live”(Deut. 30:19). Heaven and earth witness that we are faced with this same covenant and challenge. “Now choose life” is God’s word to us here and now. The 21st century, which was expected to be a time of hope, has begun as a time of unprecedented war and violence, economic injustice, climate change and ecological destruction, religious conflict, division between cultures and generations, and spiritual and psychological chaos. Our age is one in which human enmity and greed hasten the collapse of civilization and even the cosmic end. In the midst of this chaos and crisis, God speaks to us: “Now choose life.” God says, “Now”: This “now” is the eschatological time; it is a kairoic time, the time of *metanoia*, determination, and full of grace. God has prepared for us a path toward life and commands us to turn our feet away from the path of war, violence, and self-destruction and to make pilgrimage along the path of life, justice, and peace. Today, responding to this holy command and invitation, we cannot help but walk and pray this prayer together: “God of life, lead us to your justice and your peace.” Amen.

# Ecumenical Conversations

## AFFIRMATIONS AND CHALLENGES

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### EC 01. Called to Be One: New Ecumenical Landscapes

#### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The purpose of this ecumenical conversation was to assess the contemporary situation and its challenges; to reflect on its theological, relational, and institutional dimensions; and to propose steps for further exploring the potential of the ecumenical movement in mutually enriching partnerships.

Unity is fostered where we experience that we are one in Christ. Common prayer and celebration, the sharing of life, and solidarity are essential to our way for visible unity. Recognizing that the ecumenical landscape has changed drastically, we underline the urgency of God's call to discern the new texture of ecumenical engagement.

EC 01 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

#### **Affirmations**

1. Churches with their ecumenical organizations need to:
  - *build bridges* to Christians and churches that are not currently part of mainline ecumenism.
  - *foster cooperation* in more open and flexible networks in response to global challenges whose impact are felt locally, such as migration, conflicts, economic injustice, and climate injustice.
2. *Building bridges* requires openness to the diversity within the WCC, CWC's REO's, international ecumenical organizations, NCC's, specialized ministries, WEA, and evangelical, pentecostal, charismatic, and independent churches accompanied by new theological conversations. We can no longer speak of "us" and "them" (*othering*).

3. *Fostering cooperation* in more open and flexible networks requires:
  - going beyond the existing institutional framework of the ecumenical movement (e.g., the Global Christian Forum and in Africa the cooperation of the AACC with the Association of Evangelicals and the organization of Africa Instituted Churches).
  - affirming the convening role of the WCC, gathering churches and partners in conversation, advocacy, and common action.
  - seeking greater partnership and dialogue between mainline ecumenism and Pentecostal, charismatic, and independent churches
4. Top-down “elite” ecumenism of institutions is no longer effective; emphasis must be given to local ecumenism and receptive ecumenism, with new methodologies of communication and networking. We call for a truly ecumenical World Youth Day involving young people from all expressions of Christianity.
5. Ecumenical formation and engagement of young people must be a strong priority. Strategies should include a call to deeper intergenerational work at all levels and strengthened partnership with youth organizations, such as the World Student Christian Federation.
6. The WCC will give a compelling programmatic and financial priority to building bridges with those outside the historic ecumenical movement.
7. Churches with their ecumenical organizations need to focus on how to share the fruits of ecumenical work at the local level.

## **Challenges**

1. Migration challenges the fixed boundaries of concepts, institutions, cultures, and traditions.
2. Generally, young people lack interest in institutions that cannot open up to the changing contexts. We must engage young people on how to relate ecumenism to youth, including mediums of engagement and formation.
3. At local and regional levels, wider cooperation and networking is developing faster than at the international level. The ecumenical movement is a polycentric network that has no single centre. The challenge to institutions is to reflect this and change their ways of operating and co-operating.
4. There is a challenge to overcome prejudice, stereotyping, and narrow mind sets.
5. There is a challenge to identify new ways of encountering one another in Christ and engaging diverse cultures, generations, and languages.

6. There is a challenge to address issues of mutual accountability among those already engaged in ecumenical conversation; e.g., living out agreements embracing safe space to engage uncomfortable conversations blocked by gatekeeping.
7. There is a challenge to address the reality of the multi-faith world landscape.

## **EC 02. The Church: Towards a Common Vision**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

This conversation focused on the Faith and Order Commission document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV). The general objective was to equip participants to promote churches' reception of the document and to take advice concerning future work on the convergence of ecclesiologies.

EC 02 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* is a convergence text, succinctly reflecting ecumenical dialogue agreements of recent decades, while providing perspectives on the church wider than those of any particular church and pointing to questions not yet answered together by the churches.
2. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* expands ecumenical discussion of ecclesiology by dealing with topics such as the church as *koinonia*, the importance of ecumenical councils, the question of primacy, and moral challenges the churches face.
3. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* can help each church recognize the vision of the church it shares with other churches as well as broaden and clarify its own vision of the church. It should be used in international and national settings, in theological schools, in local churches, and in other groups. It will be especially useful in groups bringing together persons from different churches—including future bilateral and multilateral theological dialogues—and in ecumenical formation courses.

### **Challenges**

1. While *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* is a convergence text, to some its concern and language seem far removed from many local churches, and the experiences of younger, emerging churches and of communities and movements. The document could have more discussion of the ministry of the laity, the role of women in the church, the participation of persons with disabilities, and the power of the church to transform people and communities.

2. Although the text presents a dynamic view of the church and of the convergence of ecclesiological perspectives, the relationship between these perspectives and the classical goal of *visible unity* needs further clarification.
3. We encourage the churches and ecumenical bodies to translate *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* into many languages and to provide study materials in accessible formats—including oral resources—in order to facilitate understanding and response, and for use in theological education and ecumenical formation.
4. We encourage the churches to be prepared to receive *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, to use it extensively, and to respond to it by the December 2015 deadline, taking into account experiences of the text's use and usefulness in their own contexts.
5. We encourage ecumenical bodies to initiate reception processes in order to respond to the text by the December 2015 deadline.
6. We encourage the WCC Faith and Order Commission, when seeking responses from the churches, to go beyond the question, "To what extent does the text reflect the ecclesiological understanding of your church?" to the question "to what extent does this text reflect the faith of the church through the ages?"
7. We encourage the WCC Faith and Order Commission to indicate what it intends to do after December 2015 with the responses received so that those responding can take this information into account as they respond.
8. We encourage the WCC Faith and Order Commission to pursue the focus on ecclesiology, paying particular attention to the ecclesiologies, often only implicit, of the younger and emerging churches—especially but not only in the global South—and to do so in partnership with organizations that are creating ecumenical space for encounter with new ways of being church (for example, the Global Christian Forum, the Lausanne Movement).

## **EC 03. Transformed by Renewal: Biblical Sources and Ecumenical Perspectives**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

Renewal in contemporary Christianity may suggest programmes for church growth and evangelization. Or it may refer to movements, such as charismatic and liturgical renewal, or even to the ecumenical movement itself as an expression of renewal. While all churches can recognize the biblical call to renewal, different experiences

and expressions of renewal may also be church-dividing. What are the indicators of renewal: evangelism, prosperity, reform, restructuring, financial health, charismatic gifts, mission toward justice and peace, larger numbers of Christians, religious experience?

This ecumenical conversation sought to reflect on the concept of renewal within contemporary Christianity. The goals of the ecumenical conversation were threefold: to assist the churches in articulating what renewal means from a theological perspective; to recognize and assess its authentic indicators pastorally; and to receive its fruits ecumenically. The conversation began with biblical insights and reflected on different confessional and contextual experiences of renewal, as exemplified in the lives of churches around the world today.

EC 03 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. Renewal is a gracious gift, initiated by God.
2. God seeks our renewal.
3. Renewal should point to God.
4. Renewal starts from where we already are as human beings.
5. Renewal leads to knowing.
6. Renewal is transformation or change.
7. True worship calls for the transcending of existing boundaries and structures, and calls us to see all things in a new light, which is in agreement with the mind of the Lord.
8. Renewal is always in conflict with existing contexts/structures.
9. Renewal happens in places where people can be honest about themselves in public.
10. Renewal happens where people are willing to cross over into a new/strange country and relate to someone they have been taught to avoid.
11. Renewal is desirable and the need for it is evergreen—as Paul says: Be continually transformed.

## **Challenges**

1. Renewal invites humility—giving ourselves over to God.
2. Renewal calls for action. It calls us to do something.
3. As individuals and institutions, renewal is about change, which we naturally resist and fear.
4. It is hard to get out of our comfort zones and break out of existing structures of worship.
5. Being truthful and honest about ourselves is difficult. People are afraid to be honest and they want to stay within their own boundaries.
6. Renewal is about putting body where the mind is. We may agree that we need to cross a boundary, but be unable to bring ourselves to do it.
7. How do we understand renewal?
8. God can work from where we are. But can we as humans accept that? For example, can we accept that someone is renewed in mind yet does not go to church?
9. At times pressure results in change when it is not really needed.
10. Renewal is about getting people to come to faith rather than to church.

## **EC 04. Moral Discernment for Life, Justice, and Peace**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

Since its origins, the church has struggled to discern the will of God and the way in which it responds to human challenges and circumstances. In an age of rapid change, facilitated by technology and increasing individual freedom, the church has experienced a growing divide between its members, congregations, and denominations on certain moral issues. Indeed, in responding to such issues the church has experienced much conflict.

The theological conversation on moral discernment is one that seeks to identify the process/es utilized by individuals and the church in their response to these ethical and moral dimensions of life. It seeks to identify the guiding methodology and tools that facilitate the decision-making process. The task of moral discernment is an essential aspect of Christian life, not only for the individual but for the churches as a

whole. It is a complex process, whereby decisions are based on a range of conscious and unconscious factors and sources.

Consequently, this ecumenical conversation explores the sources and process of moral discernment as entry points into the ecumenical discussion of moral issues and differences. How can the churches help each other to make the world a place where human beings and all of creation may live a life in justice and peace? More particularly, how can the churches find more constructive ways to discern the will of God?

EC 04 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations and challenges**

Throughout the discussions within the ecumenical conversation, understanding deepened in relation to the challenges that individuals and churches face in the discernment of God's will within some of the most difficult of human situations. While factors such as cultural practices and social class have always influenced this process, others have arisen that have made discernment increasingly complex. New challenges—such as the rapid change in communication, climate change, weapons of violence, persecuted churches, greater acceptance of the rights of the gay and lesbian community, the growing differences between urban and rural or those between the old and young—all influence the way in which people and congregations approach this task. Others can be found between groups of people, such as cultural background or practices, while issues of power and politics were readily acknowledged as impacting on the process. The need to seek God's guidance and to approach the task prayerfully is vital, as is encouraging people to share how they engage with sacred sources and live out their faith.

1. The document *Moral Discernment in the Churches* was welcomed by the participants as a helpful text in assisting in the practice of moral discernment. It was acknowledged as a valuable resource offering strategies and tools in the task at hand. It resonated with people's experiences; they found it interesting and engaging, while the analysis of the case studies in this context provided "safe" opportunities for discussion and learning.
2. The group identified the importance of understanding moral discernment as a spiritual and ethical process, as well as the fact that a positive attitude towards dialogue is important to its success.
3. The participants affirmed the value of listening to one another, of coming together in a safe space to hear how others engage, and of sharing their differing approaches and experiences to moral discernment, even respectfully living with disagreements.
4. Becoming aware of how different faith traditions engage in moral discernment can help us to understand ourselves and others better. We recommend ecumenical

encounters where people share how they practice moral discernment as a way to improve the discourse on these matters.

5. Few people are equipped in the task of moral discernment. The churches could identify mentors and resources that can facilitate training in this area.
6. In the ecumenical context we have come to realize that certain churches have particular gifts to share in the process of moral discernment and should be invited to offer those for the benefit of all.
7. Theological colleges might encourage increased attention to the study of the processes of moral discernment in the training and preparation of clergy and church leaders.
8. The document *Moral Discernment in the Churches* is a tool and enables practice in the process of discernment. Churches could use it as a starting point within educational forums and processes. The central committee of WCC should place the document on their agenda in order to send it to the churches, encouraging its use.

## **EC 05. We Must Pray Together to Stay Together**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

“We must pray together to stay together” was a fundamental statement made by the special commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, a report adopted at the 9th WCC Assembly in 2006. As a fellowship of churches we face many challenges “on the way to visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ.”

Christians need to pray for unity, and this makes sense only if we pray together. For specific ecumenical events, common prayer has usually been prepared, drawing from the resources of a variety of traditions. Such prayer originates in the past experience of the ecumenical community, is based on the churches’ common witness and affirmation of the theological basis that brought them together within the WCC fellowship, and is also a common sharing in the gifts of the member churches to each other. But common prayer does not claim to be the worship of any given member church, or of any kind of a hybrid church or super-church.

Unfortunately, one of the factors that divides Christians is the matter of worship itself—now described as “common prayer” within the WCC in the light of the special report. It is in common prayer, perhaps more than in any other ecumenical work, that we encounter both the promise of God’s reconciliation and the pain of our divisions—not only in the fact that we cannot share the eucharist, but also in different emphases in worship and in different gestures and customs, which make us feel strangers in other churches.

This conversation provided a timely opportunity to look afresh at the issue of common prayer for the common journey towards unity, and to respond to the major questions and challenges this brings forth. This conversation provided an opportunity to clarify the nature of common prayer at WCC gatherings and within the fellowship of churches, and to present practical recommendations for common prayer that aim to foster mutual growth in faith, spirituality, and witness.

This conversation was moderated by Fr Prof. Dr KM George (Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church), co-moderated by Ms Magali do Nascimento Cunha (Igreja Metodista no Brasil), with Ms Alison Preston (Anglican Church of Australia) as rapporteur, and support from WCC staff person Rev. Prof. Ioan Sauca, director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

We met in the context of the Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, and respected the guidelines outlined in that document, including use of the term “common prayer” for what some might at times consider to be worship.

EC 05 formulated the following affirmations, challenges, and recommendations to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

## **Affirmations**

1. Relating to God as we pray together, we recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, God’s children, and we express the nature of the church as a community.
2. Prayer is something we can already do together. We should pray together as often as possible.
3. The Lord’s Prayer is a gift of God and an important expression of unity.
4. The profound importance of common prayer is evident in spontaneous gatherings in response to crisis, tragedy, or disaster.
5. Prayer rooted in a tradition or culture is an opportunity to model ways to pray with one another, reflecting our God-given diversity, and to practise mutual, respectful learning as Jesus commanded, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 13:34-35).
6. While we pray in our own tradition, we welcome believers in the triune God to join us. We may not always feel “at home” in prayer with others, but the purpose of common prayer is not to be comfortable but to relate to God together.
7. As we pray for visible unity, we hold a vision for sharing the eucharist together.

## Challenges

1. We feel the pain of disunity in our current inability to share the eucharist together.
2. Sometimes common prayer can feel like a “masala” (mix of 12 spices), “mish mash” of traditions, or “sanyyet khodra”—a Middle Eastern dish that is made up of “left overs.”
3. We face challenges in praying together that extend beyond liturgical practice, including differences in language, culture, between regions, etc.
4. As Christians and churches we are sometimes too willing to hold on to our differences in common prayer, and we struggle to “bear with one another ... in love” (Col. 3:13).
5. As Christians and churches we need to find ways to strike a balance between the realities of on the one hand increasing globalization that can draw us closer, and on the other, a longing for a stronger sense of identity in one’s own tradition that can draw us apart.
6. Sometimes photography and videography during common prayer can be disruptive. Guidelines are needed to outline sensitive communication of prayer.
7. Creating a sacred space for common prayer can be difficult in buildings not designed for such purposes.

## Recommendations

1. WCC should regularly “survey” confessions, regions, and ecumenical bodies for good practices of shared prayer.
2. WCC or an appropriate partner should establish a widely accessible database of resources, models, guidelines, and theological reflections concerning shared prayer.
3. As we cannot yet share the eucharist together, we should not be paralyzed but continue to share together in other ways: e.g., through Orthodox *artoklasia*, “agape feasts,” etc.
4. In the future, those organizing common prayer should include opportunities for those attending to get to know one another before prayer together—perhaps through shared food, conversation, or storytelling.
5. We encourage strengthening understanding of liturgical or confessional identity through greater priority on invitations to prayer and/or invitations of eucharistic hospitality by specific traditions.

6. Prayer that is like a performance for people to observe, rather than participate in, should be avoided.
7. Shared prayer can be led by groups other than confessional/liturgical families: e.g., Indigenous people, young adults and children, people with special abilities.
8. Sensitive guidelines are needed for official photographers/videographers of common prayer, as well as of participants wanting to record the experience.
9. Creating a sacred space for common prayer can be difficult in buildings not designed for such purposes, yet is still very important. The WCC and ecumenical partners should continue to prioritize creation of a sacred space for common prayer and also maintain a commitment to our self-understanding of being pilgrim people with a long and meaningful history of meeting for common prayer in a tent.

## **EC 06. Developing Effective Leadership: Contextual Ecumenical Formation and Theological Education**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

Ecumenical formation and theological education are vital for the future of the ecumenical movement and the integrity of Christian mission. This ecumenical conversation takes up the constitutional mandate of the WCC to “nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through process of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context.” It examines how contextual ecumenical formation and education can strengthen leadership in the churches. What role can the ecumenical movement, and in particular the WCC, play in strengthening contextual ecumenical formation and education in the coming years?

The objectives of this ecumenical conversation are 1) to analyze the different needs for, and new models of, leadership development, ecumenical formation, and theological education in churches and ecumenical organizations; and 2) to collect recommendations from experts on the future direction of the work in leadership formation and theological education in churches, in the ecumenical movement, and in the WCC.

EC 06 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. Ecumenism is lived day-by-day by the members and leaders of the churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC. Ecumenical formation programs should be

designed to develop an ecumenical ethos in students, with the learning outcome that all aspects of ministry and leadership will be undertaken ecumenically.

2. Theological education and ecumenical formation are critically important for the future of the church and for upholding the churches as just communities and transformative agents of change. The unity of the church will be shaped to a large extent by theological education and the way that ecumenical issues are identified and integrated into all aspects of the curriculum.
3. Theological education must be equally accessible by women, men, and youth, irrespective of physical ability, sexual, or gender identity, or any other personal character or identity. The variety of perspectives and identities must be represented in faculty, student body, and all aspects of the curriculum.
4. Quality theological education is by definition ecumenical in character and it must engage both academically and pastorally in positive, dynamic relationships with surrounding disciplines and belief systems. In addition, it must be continuously open to global and local inter-religious realities.
5. The WCC Programme on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) has played a crucial role in supporting ecumenical formation and theological education among the churches. We are convinced that the role of ETE will be even more important in the future and so confirm the conviction that ETE staff are required as part of the work of the WCC, not only in Geneva but also for the accompaniment of churches and regional ecumenical partners.
6. The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey's unique program of ecumenical formation must continue for the development of the next generations of ecumenical leaders, and consideration be given to offering a similar program regionally in cooperation with local faculty. The relationship between the Ecumenical Institute and ETE should be evaluated and adjusted as needed.
7. The Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) is an outstanding, innovative project with manifold positive results already in this assembly, and consideration should be given to its financial support and continuation regionally as well as globally.
8. Support is needed for those preparing to work with communities where many are solely oral or dependent on oral tradition (either by choice or by necessity). Support is also needed in the broad area of linguistic diversity, especially for the provision of theological education in mother tongues.

9. ETE should serve as a global actor engaged in activities that individual local institutions or regional bodies cannot provide—including support for (among others) global online databases, other digital media, the Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib)—and should facilitate online access to archive research materials.
10. The results, recommendations, and three mandates of the roundtable on ETE held in March 2013 should be followed, including the recommendation that a small, temporary accompaniment group be established to help facilitate the work during transition and to assist the WCC in making ecumenical theological formation an integral part of the strategic planning of the council as a whole.

### **Challenges**

Among the many challenges facing theological education and ecumenical formation, the participants acknowledge the particular challenge of the financial realities faced by the churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC, and yet ask for creative efforts to identify new sources of funding for theological scholarships and faculty development. Scholarship support is critically important in many parts of the world, especially for women and others marginalized by social systems and prejudice, if ecumenical theological education is to be truly inclusive and transformative.

## **EC 07. Together towards Life: Mission in Changing Contexts**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The objectives of the conversation were to share the new concepts and directions of mission in *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (TTL); to encourage renewed commitment to ecumenical endeavour on mission; to develop strategies on how to implement the new mission statement at the various levels of local congregations, mission boards of the member churches, international mission organizations, CWME, etc.; and to foster mission spirituality and spiritual empowerment in the mission of the Holy Spirit.

The expected outcomes were to encourage churches and mission bodies to recommit themselves to the new directions of mission; to develop strategies for the application of the new mission concepts in TTL; and to develop affirmations, challenges, and suggestions on new ways for joining in the mission of the Spirit.

EC 07 formulated the following affirmations, challenges, and recommendations to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

## **Affirmations**

The conversation recognized “changing landscapes” as an apt description of the context of mission and evangelism today. It welcomed the WCC’s adoption of TTL and affirmed, in particular:

1. its ecumenical character;
2. its trinitarian understanding of the mission of God;
3. its understanding of mission as the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the world;
4. its identification of “life” as criterion for discerning the Spirit’s presence;
5. its attention to the flourishing of creation;
6. its emphasis on mission from the margins;
7. its stress on transformative spirituality;
8. its affirmation of the church, at all levels and in all shapes, as agent of mission;
9. its recognition of multicultural and intercultural ministries; and
10. its holistic understanding of mission and evangelism.

## **Challenges**

The churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC face the challenges to:

1. Explore ways in which Christian mission can engage with different spiritualities in today’s world. How can we discern the presence of the Spirit of God?
2. Attain greater clarity on the meaning of “changing landscapes,” “life,” and “mission from the margins.”
3. Undertake further work on Christian witness in a multi-religious context.
4. Give greater attention to contexts where Christians are vulnerable and suffering.
5. Further explore mission as healing and how to develop this in the churches.
6. Ensure that TTL informs the central planning and decision-making bodies of the churches (not only the mission boards); and inspires the organizational change required to fulfil its vision.

7. Deepen the reflection on the close relationship between mission and evangelism.

### **Recommendations**

In order to join in the mission of the Spirit, we encourage the churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC to:

1. Develop a TTL website (possibly with associated social media) as a resource for local congregations—to include translations into local languages, short presentations, definition of key terms, case studies and contextual reflections.
2. Undertake further work on relational models of mission, with attention to humility, vulnerability, gender, accompaniment, partnership, *kenosis*, dialogue, and hospitality.
3. Engage with Christian development agencies / special ministries in order to discern synergies between prophetic *diakonia* and transformative mission.
4. Undertake further theological work to unpack, “tease out,” and contextualize the affirmations of TTL.
5. Develop modules for inclusion of TTL in the curriculum of theological schools, and make the case for such modules to be mandatory.
6. Hold seminars at regional level to introduce TTL to churches, schools, and agencies.

## **EC 08. Evangelism Today: New Ways for Authentic Discipleship**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The ecumenical conversation on evangelism addressed and assessed the key challenges and opportunities in the global changing context of evangelism, and emphasized the urgency to recommit anew to our witness to God of life. Moreover, the conversation highlighted the importance of a common witness to the gospel of life in inter-denominational as well as inter-religious contexts, while addressing evangelism in relation to conversion and the concern of proselytism. This ecumenical conversation also aspired to present new concrete approaches for the work on evangelism and the importance of discipleship in secular contexts in particular.

EC 08 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

## **Affirmations<sup>1</sup>**

1. Evangelism is pointing to Jesus Christ. New life in Christ that comes through the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ demands that we share the good news in an authentic manner.
2. We urge that initiatives be taken to build inclusive communities in Christ at all levels. (LC, EP & WCC)
3. The sharing of the gospel must be relevant to the basic needs of the people, including material and spiritual. (LC)
4. We urge that LCs be equipped in mission and evangelism to explore, experiment, experience, and embrace new ways for authentic discipleship. (EP & WCC)
5. We need to make the connection between discipleship and embodiment, not merely emphasizing numbers in relation to Christianity. We must change the reality of communities in conflict or at war into embodying Christ and his new way of life. (LC, EP & WCC)
6. Discipleship needs to be seen in words and action. Justice and peace are some of the significant expressions of our discipleship and evangelism. By recognizing that living out the kingdom values is itself a form of evangelism, we can communicate the good news of Christ through our life style. (LC, EP & WCC)
7. Integrating evangelism with peace and justice can be achieved through new emphasis on discipleship. Discipleship means educating and enabling others to live that life. We need to bring together initiatives on mission, evangelism, discipleship, justice and peace, and interfaith relations, rather than dividing them for the sake of job roles. (EP & WCC)
8. Congregations should act in collaboration with the communities they are placed in, and not become a stranger. We must equip individuals to collectively be neighbours both within and beyond the local churches/congregations. (LC)
9. Discipleship means drawing people to Christ to be his witnesses. Churches are encouraged to collaborate in deepening discipleship. (LC, EP)

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1. (LC= Local Congregations/Churches, EP= Ecumenical Partners, WCC = World Council of Churches)

## **Challenges**

1. We must consider how the desire for new life in Christ can be rooted in our local churches. (LC)
2. Mission challenges us to connect the vertical and horizontal relationships—it calls us to bring the needs of the broken world into our worship. (LC, EP & WCC)
3. Evangelism proclaims the good news but churches' proclamations sometimes make little connection in contexts of inequality, suffering, abuse, human rights violation, etc. We must make these connections that should be visible. (LC, EP & WCC)
4. We must consider how we can build new models of discipleship that will enable communities of different faiths to live together. (LC, EP & WCC)
5. We must ask how we can we make evangelism holistic. It should not be a mere proclamation of the good news alone, but it should also bring about transformation in the individual, communal, and social levels. (LC & WCC)
6. We are called to become neighbours to those in need. We must ask how we become neighbours and not strangers to one another. (LC)
7. Our perceptions about people outside the church must change for the better. We need to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit beyond the boundaries of the church. (LC, EP & WCC)
8. Mission in many contexts requires revival of current church members. (LC)
9. Evangelism is the responsibility of both lay and clergy. All believers should be equipped to share their faith. (LC)
10. We must find ways to establish common ground to share the good news that many will understand. (LC, EP & WCC)

## **EC 09. Community of Women and Men in the Church: Mutual Recognition and Transformative Justice**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The church, as a prophetic sign in today's world, is called to embody a true community of women and men. Such an inclusive community is God's gift and promise for humanity, being created "in God's image," male and female (Gen 1:27). To enliven

this ideal during the 10th Assembly, this ecumenical conversation created a space to explore how “what we are, we ought to become” (Philip Potter), a space for celebrating and furthering the 60 years of women’s active praxis for a just community of women and men in the church. While acknowledging the still-existing challenges to becoming this community, there was also a call for mutual accountability in different ministries of the church as to how we have been or have not been a community of women and men. Echoing the assembly theme, the ecumenical conversation was a call to transformative justice in response to the often-acknowledged backlash to the gains that the ecumenical movement made through the earlier agency of the ecumenical foremothers.

Through various methodologies the ecumenical conversation explored these questions: In what ways has the church been a community of women and men? What have been the existing challenges to the called-to-be-one church’s vision of being and living as a community of women and men? What programmes, concrete actions, and theologies should the churches, the ecumenical movement, and ecumenical partners design and engage with so as to make sure that the call to unity for justice and peace is pursued together as a just and inclusive community of women and men? How can the ecumenical process of building a community of women and men better enhance the “cross-fertilization” advocacy process with the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)?

The EC 09 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

## **Affirmations**

1. Gender justice is essential to the unity that we seek. Unity is more than diversity; it includes differences while welcoming mutual loving respect and solidarity.
2. The WCC must commit to gender justice and women’s empowerment at all levels of the WCC by:
  - allocating appropriate resources for the empowerment of women;
  - ensuring equal (not less than 50 percent) and just representation of women in the WCC infrastructure;
  - holding itself accountable;
  - addressing bad governance in member churches, cultivating a culture of respect, and creating tools such as gender policy and code of conduct for just participation of women and accountability;
  - encouraging all member churches to become advocates for gender justice, supporting, but not limiting this task to delegated members;
  - providing a programme of ecumenical formation for the 21st century that enables the equal and just participation of women and men;
  - encouraging programmatic work that addresses positive or transformative masculinities.

3. Together as a transversal community of men and women the WCC must study and develop dialogue around sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV. The WCC must also take up social and policy changes within the WCC and its member churches.
4. The WCC, its member churches, and its ecumenical partners must be sexual- and gender-based violence-free spaces (i.e., free of sexual abuse, harassment, bullying, etc.).
5. WCC spaces of common prayer must reflect a just community of women and men through words and deeds. To this end, gender sensitive hermeneutics (including, but not limited to feminist, womanist, *mujerista*, and *minjung* women's theologies) must be given prominence in the literature and theological education of the WCC and encouraged for use in its member churches.
6. Given the unique role that women play as peace builders, the WCC and its member churches must find ways to affirm this and include women in every peace-building process
7. The WCC must continue in legacy of facilitating the collaboration of marginalized voices; the way in which gender justice intersects with other areas of social inclusion is essential (e.g., using the United Nations systems and platforms).
8. The WCC must link, mobilize and affirm work by women of faith on gender justice inside and outside of its constituencies.

## **Challenges**

1. Most of the Sheffield recommendations in *Community of Women and Men in the Church* have yet to be achieved.
2. There is a tendency to compromise gender justice for "unity." Often this is expressed in the work of silencing and marginalizing women and/or gender justice perspectives.
3. This is also expressed in a lack of concern and respect for the development of women's capacity for leadership within the WCC and its member churches.
4. Many live with HIV and other illnesses and epidemics exacerbated by gender inequalities. The silence of churches with respect to gender identity and sexuality inhibits access to adequate care due to stigmas and fear of violence.
5. Affirmations, statements, and policies for gender justice in the WCC are not put into practice. As a fellowship of churches, the affirmations, statements, and

policies for gender justice are non-binding for member churches. Still, a way to implement the positions of the WCC that have emerged from its conciliar process must be adopted in practice:

- Inclusive language and images in different liturgical practices, theological and dialogical spaces of the WCC and all member churches must become standard practice.
- We need to achieve balanced representation of women in leadership positions of churches (including, but not limited to, ordained or consecrated roles).
- Where the WCC and member churches approach numeric balance, there is need for balanced perspectives supporting gender justice more broadly.

6. Although we understand an inherent connection in various forms of injustice (including but not limited to race, caste, ethnicity, region, class, ability, power, status, and sexual orientation), intersectional justice work remains an essential way to approach matters of gender justice. We must become aware of and respond to the implications of the social-economic crisis for the relationship between the genders: human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, and broken relationships.

7. Our distinct cultural contexts and confessional perspective present added challenges as we work toward common vision and expressions of gender justice. Even within more progressive contexts, realizing vision in practice remains a challenge.

## **EC 10. Exploring Christian Self-Identity in a World of Many Faiths**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

In the 21st century, Christians in many different contexts and parts of the world need to articulate their faith in conversation with people who are followers of other religions. This conversation reflected on a number of central Christian themes (such as our understanding of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, creation, salvation, the Bible and the church). Though Christian thinking and practice about such issues may be challenged as we engage with people of other religions, it can also be a creative undertaking, encouraging us to return to the roots of our faith and to reflect more deeply, discovering Christian insights speaking directly to this religiously plural world.

This ecumenical conversation sought to be a space for holding a genuine conversation in which different views on serious questions about the relationship between Christianity and other religions might be expressed courteously, heard graciously, and honoured. The conversation drew as a resource on the consultations organized over the last decade by the WCC in the area of “Christian self-understanding in the context of religious plurality.” The draft report produced as a result of these consultations—“Who do we say that we are?”—acted as a background resource for the

conversation. The conversation also acted as a springboard for future inter-religious work, integrating both theological and practical dimensions.

The conversation was framed using the motifs and themes of faith, hope, and love, and it formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

## **Affirmations**

1. We affirm the place of and contributions made by those of other faiths/religions in this ecumenical conversation.
2. Through dialogue and common action, both our Christian self-understanding and our relationships with partners of other faiths/religions may be deepened and enriched.
3. The world of many faiths/religions invites Christians to wrestle with the “scandal of particularity” and the “gift of divine plenitude.
4. Theological questions relating to inter-religious dialogue are still very significant and unresolved within the Christian community.
5. There is an intrinsic inter-religious dimension to all the work of every church, ecumenical body, and the WCC.

## **Challenges**

1. We encourage the WCC and its ecumenical partners to explore the challenge of the relationship between inter-church and inter-religious dialogues, including the ecumenical diversity in approaches to inter-religious dialogue.
2. The WCC and its ecumenical partners must create opportunities for people of different faiths/religions to act together locally, regionally, and globally to love their neighbours and to work for justice and peace.
3. The WCC must take into account comments made in this ecumenical conversation (e.g., that Jesus commended the faith of a woman of another religion [Mark 7.24-30], that Christian hope is focused in the incarnation, and that true love is not uncritical [see Prov. 3:11-12 and Rev. 3:19]) and ensure that they contribute to the final version of “Who do we say that we are?” The participants encourage the publication, distribution, and study of this report;
4. Churches and the WCC need to continue to be prophetic, to take risks even when there is potential for misunderstanding, and to be prepared to become pilgrims in our thoughts and self-identities towards other religions.

5. The WCC needs to take seriously *all* aspects of inter-religious dialogue, “the dialogue of life, social action, theological exchange, and spiritual experience” (*Dialogue and Mission, PCID, 1984*), and how they mutually inform each other.

## **EC 11. Bonded with the Marginalized for a Just and Inclusive Church**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

This ecumenical conversation attempted to address some of the major hesitations and inhibitions that churches encounter in addressing practices of discrimination and marginalization within. It searched for creative possibilities for churches’ effective presence and witness in an increasingly unjust and exclusionary world.

EC 11 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. Marginalization is a social, economic, cultural, and political reality that is a profoundly moral and spiritual challenge, contradicting the basic Christian affirmation that all people are created in the image of God.
2. God’s preferential option for the marginalized as witnessed in Jesus recognizes life in the margins as a testimony to the brokenness of the world, thus struggling against marginalization offers a testimony of hope for the promise of the fullness of life. As such, the church is called to witness through its struggles against forces of injustice and to be an instrument of God’s transformation.
3. The church is called to continue the ministry of Jesus through the witness of the saving and transforming power of God in Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, who suffered outside the walls (Heb.), the church is called not only to be outside the walls but also to break down the walls that exclude people (Eph.).
4. Diversity of creation is a gift and the self-expression of the divine. The church is called to celebrate and uphold the richness of diversity through its concrete acts of solidarity and justice.
5. The church is called to a common mission of justice, witnessing to hope, embracing human diversity, and working toward a just and inclusive world (Micah 6:8).
6. Being inclusive is a conscious moral choice to create and sustain spaces for inclusion and just participation within which all identities are affirmed and respected. Therefore, there can be no discrimination based on age, caste, class, ethnic and

national identities, gender identity, physical, sensory or intellectual/mental impairment, race, religion, and sexual orientation, or other categories within the space of the church. The church is called to enlarge the tents (Is. 54:2). Being inclusive, therefore, requires a sharing of power and the transformation of communities to live fully into the space that God has given us.

## **Challenges**

1. The church's challenge is to recognize how it mirrors the powers and principalities against which Jesus struggled. The church is called to be reflective on its complicity in perpetuating and legitimizing discrimination, marginalization, and violence.
2. Since marginalization is systemic, the church must provide biblical, theological, and liturgical resources as a framework for justice, healing, and wholeness in addressing hatred and violence. Churches must take initiative in collaborating with civil society actions and organizations that challenge discrimination and marginalization instead of remaining indifferent or waiting to be led by them.
3. The church has to be an accepting and affirming community; it has to become a church without borders or barriers. To do this, we need to sensitize the leadership and membership of the churches to issues of discrimination and exclusion to achieve equity and inclusivity. The churches need to conduct a social audit.
4. The struggle for justice is a pre-condition for peace.
5. The member churches, ecumenical partners, and WCC must equip and empower disciples of Jesus to create and embody inclusive communities.
6. The WCC is challenged to reaffirm its programmatic commitment to a just and inclusive community and to ask its member churches to send delegates according to the quota for the next assembly.

## **EC 12. The Earth Community Groans: A Call to Ecological Justice and Peace in the Face of Climate Change**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The objectives of this conversation were to come to an overall understanding of the ecological crisis and especially climate change threats; to discuss the ethical, spiritual, and theological dimensions of the crisis; to learn what churches, civil society, and the international community are doing to address climate change and ecological

destruction; and, finally, to put forward proposals for action by churches and the WCC as a component of the ecumenical pilgrimage for justice and peace

EC 12 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. We affirm that the crisis that God's creation is facing is fundamentally ethical and spiritual and is a threat to all of life.
2. We affirm that climate change is one of the most threatening manifestations of the ecological crisis affecting all life on the planet, particularly the most vulnerable everywhere. Too little has been done by the international community.
3. We affirm that scientific data indicates that the ecological crisis, caused by the actions of human beings, is already leading to an irreversible threat to humanity and the entire planet, and thus urgent action is needed.
4. We affirm that some churches around the world are addressing this issue locally, nationally, and globally, working also on an ecumenical, interfaith, and inter-generational level, but we acknowledge that much more needs to be done.

### **Challenges**

1. We encourage the WCC as a fellowship of churches to take a leading role to inspire while providing vision and facilitating more intensive ways of collaboration among churches, specialized ministries, ecumenical organizations, and links with other faiths around the world to care for God's creation.
2. Since a conversion is required—a radical change, a *metanoia* of our hearts, minds, lifestyles, and relationships with God and with our neighbours near and far, now and in future—we envision a pilgrimage to justice and peace for God's creation that puts at its centre climate and ecology. This will require a holistic approach and action on the social, economic, political, spiritual, and ethical dimensions so as to ensure the enjoyment of full human rights and dignity for all, without destroying the planet in the process. Through the fellowship of churches on a pilgrimage for justice and peace for God's creation, we will transform hearts and minds.
3. In order to experience radical change, we challenge the churches and other organizations to raise awareness, to do and share good practices, and to engage in advocacy work. Many churches already do this all over the world.

## **EC 13. An Economy of Life: Overcoming Greed**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The purpose of this ecumenical conversation was to assess the contemporary culture of greed and its challenges with respect to an economy of life. We aimed to engage in theological and social reflection on an economy of life and anti-greed measures, as well as their influence on the everyday life of people, the Christian community, the WCC's mission, the ecumenical movement, the global economy, and the whole creation of God.

This ecumenical conversation responds to the biblical call of Jesus in Luke 12:15, which cautions, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." This saying of Jesus hints at the perennial challenge of relating Christian discipleship to the larger economic environment in which the fullness of life is or is not realized.

Greed and unjust financial and trade structures are at the root of the intertwined economic, social, and ecological crises that continue to cause immense suffering, not only among the already impoverished and marginalized, but also among materially privileged people through ethical erosion. Churches, the ecumenical movement, and the WCC are calling for an "Economy of Life, Justice and Peace for All," a vision in which poverty—material and spiritual—is eradicated, inequality and greed are challenged, and creation is cared for.

This ecumenical conversation asked the following key question: How can churches inspire a pilgrimage toward justice and peace with a focus on an economy of life, witness to a "spirituality of enough" or "spirituality of anti-consumerism," and contribute to transforming the current climate of greed, materialism, and consumerism? A major focus has been the introduction of greed lines and indicators, practical anti-greed measures, and alternative definitions of well-being, crucial to evolving an economy of life.

Individual, national, institutional, structural and systematic dimensions of greed were discussed in order to outline concrete actions and projects among churches and between churches and other partners and the World Council of Churches (WCC) to overcome greed at all levels, thereby promoting an "Economy of Life, Justice and Peace for All."

EC 13 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. We affirm the decisions taken by the central committee meeting in Crete, in 2012, voting that:

the World Council of Churches launch a pilgrimage of justice and peace based on the basic parameters found in the Economy of Life document, Commitment and

Call, paragraph 21-26 at the Assembly in Busan (until the 11th Assembly) for and of the churches to focus on faith commitments to economic justice (poverty and wealth), ecological justice (climate change, etc.), and peace building. The WCC should “set the table for the churches (as well as other organizations and communities including Christian world communions, specialized ministries, interfaith organizations and social movements) to share spirituality and practice developed in their search for transformation for justice and sustainability...

the World Council of Churches initiates a broad theological study process of the issues related to the pilgrimage of justice and peace in order to connect to the theological work on ecclesiology (undertaken by Faith and Order), unity, mission (CWME) and others within the member churches.

## 2. Important elements in the pilgrimage are:

- emphasis on the essential relation between social justice and eco-justice as a major challenge for humanity and for our Christian faith;
- critical self-examination of the churches as institutions and as communities with regard to the issue of greed (Luke 12:15) in the light of what scriptures tell us about discipleship and Christian life styles;
- education on how to participate in economic life, especially in relation to issues such as consumerism and greed, and to foster “caring and sharing communities” (as in Acts 2 and 4);
- promotion of theological education on Christian understandings of “fullness of life” (John 10:10), and of justice and peace in God’s creation, and include these topics in curriculum development;
- advocating with decision-makers in society to promote policies towards justice and peace in God’s creation, and use of the Multi-dimensional Structural Greed Index, making use of on-going international processes;
- examination of the international financial order in view of transforming this to serve economies of life by building on the report on the “International Financial Transformation for the Economy of Life” (“Sao Paulo report”) and the work of the commission that continues work on this topic;
- building on the inspiring model of dialogue that was applied by CLAI and CEC to promote links between different contexts and continents as a methodology for a pilgrimage towards justice and peace in God’s creation;
- continued engagement and partnering of the WCC with the relevant international organizations to promote decent work for all;
- launching of a study process on the short, medium, and long term shift from a profit and greed-oriented economy to a common good-oriented political economy;
- assessment of how the elements of the vision of economies of life can be incorporated in the discussions and implementation concerning the “post-2015” process on establishing sustainable development goals.

## **Challenges**

1. We encourage the WCC to take initiatives that would stimulate churches and their members to focus on just and sustainable life styles.
2. We urge the WCC to set up a reference group (or special committee) to help design and accompany the pilgrimage of justice and peace.
3. Member churches of the WCC and other organizations related to the WCC are invited to provide the necessary financial and other resources to make this pilgrimage possible.

## **EC 14 Human Security: Sustaining Peace with Justice and Human Rights**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

This ecumenical conversation analyzed and reflected on pertinent issues related to human security within the context of peace with justice and human rights in emerging geo-political contexts. We also discussed the inter-relatedness of human security and human rights, sharpening the theological undergirding of God's call for prophetic witness.

EC 14 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

Based on the above identified challenges, the group agreed on the following affirmations at various levels:

1. Individual:
  - Christians should be proactive and united in their pursuit of human security and peace.
  - As Christians, we must care for victims of unjust practices that undermine human security.
2. Ecumenical movement/churches:
  - Churches working in the realm of human security should be rooted in biblical concepts such as shalom.
  - Churches must sharpen their focus in the realm of human security by moving beyond national security to affirm human dignity and protect human rights.
  - Churches should create safe spaces for victims of human trafficking and become a sanctuary for refugees and uprooted people

- Churches must advocate for the human rights of migrant workers and their families, as well as stateless people.
  - Churches must use different channels to work with government officials and civil society.
  - Churches must hold accountable countries and corporations that are the main weapons producers and condemn those that disseminate or sell weapons into the wrong hands.
  - Ideas developed in ecumenical circles should be communicated to local parishes.
3. National and international:
- The church should engage in the political process to promote good governance, rule of law rooted in human rights, and transparency.
  - The church must collaborate with various partners for the protection of various vulnerable groups.
  - The church must take a role in preventing violence from arising or escalating and also in protecting vulnerable groups who are exposed to grave injustice

## Challenges

After in-depth discussions, the group identified the following areas as challenges where further work is needed:

1. The global trends in *migration*, including the exploitation of migrant workers, human trafficking and sexual exploitation, internally displaced people, uprooted people.
2. The increasing *militarization* of states, including the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and its impact on women and children, the sophistication of weaponry, the allocation of resources to weapons production at the expense of development.
3. The threat of *nuclear arms, nuclear energy, and nuclear waste* for future generations.
4. The denial of the human rights of *stateless people* as a result of their lack of citizenship.
5. The denial of people's *right to self-determination*.
6. The role of *corporations and the private sector* assuming the power of states.
7. The lack of *access to food and water* as a violation of human security.

## **EC 15. The Way of Just Peace: Building Peace Together**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

This conversation explored how churches at different levels are motivated and equipped to build peace. It tapped rich biblical, ecumenical, and other resources using the inter-disciplinary approach of just peace. It provided space to debate global issues that call Christians toward the more dynamic unity required if we are to become credible witnesses for peace today. It drew from the discussions new pathways for churches committed to building peace together, in faith.

Participants were introduced to basic concepts and capacities related to the proposed ecumenical pilgrimage of justice and peace. They learned about the spirituality and praxis required in building peace and just peace ministries, including interdisciplinary and multi-religious approaches. The pursuit of peace was presented as a transformative issue in Christian life. Participants were exposed to secular peace-building priorities, such as violence prevention, conflict transformation, influencing governmental policies, enhancing the rule of law, and building cultures of peace.

Participants are able to apply tools for churches and related ministries to the proposed pilgrimage of justice and peace: (a) an interactive and thematic approach to the concept of just peace, (b) specific practices of just peace-making, (c) criteria for selecting advocacy issues with global-local impact, and (d) strategies for international advocacy networks.

Understood from a theological point of view as a gift given to us by Christ, just peace is an ethical paradigm that doesn't seem to be easily fulfilled throughout history. In this sense, just peace is a journey, a dynamic pilgrimage that points to a process and praxis, requiring both personal and community movement and commitment to be pursued in the life of the community, in the church, in the market place, in dealing with nature and among peoples.

However, the main substantial challenge to this view is that just peace is defined differently from diverse perspectives emerging from geo-political, economic, and cultural contexts. Furthermore, just peace is perceived differently by the privileged and the marginalized in the global context as well as in local contexts where advocating the right of one person or one group might block the right of other persons or groups (e.g. in complicated diverse contexts like the South-East Asia or the Middle East).

Taking the controversial nature of just peace into consideration, we were able to observe a growing consensus that, in general, democracy, human rights, and religious liberty do contribute to pursuance of just peace.

EC 15 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

## **Affirmations**

1. As just peace is based on the broad biblical concept of *shalom*, it includes an encompassing spiritual attitude of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration towards all creation. Peacemaking initiatives of all kinds shall, thus, embrace a deep spiritual dimension based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.
2. Among the peacemaking initiatives discussed, personal commitment to contribute to nonviolent actions, reducing threats to life and equality, and working together with others to solve conflicts were emphasized. In this regard, a shift from conflict resolution to conflict transformation could be recognized (e.g. in the Israeli-Palestinian context).
3. In regards to economic justice, just peace is the medium in which just and sustainable economic development for all could be pursued.
4. In a changing international system, the churches are asked to play a more crucial role by raising their prophetic voice to promote justice and peace wherever suffering prevails. This could happen in cooperation with international institutions like the UN. Efforts should emphasize the importance of reducing weapons and weapons trade.
5. In order to promote peace, the churches should encourage grassroots peacemaking groups, affirm programs dealing with structural oppression, and encourage children's peace education, from which not only the children of the oppressed, but the children of the oppressor benefit.

## **Challenges**

1. The basic challenge of the journey of just peace is to make it acceptable in our diverse world. For example, the concept did not touch the heart of Korean Christians who still live in a context of division, threat of war, and nuclear power.
2. It seems that defining Just Peace as a middle way between "just war" and "pacifism" does not yet fill in the concept with positive content.
3. In accordance with the observed diversity of contexts, the concept of Just Peace might have different content according to the context. In this case, we must ask how universality can be achieved.
4. The *Call* and the *Just Peace Companion* emphasize the "rule of law" as a way to promote justice. However, in the international arena the law is the law of the powerful and the mighty, who make use of it over the weak.

5. For the issue of the peace needs of today to be seen in the context of injustice and violence done by empire, it seems that in the present context we are emphasizing nonviolence to the weak who have become victims of violence of the powerful, rather than to the strong, which could indirectly mean supporting oppression.

## **EC 16. Religions Working Together for Peace and Freedom**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The purpose of this ecumenical conversation was to explore and imagine contextually relevant models of inter-religious engagement that can lead to peace and freedom. This was achieved by facilitating a candid and creative engagement with theological ambiguities and contextual complexities surrounding the relationship between religions and the themes of peace and freedom. In this way, interfaith collaboration became a “dialogue of” and “dialogue for” life

EC 16 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. We need to harvest resources, models, and examples of individuals, groups, and ministries joining together across lines of faith to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in response to the cries of the world’s people and all creation.
2. Entering into religious dialogue not only enriches and strengthens our own identity, but also opens space to engage with the wider issues related to identity-based conflicts.
3. We need to recognize the diversity within each religious tradition, taking into consideration the diverse geographical and political contexts in which they exist.
4. Christians must to learn about other religions and their texts and traditions in a posture of humility and openness.
5. Inter-religious dialogue must be contextually embedded and shaped by people in the margins.

### **Challenges**

1. The participants acknowledge the difficulty of recognizing that often the causes of religious conflict are due to the political instrumentalism of religion.

2. The participants acknowledge the exclusivist theologies that inhibit the willingness and courage to engage with people of other religions to build a future with justice and peace.
3. The participants acknowledge that some contexts are not conducive for religious freedom and pluralism to thrive.
4. The participants acknowledge the difficulty of understanding a religious tradition on its own terms without interpreting it through a Christian lens.
5. The participants acknowledge the challenge of going beyond academic dialogue and engaging local communities in face-to-face conversation with a hermeneutic of suspicion and an orientation towards action.
6. The participants acknowledge the difficulty of having representative religious leaders at inter-religious dialogue events that often exclude women and young people.

## **EC 17. The Korean Peninsula: Ecumenical Solidarity for Justice and Peace**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The delegates of EC17 encourage the WCC Programme Guideline Committee to make the matter of seeking justice and peace on the Korean peninsula a very high programme priority of the WCC immediately following this assembly. A significant first step and sign of this justice and peace will be the reunification of North and South Korea as one nation. We do not believe that it is a coincidence that the 10th Assembly of the WCC is being held on the Korean peninsula in the same year that the world marks the 60th anniversary of the armistice that brought about a temporary cessation of the Korean War. This armistice was signed with the promise of an imminent peace treaty. However, that peace treaty has never been signed. The Christian community is mandated by its Lord and Saviour to be peace-makers. With each passing year the urgency for seeking peace and justice on the Korean peninsula increases. Within 20 years there will be few people with a living memory of a united Korea. The peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula is important not only for those people for whom the Korean peninsula has been their ancestral home for thousands of years, but for the peace of North East Asia and the world.

EC 17 acknowledges and honours the sincere hard work of our forebears in the ecumenical movement. Many fine statements of peace-making on this peninsula have been produced, and other people have sought to work for reconciliation and reunification, especially in Tozanso (1984) and Glion III (1990). Hence, we are requesting a revival of the Tozanso spirit and especially the inclusion of younger generations

in the process of finding a common vision for a peaceful and united future for the Korean peninsula.

EC 17 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

## **Affirmations**

1. The reunification of the Korean peninsula is an urgent issue. As each year passes hope for reunification fades. Fatigue sets in when the hope of progress is dashed. We are living in an age of fear that has done violence against people living in hope. Without hope we grope in the dark, vulnerable to the false prophets of gloom and doom.
2. The principle actors in the struggle for reunification are the Koreans themselves. No one else will, can, or should do it for them. No one can rush the process any faster than the Koreans themselves want it, although it is possible for outside forces to obstruct it.
3. Justice is relevant to peace. True peace must walk with justice. The use of force will not bring about peace. Readiness to resort to arms is too high a price to pay for security.
4. False prophets prefer the force of arms, while true prophets call for confession and forgiveness, dialogue and understanding, and persistence in prayer and self-sacrifice. True prophets will teach that we are incapable of achieving unity without tapping into God's endless capacity for love.

## **Challenges**

1. We urge the WCC Programme Guideline Committee to demand that the United Nations Security Council begin a process for formalizing a peace treaty that will bring about a definitive end to the Korean War on the bases of the Armistice of 1953 and the Basic Agreement of 1991.
2. We strongly urge the member churches of the six countries involved in the Korean Peninsula (Russia, China, Japan, the United States, and North and South Korea) to work with their respective governments to adopt policies and practices that contribute to building peace on the Korean peninsula, and the reunification of North and South Korea.
3. We urge for the development of a process for accompanying the churches in North and South Korea to meet on a regular basis for discussion, prayer, worship, and fellowship around the Lord's table, building bridges between the churches of North and South Korea.

4. We encourage the congregations of WCC member churches to embark on a pilgrimage of justice and peace, mobilizing resources that can be provided in support of the Christians and people of North Korea to alleviate their humanitarian needs, and advocate for the improvement of human rights and the reunion of separated families.

## **Appendix—PROK Recommendations for Decade of Global Action for Peaceful Settlement in Korean Peninsula**

To all the ecumenical leaders attending WCC Busan assembly:

We ask the delegates and everybody gathered at the WCC general assembly to consider these suggestions for a decade of global action for the Korean peninsula's peaceful settlement.

### **1. Armistice to peace treaty**

In 1953, the armistice was signed, bringing a temporary halt to the Korean War. Sixty years later, it is still in effect, but does not bring security to the Korean Peninsula. A peace treaty should be negotiated between the South and North and should contain a non-aggression pact, allow a way for economic, religious, and cultural exchanges, and provide a political road map for political reunification.

### **2. Reunion of separated families**

From the humanitarian perspective, the reunion of separated families should be brought about as soon as possible. The North and South's recent agreement to reunite families was cancelled. These families should not be held hostage to political issues, so we suggest an MOU so that such a disappointing event will not happen again. This MOU should contain the process for verification of status and address, enable the exchange of letters and phone calls, and establish a permanent meeting place. Most of all, it should be a priority that the presently separated families should have the opportunity to reunite before the primarily affected individuals, who are elderly, die.

### **3. Discontinuation of economic sanctions against North Korea and delivery of international humanitarian aid**

We oppose any kind of economic embargo or sanctions against North Korea. Such sanctions always impose difficulties on small countries, bringing about starvation and affecting human rights. These embargoes are a situation against human rights. Based on this humanitarian principle, we and the international community should discontinue the sanctions and provide and increase humanitarian aid to children, expectant mothers, and the poor of North Korea

#### **4. Making the mouth of Han River a peace zone**

In the Yellow Sea, North and South should agree to establish a common fishing area and develop this area as a peace zone. In the 1953 Armistice Agreement, it specifies the location of the MDL (Military Demarcation Line) on land, but makes no mention of the sea. Therefore, now both North and South claim their own version of the NLL (Northern Limit Line) as the maritime demarcation line in the Yellow Sea they recognize, and as neither side will yield to the other, tensions are created. Yeonpyeong Island bombardment is the result of such conflict. If both parties insist on their own line, the area between the two is effectively a war zone. If each government will yield to the other, giving up their claims, that space created, now freed, should be recognized as a foundation for an area of common life. An agreement should be made of a common fishing ground so that the area will be recovered as one of livelihood enhancement and peace. The beginning of this area should start in the zone where the river and the sea meet.

#### **5. Further expansion of the peaceful Gaeseong Industrial Complex**

GIC should be developed more extensively, according to its original plan. GIC is not simply an economic complex; it is a symbol of peace and reunification. It was built by the technical expertise and finances of the South, making use of the natural resources and human labour of the North. A few months ago, GIC was closed due to a conflict and political standoff between the governments of South and North. Now it is reopened, and we welcome this situation. Moreover, GIC should be developed further according to its original plan, and the major companies should participate in its development. It had been planned that the complex would extend to the Haeju area, on the Yellow Sea coast. Its enlargement will mean the extension of the Peace Zone and thus will accelerate Korean reunification.

#### **6. Resumption of Keumgang Mountain tours**

North and South Korea should make every effort to resume the Keumgang Mountain Tour. It is necessary that the North provide security for the tourists. The tour was stopped primarily by the South Korean government, which should strive to restore it. Keumgang is a famous mountain for Koreans, as it is the site of a great deal of the cultural heritage of our Korean ancestors. In 2002, when Keumgang Mountain was opened to South Korean tourists, it became a symbol of North and South cultural exchange and reunification. The killing of a tourist was a tragedy in 2008, but the aspirations for reunification of North and South cannot be stopped because of that incident. To resume the Keumgang Mountain Tour, the governments of North and South need to build trust between each other and ensure that such an incident not happen again.

#### **7. Peaceful military disarmament**

Based on trust created in several areas (as described above), North and South Korea will be ready for military disarmament. For 60 years, the period of the Armistice,

there have been military incidents between the two countries, with hundreds of thousands of military troops kept at military readiness, and with wildly increasing military expenditures and accompanying economic loss for the countries. We should change these military expenditures to budgets for peace and welfare, living up to the biblical vision of “making ploughshares out of swords” (Is. 2:4, Micah 4:3)

### **8. Policy for the peace of Northeast Asia**

The major powers should give up hostility against each other and try instead to keep peace in the region. The present two blocs—consisting of Russia, China, North Korea on one side, and the US, Japan, and South Korea on the other—should stop agitating each other, stop building military establishments, stop the arms race, and withdraw the launching of the Missile Defence System. Any activities that lead to war should stop. In this regard, we demand an immediate stop to the construction of Gangjeong Military Base in Jeju Island, South Korea, which is presently taking place.

### **9. Making the Korean peninsula a nuclear-free zone**

The Korean peninsula should be a nuclear-free zone. Nuclear missiles stationed in South Korea should be withdrawn, and the South Korean government should refuse to allow the presence of American nuclear submarines, nuclear aircraft carriers, and strategic bombers that threaten North Korea. North Korea should also discard its nuclear weapons. The facility producing the nuclear weapons should stop operating. We learned from Chernobyl and Fukushima of the disasters that can take place, which threatens humanity itself. We strongly suggest that all nuclear power plants in both North and South be closed, and that all nuclear facilities should be abolished. In contrast, we should develop alternate energy sources and promote their use. We demand that North and South both adopt these policies, use neither nuclear weapons nor power—which threaten humankind—and find alternative energy.

### **10. International conference for peace in Pyongyang**

To achieve the final goal of making a peace treaty, North Korea should normalize relations with the US, and the South should support such a diplomatic relationship. Now that we have a good relationship with American Christians built upon communion, we can use this channel to encourage the relationship between North Korea and America. From this perspective, we suggest holding a peace conference in Pyongyang, in celebration in 2014 of the 30th anniversary of the Tozanso process and in 2016 the 30th anniversary of the Glion meeting.

### **11. A WCC decade for peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula**

We ask that in order to realize the above 10 items recommended by the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PROK), the WCC:

- continue call the for global joint prayer for the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula, in the period before 15 August (the anniversary of Korean liberation from Japanese occupation);

- establish in the WCC office a Korean peace desk;
- encourage the development of peace education resources and study of Peace Theology of Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula; and
- develop programmes to overcome divisions of Korean Peninsula (following the process of the WCC 1970 Programme to Combat Racism [PCR]).

We ask you, delegates and people gathering in this WCC General Assembly, Busan, that out of this Ecumenical Conversation, our suggestions be raised in the plenary of the assembly as a main topic of conversation.

Peace and grace be with you.

## **EC 18. Middle East: Whose Justice, What Peace?**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

In the last three years several countries in the Middle East have experienced popular movements and uprisings in the midst of the on-going Palestinian-Israeli conflict over the land. This ecumenical conversation focused on the multifaceted aspects of these uprisings, examining the different theologies that inform the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It also explored ways in which the churches in the region and in the wider ecumenical arena could come together, work together, and witness together for the cause of a just peace in the region.

EC 18 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. We affirm our commitment to support, pray for, listen to, and learn from Christians in the Middle East, the oldest churches in the world. We remember that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, took refuge in Egypt, was raised in Nazareth, baptized at the River Jordan, performed miracles in Tyre and Sidon, and was crucified and resurrected in Jerusalem. We also recall that it was in Antioch of Syria that the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. Even as we affirm the commitment of Arab and Middle Eastern Christians to be integral participants in their societies, we grieve and commit to working against Christian emigration from the region. As we foster intra-Christian engagement, we will give privilege to and seek amplification of their voices when discussing situations that affect their lives and actively support efforts to promote peace-building and the preservation of a Christian presence and witness in the Middle East.

2. We affirm our commitment to draw connections between the challenges faced by Christians in the Middle East and the struggles of our own contexts and locations. By analyzing our own contexts, we will discover ways to better understand global structures of power and oppression manifested in the Middle East, working against them in all contexts. In relation to the lives of Middle Eastern Christian sisters and brothers, those of us who experience oppression on a daily basis, we will work to discover new forms of solidarity, while those of us with lives of privilege will challenge the ways our power is aligned with oppressive structures in the Middle East.
3. We affirm our commitment to speak out against those forces that deny the flourishing of communities in the Middle East. We grieve the suffering experienced by Christian communities in recent years. Even as we refuse all forms of anti-Jewish diatribe, we refuse to be silenced by fears that our testimony will be described as anti-Semitic. At the same time, we will seek to address any tensions between Muslims and Christians while refusing any form of anti-Islamic bias. We repudiate all forms of extremism now developing in the Middle East, including among Jews and Muslims. We repudiate the growing influence of Christian Zionism both in the Middle East and around the world. We repudiate the harmful effects of certain forms of Jewish political Zionism on both Jewish and Palestinian communities. We declare our support for and seek common work with Jews, including Israelis, who take costly stands for peace with justice in Israel and Palestine.
4. We affirm our commitment to reimagine the biblical texts used to justify oppression in the Middle East. Through song, theatre, multimedia resources, and other means, we will question what we have been taught in our respective contexts, knowing that God is still speaking to us today. Our new narratives—based on close readings of holy scripture—will disrupt all oppressive interpretations, seeking liberation for all communities. These new resources, along with intra-Christian engagement with Arab and Middle Eastern communities, will be used for raising awareness and advocacy in all global contexts, including resources focused on ethical tourism and pilgrimage.
5. We affirm our commitment to build the capacity of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) to promote prophetic, nonviolent resistance to all forms of oppression within the modern Middle East, including illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab lands. We encourage the development of a clear plan of action, including the voices of youth leaders and women, for promoting Christian presence and witness in the Middle East. We believe that the 11th Assembly of the WCC should be held in the Middle East region.

6. We affirm our commitment to the leadership of the WCC in providing a global, prophetic witness that advocates innovative, bold, and powerful nonviolent resistance to all forms of oppression in the Middle East. We affirm the continued theological and coordinating work of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF), the global witness of the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, and the chain of witness provided by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). In Palestine and Israel, we affirm the importance of the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land (CRIHL) and encourage its participation in all negotiations concerning the status of Jerusalem. As we seek peace based on justice and reconciliation based on forgiveness for all communities in the region, we encourage all forms of creative nonviolent resistance to Israel's occupation, which is "a sin against God and humanity" (*Kairos Palestine*), including serious exploration of economic measures (i.e., boycott, divestment, and sanctions). We affirm that many sins are being committed throughout the Middle East that harm the flourishing of human communities; we commit to working against these realities at all levels.

## **EC 19. Churches' Advocacy for Children's Rights**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

Children are a blessing from God. As churches, families, and communities, we are called to nurture and protect them. However, many children in every part of the world are at risk, particularly as a result of violence, conflict, and a neoliberal globalized economy. Children are among the most vulnerable victims of injustice, poverty, and abuse. Furthermore, children have been abused even within the churches. It is our responsibility to protect them, to nurture them spiritually, and to advocate for them.

EC 19 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

The participants affirm the following statements about the care and spiritual development of children.

1. All children have the right to be treated with respect, have their basic needs met, and live in safety and freedom from discrimination, exploitation, abuse, violence, and poverty. These rights are not negotiable.
2. We are called to welcome and value children as Jesus did (Matt. 18:2-5). Children are equal members of the church and we can learn from children's understanding of God, their unconditional love for others, and their sense of justice.

3. Children are not the church of tomorrow but the church of today, and as such deserve a strong and visible commitment to their protection, participation, and spiritual growth.
4. The church is called to care for children in the community and the church by advocating for their rights in partnership with governments and other organizations, empowering them to stand up for their rights, and implementing policies and procedures to protect children.
5. The church is called to help children develop spiritually by teaching them using age-appropriate, effective, and creative approaches, engaging them in the life and worship of the church, and sharing the hope we find in Jesus Christ.

## **Challenges**

The participants acknowledge the following challenges in our effort to protect and nurture children:

1. Adults, including Christians, frequently violate the rights of children by failing to care for and protect them, exposing them to exploitation and abuse, and robbing them of their childhood.
2. When we prevent children from being full contributors to churches, families, and society, we often hinder their spiritual development.
3. In many churches, children are almost invisible; the worship and Christian education strategies of such churches are not engaging or effective for them.
4. Our traditions and customs can be barriers to the inclusion and empowerment of children.
5. Children living in unsafe environments are denied the integrity and dignity of life that God designed for them.
6. Scripture can be misused to justify abuses toward children.
7. Culture can be a significant factor in our understanding of the rights of children. We need to both respect the cultural background of children and challenge ways that culture can be oppressive to them.

## **EC 20. Health and Healing Ministries**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

The purpose of this conversation was to strategize as to how churches, Christian healthcare providers, ecumenical health networks, secular international agencies like WHO and UNAIDS and national governments can work together to restore dignity, justice, and health in communities; and to identify ways of creating and/or strengthening ecumenical partnerships for life and of calling each other to health and healing ministries.

EC 20 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations**

1. Churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC see health and healing as a primary area of mission to which we are called by God; member churches offer a significant percentage of health services, particularly in the global South, often going where governments and NGOs do not reach.
2. The WCC has a strong history of supporting Christian health associations and serving as a bridge to UN agencies and other similar agencies.
3. Since 1986 the WCC has engaged in HIV response, including the creation of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and the work of Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAlA).
4. The WCC has supported the “Healing of Memories” for dealing with trauma, especially in relation to atrocities and addressing individual and collective wounds of the past.

### **Challenges**

1. Christian health associations are facing difficulties in the areas of advocacy, resource mobilization, and capacity building. The WCC needs to continue to actively engage in support of Christian health associations and facilitate the sharing of best practices that promote health and healing, including contextual Bible studies and “Healing of Memories.”
2. Despite medical advances, HIV continues to be a significant global health crisis. The churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC need to emphasize the responsibility and role of the Christian church in overcoming stigma, addressing social determinants, sharing effective practices among regions, and serving the needs of persons living with and affected by HIV for prevention, care, and support.

3. There has been no collective ecumenical action addressing the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and participants encourage the WCC to develop a collective strategy to address the post-MDGs in 2015.
4. There are tensions in the church in addressing specific health-related concerns, such as human sexuality and gender-based violence. The WCC is encouraged to develop resources—including frameworks for creating safe spaces—that can help Christian churches address these sensitive areas of concern affecting health and wholeness.
5. Marginalized communities, including people with disabilities, are disproportionately affected by health disparities, and we call on the churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC to take action for inclusion and justice.

## **EC 21. Compelled to Serve: *Diakonia* and Development in a Rapidly Changing World**

### **Purpose of the ecumenical conversation**

This ecumenical conversation invited churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC to a deeper analysis of *diakonia* and development in a rapidly changing world and to identify its challenges. We reflected theologically on the implications of the changing development paradigm, in which the ecumenical movement is compelled to engage and to witness for and serve God. The four sessions provided space for theological, ecclesiological, and practical reflection on how these change factors affect churches and specialized ministries. Through group discussions, we focused on vulnerabilities, opportunities, and new patterns of cooperation, providing background to these discussions through two key documents: “The Changing Development Paradigm: An ACT Alliance Discussion Paper” and “Theological Perspectives on *Diakonia* in the Twenty-First Century.”

EC 21 formulated the following affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the member churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC.

### **Affirmations and challenges**

1. Churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC must continue to network and form alliances across denominations in order to work together and add value to our diaconal work in a rapidly changing development context, in which the private sector and new actors are increasingly playing a role in development and in times where migration is changing the global demographics.
2. Churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC must respond to the shrinking political space even where it may mean a new role for churches. We must claim our

space through common action, advocacy, and building awareness together with other faiths in civil society.

3. Churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC must respond to the signs of the times by developing a common diaconal language. We are faith-based and rights-based and we need to identify what this means in practice, which includes defining our mandate and our core values and by mapping our diaconal assets.
4. Churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC must be in closer contact with local congregations and support diaconal work at the grassroots level.
5. Churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC must respond to the social impact of gender, economic, and climate injustice through networking, developing the capacity for policy analysis, and transnational advocacy in order to promote equitable and sustainable development.
6. We encourage churches, ecumenical partners, and the WCC to engage in new ways of biblical and theological reflection in order to reveal and articulate a transformational vision as outlined in the two background documents: “The Changing Development Paradigm: An ACT Alliance Discussion Paper” and “Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the Twenty-First Century,” in order to undergird our diaconal work in a rapidly changing world.



# THE WORK OF THE WCC



# REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

*Walter Altmann*

*Moderator, WCC Central Committee, 2006-2013*

*30 October 2013*

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*"I tell you, many will come from east and west, and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 8:11//Luke 13:29)*

While thinking about what to share with you today in this brief speech of accountability, reflection and challenge, I let myself be guided by a series of questions, and I took it in a very personal sense. My first thoughts refer to the sense of an assembly of the World Council of Churches.

## **What Is the Meaning of Our Common Walk as a Fellowship of Churches from Porto Alegre to Busan?**

We are experiencing the reality of those words of Jesus mentioned above that can be found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke (Matt. 8:11, Luke 13:29). If we take as the point of reference the Holy Land, where Jesus spoke to his disciples, we move from the west to the east as we move from Porto Alegre to Busan. Furthermore, we move also from the south to the north. We move from one side of the globe to another, in the most literal sense of the term.

We are gathered here as a global community. Earlier today, in the opening session, we heard testimonies of young people. Let me highlight the strong meaning of the testimony given by Thomas Kang, a young Brazilian who served as a steward in our last assembly in Porto Alegre. Thomas's forefathers are from Korea. His father is from North Korea and his mother is from the South. Bottom-line, we have come from all corners of the world and we are now inserted in the Korean reality, along with our sisters and brothers of this nation, to witness the faith that unites us as a global community.

It is also appropriate that, from the outset, we express our gratitude to the churches in Korea and to the sisters and brothers who have welcomed us and who have worked so diligently to prepare this unique ecumenical event. I was born in Porto Alegre, where the headquarters of my church, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, also may be found. For me, our passage from Brazil to Korea has a personal dimension of much significance.

One year ago I had the opportunity to visit the churches in the Republic of Korea, in Busan and Seoul, and to have contact with local and national committees, as well as with church leaders. I could experience their hospitality and witnessed the great expectation and diligence with which they were preparing themselves to receive us. They have made significant amounts of human, technical, logistical, and financial resources available for this assembly. Thank you so much.

The fact that we have come from all corners of the world has significant dimensions. It is in itself a testimony to the diversity in the body of Christ. Let us look around us and witness our colourful ecumenical mosaic. We speak so many different languages. At no time do we express so deeply the meaning and strength of our fellowship as when we gather and pray, each in his or her own tongue, the prayer that our Lord Jesus taught us himself, the Lord's Prayer.

But our diversity is wider than the differences among our languages. We represent different ethnicities, cultures, traditions, and denominations of the Christian faith. The WCC has historically valued the participation of women, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and youth. In this sense, it has developed a number of programmes, always seeking greater inclusivity and the overcoming of discriminatory practices. The gifts, so abundant among us, are very diverse. An assembly like the one we are now holding is a celebration of diversity.

And yet, our diversity does not restrain us from building and seeking unity. Quite the contrary! The ecumenical dream sees diversity as richness, by which we complement each other. Indeed, we also correct each other, or at least we should be open to that possibility while searching for better complementarities and better expressions of unity. For, as occurred among the disciples of Christ (Mark 10:35-45), we are not immune to the temptation to consider what is "ours" as something superior to what different people bring with them.

We are subject to the temptation of power, as well. Throughout history this temptation has marked several levels of relations among people and nations and has led humanity to sinful practices such as racism, patriarchy, economic exploitation, and multiple forms of exclusion and oppression, not forgetting sinful competition among churches and religions—sometimes to the extreme of using physical violence, war, and terror. Our ecumenical commitment also becomes concrete in the shape of penitence.

Despite all that, in the ecumenical movement we want to affirm diversity as being expressive of the fact that we complement each other. We are called to discover and rediscover again and again how this diversity enriches us as a Christian family. This is why we are here today. In the search for a better expression of the unity of the church, we have to acknowledge our neighbours' gifts, experiences, and convictions. They can make us more authentic and more faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. We also want to keep an open mind towards possible corrections that our sisters and brothers might point out to us, as we listen to the Holy Spirit.

It is, of course, quite true that we often live very far from these ideals. In our midst there is still space for the spirit of competition to reign. But competition was not the

ideal that guided those who preceded us in the ecumenical journey, when in Amsterdam (1948) they stated the firm intention to stay together. It is on behalf of such ideals that our churches and organizations appointed us as their delegates and their representatives. And it is these ideals that we are called to preserve and follow. In this sense, this assembly, as the preceding ones, will dedicate space for the study, discussion, and adoption of a new statement on the theme of unity, underlining our core commitment.

The apostle gives a sustained theological foundation to our commitment to unity. It is the most fundamental element that directs us: "There is . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." (Eph. 4:4-6).

When contemplating diversity, along with the unity of the church, the apostle employs a rich picture of the body that has many members, constituting one single body (1 Cor. 12:12). In this sense, an ecumenical assembly is also and foremost a celebration of unity, a unity that we already have in Christ and, being faithful to Christ, we wish to seek today with even more intensity in the reality of our churches.

Finally, the Bible verse that was cited at the beginning of this reflection leads us to a more profound and eschatological dimension, namely, the promise of God to congregate us around the table in the kingdom, together with the patriarchs and, we may add, the apostles, in the presence of God. This promise, the prospect of future reality, anticipates that reality, albeit incompletely by our divisions, yet effectively when we gather in the name of the Lord to worship the triune God and listen to God's voice. For this reason we are gathered here.

## **What Has Marked This Period since the Last Assembly of the WCC?**

In various ways this has been a period of transition. I begin by mentioning the international financial crisis, caused by irresponsible practices, even criminal ones, of powerful economic sectors in developed countries, countries which through political measures of a so-called liberalization have renounced the good practices of public regulation of these sectors and their economic interests. I mention the financial crisis not because I consider this the most important aspect of this era in relation to the WCC, but primarily because it has affected profoundly the world economic order. All over the world, crowds were led to increased unemployment and hunger. Multitudes were driven into despair. And, as a consequence, the crisis also affected the financial sustainability of many churches and their capacity to support ecumenical organizations around the world, and thus also the WCC.

Despite several efforts implemented by the administration of the WCC that, with the valuable collaboration of the members of the governance bodies, led to an increase in the number of churches fulfilling their duty to contribute to the support of the council, the total amount received by membership fees constantly declined during this period. When we considered, in addition, the adverse exchange rate reached

by the Swiss franc, the administration and the governance bodies were compelled to undertake constant adjustments, including the reduction of the number of officers and employees, reducing the capacity to develop established programmes. This is certainly not the most stimulating framework for those who are engaged in the programmatic work of the WCC. It is also unfortunate that some churches have felt obliged to take the decision not to send a representative to this assembly, despite the subsidy offered by the WCC.

Nevertheless, thanks to administrative measures taken and to the dedication and understanding of the staff, to whom we are deeply grateful, it was possible to maintain a stable financial situation in the WCC. However, the question remains for the churches to answer: To what extent do they wish and are they willing to support and strengthen the WCC as a non-renounceable part of their commitment towards the ecumenical cause.

One of the biggest challenges in this period was to find a solution to the growing deficit in the pension fund of the WCC, with no prospect that the trend could be reversed. The transition toward a private pension plan, with full respect towards the acquired rights of the participants of the pension fund, and a project that aims to development further the real estate available at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, through new construction, offers us perspective and a belief that a permanent solution to this acute problem can be reached.

We also experienced a succession in the general secretariat of the WCC in this period between Porto Alegre and Busan. Samuel Kobia was succeeded by Olav Fykse Tveit as WCC general secretary. Both have served the WCC with diligence and great personal dedication. Both had to face great challenges. Both sought close contact with the churches and the ecumenical bodies. To both alike, brothers of ours, I would like to express here today the gratitude of the central committee and of the WCC at large for their service to the ecumenical movement.

Another transition in progress is deeper and wider than the ones I have already mentioned. It is related to the changes in the global religious landscape. In Porto Alegre we already had begun to speak about the changing religious landscape in today's world. Over the last decades we have witnessed on a global scale a growing religious mobility and fragmentation. With regard to Christianity, our attention is drawn to the progressive shift of Christianity's centre of gravity to the East and to the South. There is a decline in the number of Christians in many Western countries, particularly in Europe, with consequent withdrawal of significant portions of the population from religious institutions due to the continuous process of secularization, or as inheritance of an atheistic education in past decades. (In the Middle East, due to conflict in the region and a consequent emergence of an adverse climate towards Christianity in many places, there has been a strong diminishing of the number of Christians, which is cause for profound concern.) In contrast to these diminishing numbers in some regions, the number of Christians has been increasing steadily, in some cases explosively, in Asia and in Africa.

Pentecostalism has grown considerably, although as a very fragmented movement, and has established itself as one of the great streams of the Christian faith today, not sufficiently represented in the WCC, as yet. A growing number of these churches are showing interest in WCC membership or at least seeking dialogue with us. Still, it is clear that the WCC is today less representative of world Christianity than it was when it was founded, or at least than in 1961 when the WCC welcomed the affiliation of many Orthodox churches.

One way in which the WCC has tried to respond to this challenge was the establishment, along with other partners, of an expanded space for meeting, spiritual exchange, and dialogue. At the assembly in Harare (1998), general secretary Konrad Raiser, inspired by the document approved there called “Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC,” suggested the creation of a forum for encounter and dialogue that would go beyond the institutional boundaries of the council. Some years later the Global Christian Forum was established as a space in which Christians from a wide range of Christianity could meet, foster mutual respect, and address common challenges together. So far, the GCF has held two global meetings, the first one in Limuru, Kenya (2007), and the second one in Manado, Indonesia (2011).

In another significant ground-breaking initiative, the WCC, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the World Evangelical Alliance approved in 2011 a joint statement entitled “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World.” A recent exploratory meeting convened by the GCF has suggested that these bodies, and also the World Pentecostal Fellowship, undertake an effort to elaborate a similar document with guidelines for the relationship between churches under a tentative title of “Christian Witness in a World of Multiple Christian Families of Faith.”

Initiatives such as the GCF should not be seen as nor develop into an alternative to the WCC. A memorandum of understanding signed between both expresses the common understanding that they play a complementary role to each other. The WCC remains as a privileged instrument of the wider ecumenical movement. In light of the expressive religious mobility, along with the sometimes negative experience of so-called “historic” churches, there has arisen the temptation for these churches to view their ecumenical commitment as secondary and to redirect their efforts towards their own internal consolidation, be it centred on doctrinal or institutional issues. This state of affairs may also be attributed to a sentiment of disenchantment of some churches with the difficulty they experience in advancing the ecumenical programme towards unity. Be that as it may, an assembly like this one is also a highly auspicious and needed occasion to restate the ecumenical goal of the churches, a goal that is even more urgent when one looks at the current fragmentation of Christianity. Fragmentation is not an invitation to strengthen confessional fortresses, but a challenge to deepen the ecumenical commitment, not to weaken it. If the commitment to unity is neglected, the church suffers from loss of credibility and strength in its witness. Thus, perseverance in ecumenical cooperation is a form of resistance in a world in which faith becomes increasingly a commodity in a “religious market.”

## With So Many Changes . . . Everything Is New?

The answer to that question is definitely no. We have a beautiful history behind us and we continue to recognize the continuity of it.

Luke beautifully characterizes those who follow Jesus as those who belong to “the way” (Acts 9:2). We constantly refer to the ecumenical movement as a journey. This is quite appropriate. A well-known proverb states that a journey of a thousand steps begins with the first step. Thank God, we no longer need to take the first step. Before we came on the scene, the ecumenical movement already had taken, before us, a good number of steps which led to today.

In my address at one of the meetings of the central committee, I had the opportunity to reflect on the legacy of those who have preceded us in the ecumenical journey and in the history of the WCC. We know that our roots come from major ecumenical world conferences of the first decades of the last century: Mission, Edinburgh (1910); Life and Work, Stockholm (1925); Faith and Order, Lausanne (1927). And one should also add as an integral part of our history the work on Christian education.

All these streams have come together at different times either creating or joining the WCC, and they are still indispensable pillars of our ecumenical endeavour. Or can we actually picture the WCC and the ecumenical movement as such without any of these currents?

Without the emphasis on Christian education, mission would lose its focus and distort the witness of the gospel. Without *diakonia*, both mission and Christian education would degenerate into ventures without credibility. Without theological reflection and doctrinal dialogue, Christian advocacy would become random. Finally, without mission and *diakonia*, theological reflection and dialogue on doctrine would become an abstract and artificial effort.

Thus, even if for good reasons at different times and in diverse contexts, with particular gifts and abilities, we can and we must make distinctions and deal specifically with doctrine, Christian education, mission and diakonia, we must always avoid false dichotomies, as if one of these currents were more important than others. We have a holistic view of the Christian faith and a holistic view of the ecumenical journey. And we hope that it may always be moved by the love of God. For love, as we have learnt from Jesus, the apostles and the scriptures, is above all. Without it, everything will be in vain. In fact, without love, even with a faith that could move mountains, we are nothing (1 Cor. 13:2).

In our last central committee meeting, in Crete, we had the opportunity to harvest several documents that are fruits of the work done over the last years in different areas and will also take a significant part of our attention during this assembly.

Thus, the central committee received and recommended to the churches for “study and formal response” the document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*.

The document elaborates impulses arising from a well-known fundamental document of the WCC, “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,” and the reactions to it.

The central committee also adopted the document *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* and recommended it as a ground material for this meeting in Busan.

One of the central themes of this assembly is expressed in the word “peace.” The commitment to just peace, a peace allied to justice, has been part of the life of the WCC since its creation. When we met at the Porto Alegre Assembly, we were right in the middle of the Decade to Overcome Violence, which generated a large number of initiatives in our churches. The process culminated with the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, held in Kingston, Jamaica, in May 2011. The call to peace with justice issued by that conference, in a world so troubled by violence and war, is of great value and will also take a central part in this assembly.

Therefore, when we define the ecumenical journey as a process of holistic approach to our calling as followers of Christ, the currents that came together to form the WCC continue to be vivid as we develop our programmes. For we are constantly inspired by the description of the experience of faith of the primitive community: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42).

## **If We Compare Today with Past Times, Hasn’t the WCC Lost Its Prophetic Voice?**

It seems beyond doubt that the WCC has not had more attention from the secular media of the kind it had in the past; for example, the spotlight that fell upon the WCC when it implemented the Programme to Combat Racism or the Human Rights Programme which supported people who were widely persecuted by military dictatorships, particularly in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s.

The panorama of international relations in a globalized world has helped attract the notice of the media to other scenarios in which the WCC cannot easily play a role of great visibility. In spite the efforts of the communication department to inform the public extensively about the WCC, many statements on peace, for example, are easily placed in the background by media, while images of terror attacks and ventures of war take up most of the attention.

We might also ask ourselves self-critically if we have given enough attention to the perverse mechanisms of the global economic order, which were so evident in the international financial crisis and its tragic consequences for the people of the world. Or if we have been clear enough in calling to overcome extreme poverty in the world, a target perfectly doable if there were a clear policy and international effort in this direction. Resources far below those routinely allocated to armaments and warlike confrontations would be more than sufficient for this purpose.

Still, it would be hasty and erroneous to affirm that the WCC has lost its prophetic voice. At each meeting of the central committee, the executive committee or the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, not to mention our own assemblies and the statements issued by the general secretary, the WCC has issued statements and minutes about major issues of public importance. One might even wonder if the high number of subjects touched does not dissipate the public interest in our voice. But at each meeting we have also experienced how difficult it is to put aside any of the many pressing matters of concern to our fellowship.

However, in recent times we have had significant opportunities in which the WCC's prophetic voice did become audible. Let me give you a few examples. And allow me to start with one example from my country, Brazil.

In 2011, on the occasion of the visit of general secretary Tveit of the WCC, we delivered to the Brazilian public prosecutor of the republic a set of thousands of documents related to military lawsuits against political prisoners in Brazil during the military dictatorship (1964-85). The files were kept safe for decades in the archives of the WCC, in Geneva. These processes had testimonies of the defendants who suffered torture, and the files were surreptitiously photocopied by a group of lawyers who were part of a human rights project sponsored by the WCC, lodged at the Catholic Archdiocese of Sao Paulo under Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns, in close partnership with the Presbyterian minister Jaime Wright. The project was called "Brasil: Nunca Mais!" (Brazil Never Again). This year, with major repercussions in the Brazilian media and as an expression of support for the recently constituted National Truth Commission, a website of the project was launched in São Paulo. It provides free access to over 900,000 digitized pages on this project. On the occasion of the launch event, the WCC received public recognition for its support to the cause and the project.

As a second example, I'd like to mention the impact on the process that led to the United Nations' approval of a treaty on the international arms trade. The WCC was able to organize a wide network of churches around the world, advocating with their respective governments in favour of the treaty, which, at the end of a painful process, was finally approved by the UN. During the UN conferences debating the proposal in New York, the WCC worked closely with other non-governmental organizations advocating with delegations from various countries in favour of a robust and effective treaty. In meeting ambassadors and representatives of a good number of countries, the WCC could convey the conviction that it was imperative to achieve a regulation of the international arms trade in order to reduce the number of people killed or injured every year around the world. A powerful commercial interest strongly opposed the treaty, and still works against the process that leads to the implementation of a treaty regulating the arms trade. Jokingly, it was brought to our attention that while there is in the world already, and has been for a good time, a treaty governing the bananas trade, but there was not an arms trade treaty. The mobilization of churches is still important on this

matter, because the treaty needs to be ratified by the signatory countries in order to come into effect.

Among the various initiatives in which our secretaries general have been personally engaged, let me highlight as an example recent initiatives toward joint actions among Christian and Muslim representatives in seeking to overcome cases of inter-religious violence. An example of these efforts is a joint visit to Nigeria, a country afflicted by violence with religious roots that has victimized many Christians and Muslims.

For over ten years, the WCC has developed a successful accompaniment program in Israel and Palestine, inspiring a similar experience in Colombia, a country that for decades has suffered from internal multifold land conflicts and is currently seeking dialogue toward a peace agreement.

More recently, often with necessary discretion, another set of initiatives led by the WCC took place with regard to Syria. A recent meeting was convened by the WCC gathering church leaders from Russia, the United States, Western European countries, and Syria with former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan and the UN-Arab League joint representative for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi. The aim was to combine efforts to prevent external military intervention in that country that could result in unpredictable, but certainly very negative, consequences for the whole region, and to support diplomatically negotiated solutions for the conflict in Syria. This meeting deserved attention from the international press.

These examples, and others that could be added, support the claim that the WCC today, as in the past, is called to and is exercising its prophetic role in the international public sphere.

## **And What Are We to Do and to Say in Busan?**

As in all the assemblies, we will be celebrating the unity we have in Christ, which is already visible, although not yet in its fullness. At the same time we recommit ourselves to the unity we received from God as a gift and to which we are permanently called. We certainly don't want to lose sight of the target of full unity, to be celebrated around the eucharistic table. Thus, we want to reaffirm our commitment and echo the delegates of the constituent assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam: "We intend to stay together."

This is the second time that an assembly has taken place in Asia, where the Christian family is a minority and lives and coexists with other, majority, religious expressions. Mutual religious respect and inter-religious dialogue in favour of harmonious relationships among religions, for the sake of achieving peace among peoples, ethnic groups, and religions, as well as in favour of ethical values exercised within our society, and the urgency of care for the divine creation, are important components of our ecumenical commitment.

We gather in Korea, a nation still dramatically divided; a nation which for the last six decades has lived under a permanent ceasefire, but without a lasting and just

peace. We want to put ourselves on the side of the Korean people in the South and the North, stand by their side as they experience the pain of separation and as they long for reunification. We raise our hands and lift our hearts to God in intercession for reunification, for a peace with justice that establishes and preserves the right of individuals and peoples. Psalm 85:10 says: “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.” I believe that as a gathering in Korea, we could not have a better prayer than the theme of our assembly: “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”

In this assembly, and somehow with this report and the reception of the report from Porto Alegre to Busan, the mandate of the central committee, and also of the presidents elected in Porto Alegre, comes to an end. I want to thank all for their dedication, their discernment, their commitment and love for the WCC and the ecumenical cause. New presidents and new central committee members will be elected here in a few days.

This assembly also closes the mandate of the moderator and vice-moderators. I extend my gratitude to the vice-moderators for their support and their constant willingness to serve the WCC. Personally, it was for me a challenge and a privilege to serve as moderator of the central committee. There were difficult moments, but the moments of satisfaction prevailed. Trust overcame doubt.

I appreciate the support of our member churches, ecumenical organizations, of all those who shared responsibilities in our governing bodies, of the staff members who so intensively have dedicated themselves to the WCC. As outgoing moderator, I thank God, above all, for having put this challenge before me and for having supported and protected me through these years, as I tried with the best of my limited capacities to face the challenge placed before me.

I mentioned above the adage that says that a journey of a thousand steps begins with the first one. And I also mentioned that, thank God, we no longer need to take the first step, for we follow the path inaugurated by those who preceded us. We can trust that we have taken a few more steps in this journey, and we hope that those have been in the right direction. But at what point of the journey do we find ourselves? How close are we to the target? God knows.

When speaking of hope, the apostle Paul assures us that it overcomes everything that is against hope (Rom. 4:18). Hope is trust not in our abilities, but in the promise of God that never fails. Brazilian Roman Catholic Archbishop Helder Camara once said during the times of oppression that the country was in need of “Abrahamic minorities,” people who despite the powers in charge, would respond to God’s call and commit their lives to the project of God’s kingdom: people who dare to trust in the promise of God, in whom we are one, God who leads us to peace and justice. Let us walk in confidence and continue on our journey also in this assembly!

# REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

*Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit*

*General Secretary, WCC*

*30 October 2013*

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## God of Life

“God of life, lead us to justice and peace.” The theme of the 10th Assembly says a lot about what the WCC is and why we are the WCC together, and where we as the WCC should go from here.

Everything we are, and are called to be, is given through our faith in God, the triune God, who creates, nurtures and cares for life—our lives and the life of the whole creation. We are bound up in the mystery of the God of life; we are in a living relationship with the God of life; we are in the life-giving ministry of the God of life. As it is written in the Acts of the apostles, “In him, we live and move and have our being” (17:28). That is why we are here with this prayer on our lips and in our hearts. We pray to the God of life, who has received us, called us to be one, and sent us to serve the world.

Life provides us many expressions and symbols, in the scriptures and in our daily experiences. The most visible is the dawn of every morning. This is described in one of the most beautiful formulations we have in our Bible:

By the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1: 78-79)

The dawn from on high *will* break upon us.

The dawn makes us humble; the life of every new day is a gift of grace from God and humbles us, and we are given a place in this dawn to bring the work of yesterday into a new time. It makes us honest; it gives us light to see and speak about life as it is, things as they are, ourselves as churches and human beings as we are. We become hopeful: We can leave yesterday and the night behind us. The light will shine for those who are in darkness, even in the shadow of death, and our feet will be guided in the way of peace.

God is creating a new day for us: for all in creation living with threats to the existence of our planet and the life of today and even more tomorrow; for us as humanity of different faiths or no faith, facing new and unprecedented conflicts between groups identified by religion; for those who live here in Korea as members of divided families. God is creating for us a worldwide ecumenical movement, building on our experience of a real but not yet full unity in our faith and life.

The dawn from on high breaks upon us.

It comes by the tender *compassion* of our God of life.

The Holy Bible grounds everything in God, the God of life, God who loves all people and things that are created. This is the God who lives with us and calls us to fellowship in the light and in the darkness, in the great moments and the most difficult, even the shameful moments of human life and history. In the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the presence of the God of life as a graceful, transforming power in our world is ever manifested. There is no place, no human being, no injustice, no conflict, in which the God of life is not present. There is no sin or evil that cannot be carried by the grace of our Lord and Saviour.

The cross of Christ shows us the overwhelming love of God and points always to the resurrection when the God of life claimed victory over sin and death. The Holy Spirit is present in our lives, in all life, giving us the courage to live, to look forward, to pray and work for the kingdom of God to come and reign among us in this world, with justice, peace, and joy as the signs of God's life. It gives us a hope beyond everything we know and experience through our lives here.

We meet in a time when the life of God's creation is more under threat than it has ever been. The globe cannot carry the sum of all the developments and the crises that are present and those which are likely to come. So many things point to crisis: the overconsumption of energy resources, the devastating effects of emissions into our common air and atmosphere, the natural disasters that are made worse due to these effects, the exploitation of nature as we consume more energy, food, fresh air than this globe can sustain, and all the while human beings are marginalized and excluded from the life of the world economy as it is. Many of the poor are becoming even poorer. Affairs cannot continue like this. We know all this from recent reports of the UN climate panel, and other reports; many of you know it from your own experiences.

We also live amid signs of a new dawn and a new day of light and hope. Fully 2.1 billion people have received access to clean drinking water since 1990. The world produces three times as much food now than it did 30 years ago. Millions have been lifted out of poverty. Many diseases are being cured. There are indications of reductions in grave violence and killings, compared to former centuries. There are fewer wars between nations and more cooperation and communication among human beings. We can communicate with one another more and more quickly than ever, as one humanity.

As a fellowship we come here from a great many contexts. We are the church, gathered from many places and cultures. With our diversity we bring stories, experiences, hopes, prayers, and vision. We also bring our pain, our challenges, and our yearnings for justice and peace where we live. We know divisions and conflict locally, nationally, and internationally. But we come ready to share our gifts and receive the gifts that others share with us. We know that it is by being who we are in the God of life—in our pains and our hopes—that the richness of the fellowship will be experienced.

This assembly brings us all to Asia, a continent of growth, with the largest share of the world's people, great wealth, and power in the global context; yet it is also a continent marked with many disasters, many worries about protection of the life of human beings and nature, and many families who do not share in the growth and hope of others. In Asia, philosophy and the practice of harmony through religious faith and practices play a significant role, yet violations of human dignity and rights and conflicts between peoples of different ethnicities, castes, and even religions are deeply worrying.

We are in South Korea, a country where many have overcome poverty through hard work, and the WCC has played a significant role in supporting the democratization processes challenging dictatorship and oppression. Still, the peninsula and people of Korea remain divided, having lived without a peace agreement for 60 years. I have visited the Republic of Korea several times, and a few weeks ago I also visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the demarcation line on the border. I have learned much about the deep and complex dimensions of this unsolved situation for the whole Korean people, feeling the power and pain of this separation.

The WCC has played a significant role in bringing the people of North and the South of Korea together, focusing on the need for basic supplies through humanitarian aid for the whole people of the north, and for justice and peace for all people here. The confidence in the WCC is significant, and this assembly should speak wisely and firmly to promote peace among all the Koreans, knowing that without peace and sharing of life together there can be no justice. I will take new initiatives for a high level meeting in Geneva of church leaders from several of the countries concerned, to continue addressing the underlying problems of this unsolved conflict. This intention has drawn appreciation from leaders both in the north and in the south.

In this very place of life's tension between pain and hope, it is time for us to come together and pray to the God of life. Sometimes we may wonder what we can do to bring light to this world. The first and most convincing answer to me is that we can make a difference by being and knowing where we are in the many streets or villages of life in which we are placed by the God of life. In the company of God and our companions on the journey, we perceive the mystery of good despite the world's evil, and we bear witness to the tender compassion of our God.

As the 10th Assembly logo reminds us, the tree of life does grow, even among stones, and we can find shelter, fruit, and inspiration in this tree. Our task now is to pray and listen to God, to one another, to the people of this land and this continent, to all who are our neighbours whom we are called to love as we love ourselves, to the groaning of the whole creation. And we ask: Where is God, the God of life, leading us, in the new dawn that is breaking upon us?

This report builds on the many reports and documents you were given to read before you came here, particularly *A Faith That Does Justice: The Journey of the WCC from Porto Alegre to Busan*. I will highlight some examples of what we have seen and

experienced. You will continue the report in your reflections about the past, but even more in dialogue among yourselves about the future. This is our time to shape the future.

## Lead Us—A Fellowship of Churches

### Who and what is the World Council of Churches?

We are in our essence a fellowship of churches. We define ourselves by our shared gifts and our calling from the God of life, by our being churches together in faith and service, living together in a changing world. The dynamic between these three aspects characterizes the unique identity of the WCC.

We claim this moment of a new day for the WCC by going back to basics. Our basis says that we are

...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.

We—the churches—have a legacy as the WCC for which we give thanks to God. Among the dramatic events, severe injustices, and crises the world had to face and be rescued from in the 20th century, there were also significant initiatives born and institutions established that have improved the relationships between people and nations, and among churches and religions. The ecumenical movement, with the WCC as the most significant and unique institutional expression of this movement, has been instrumental in cultivating better and stronger, deeper and wider, and more mutually accountable relationships—among churches of different confessions and traditions, but also among churches in different countries and continents.

Some of us have needed the ecumenical movement and the WCC more than others, and have experienced more critical times: in the period of decolonization, in the cold war, in the combat against apartheid, in the rebuilding of trust and relationships after WWII and other, later conflicts.

Some of us have needed the council to open our eyes to the churches beyond our own, or to see the deep needs of the world, to see global reality from a less privileged perspective, wearing the shoes of a sister or brother in a totally different context than one's own. Some have needed the common statements, the new theological reflections, the leadership of the council; some have needed the quiet contacts, the signs of support. And we all have needed prayers with and for one another.

In all of this, the fellowship has always needed you, the churches. Without your commitment, no response to needs could have been possible.

The greatest asset of the WCC is you, the 345 member churches with two churches well advanced in the application process. Therefore we have done our utmost—with

the generous support of many churches and partners, not least the Korean host churches—so that as many of the member churches as possible could be present here in Busan. We are here to manifest what our constitution says we are, what our common understanding and vision (CUV) concluded at the 8th Assembly in Harare: that we are *a fellowship of churches*.

We have a unique quality to bring to advocacy for justice and peace, and we should focus on how to emphasize the WCC's unique "added value." We represent real and human connections between East and West, North and South. Based on the experience of our churches, we contribute to the understanding of human dignity, human rights, freedom of religion, and the peace between religions. We define "just peace" to be our norm and our common goal, and so we move beyond the traditional discussion of a "just war." We continue to seek new expressions of what unites us as churches of many traditions, in our baptism, in the eucharist, and in the ministry to serve God and one another. We have contributed to changes in and between our churches, and we continue to do so.

The WCC has a solid structure. I trust we will have even more able and strong governing bodies after the decisions we will make about our constitution in our assembly. The WCC has resources; even if they are less in terms of finances than at the last assembly, we still are provided with significant resources to do a lot of work, and there is—thanks to much effort—a stabilization of a level of income on which we can plan and work. But to be a fellowship of churches we all have to contribute according to our size and our resources. What we have does not belong to ourselves alone. With a common vision of what God calls us to do, we have to enable full participation by offering member churches and ecumenical partners a solid instrument and proper way of becoming more deeply involved in our work.

We have staff and a secretariat and a presence alongside representatives from all nations of the world, and many other global institutions sharing our agenda and visions. We soon will enter a period of recruitment of new staff. We need you to encourage the best human resources you have to make themselves available for this work.

We have partners in the ecumenical movement who expect a lot from us and also want the WCC to give leadership, to bring coherence and nurture mutual accountability in the ecumenical movement.

We have funding partners for our programmes, for whom we are extremely grateful, who are faithfully committing themselves to contribute to and be more involved in our projects, as we are able to revise our plans and programmes according to the mandate this assembly will give us.

### **Since the last assembly**

We have had a challenging period since our last assembly. When you read the reports, you see that there have been different crises in different parts of the world that have affected the WCC and our member churches, such as the financial crisis of 2008.

And there have been institutional changes in the WCC, and challenges which we have addressed.

It is quite remarkable that, even with fewer resources and many challenges, these years have also been a time of rich harvest, of hard work, of new initiatives, of new colleagues and partners coming to work for the council, new ideas of how we can work together as a fellowship of churches, the sharing of insights. On this basis we move forward, into this assembly and into the new dawn, the day God will grant us.

We bring with us the blessings and the inspiration of our 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre, where we prayed together in humility, honesty, and hope: "God in your grace, transform the world!" The work was restructured through prioritization and the definition of programmes. This mandate has to a large extent been followed up, under the leadership that was elected by the 9th Assembly and by the central committee. I will particularly express my gratitude on behalf of all of us to the moderator and the two vice-moderators for your faithful and time-consuming work, with a lot of travel to Geneva and other places. On behalf of the whole fellowship, I thank our WCC presidents for representing their regions to the council and for representing the council to the churches and the world. And I give thanks to God, especially, for our late president, Patriarch Abune Paulos of Ethiopia.

The central committee and the executive committee have given direction and have found the way forward in this period, taking difficult decisions on behalf of the whole fellowship in demanding times for the council. The members of the many commissions and committees, consultations and working groups have offered wisdom, time, and energy. As churches and partners, you have made your financial resources available. For this and much more, I offer you the deserved appreciation of the whole fellowship.

I particularly thank my predecessor Sam Kobia for his great efforts the first years of this period between assemblies, and for the way he introduced me to the work of the WCC and the tasks of the general secretary.

My colleagues on the staff in Geneva and in other offices have carried the daily burdens of the work, of the worries and of the challenges, but together we have also shared the joy of our achievements, the blessings of seeing fruits of the labour of our hands and our minds, the fellowship of solidarity, and mutual support, and the inspiration of great commitment to do the work of the council for the benefit of the churches and everyone who needs what we do. To God be the glory!

Nevertheless, as there has been a significant reduction in the total budget of the WCC over the last period, there are now fewer staff members to carry out the work. We have worked to create efficiencies in the organization, to become more focused on the impact of programmes, and to better coordinate programme and relationship building work.

We need constant renewals of the commitments of our churches, and we have taken initiatives to find new funding partners. We have seen both over the last years. We also seek more ideas, collective commitment, and progress through the work of

this assembly. I will inform the Finance Committee about how we might do this and how we are dealing with the present challenges.

### **The Ecumenical Centre in Geneva**

Our presence in Geneva over more than 65 years is an important part of church history. The chapel in the Ecumenical Centre has been assessed by the heritage commission in Geneva and found to be of exceptional quality; it is now registered to be preserved.

We have in the last several years addressed the unacceptable risk of a growing deficit in the WCC pension fund. As I understood the reality of this, and reported it to the executive committee, supported by the central committee, we took the decision to pay into a sustainable fund, replacing the independent WCC plan. This was made possible through a loan, and we also embarked on an evolving plan for developing the property in Geneva in repayment of the loan. This arrangement will generate more income for the WCC and lead to a restored and partly new Ecumenical Centre suitable for the use of the next decades, without the burden of renovation and upgrading the old wings of offices. I am happy to report to you that this process has advanced in a very solid way, and just two weeks ago led to a decision from a highly qualified jury including representatives of the Geneva government. This diverse group showed enthusiasm for the chosen project utilizing our real estate in a way that serves us and improves the quality of that area of Geneva. Without asking you as churches for anything in terms of money, we have found solutions that are reliable and promising, for us and for the authorities of Geneva.

The WCC is located wherever you are as member churches. You are the WCC. However, to be in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva is a great asset in itself. It places us in the heart of international organizations and their work for justice, peace, human rights, for children, for health, for disarmament, and much more. The churches are seen and should be heard in this international reality, and the international community should hear and see you through us. The role of advocacy has always been crucial to the WCC, and can be enhanced by strengthening the connections between Geneva, our New York office and you as churches. In the work for an arms trade treaty, we saw how the advocacy you did with your governments could be inspired and later harvested by the WCC in a very significant way.

### **Christian solidarity**

“No part of the body can say to another: “I have no need of you” (1 Cor. 12:21). I often summarize the unique qualities of the relationships we have and are called to nurture in the WCC in one word: solidarity. Christian solidarity. This is a deep biblical principle: Christian solidarity in the light of the cross of Christ offers a strong biblical principle, which has become a foundation for all ecumenical relationships. This corresponds to our mutual accountability. Thus, we simply cannot say that I have no need of you anymore, or just now. And we cannot say, I do not have to worry about

whether you need me or not. It is in this solidarity with the groaning world that we pray, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”

God in Jesus Christ is in solidarity with those who live with emptiness, who are less privileged or have less, and therefore makes a “preferential option for the poor.” To follow Jesus Christ means to do the same. He even became a victim of injustice and violence himself. His way to Golgatha became a way to dismantle and display the lies, the human weakness, the injustice, and sin in its many dimensions. Following the resurrection it could be seen as a sacrifice for sin, once and for all, for all of us, to bring a dawn of forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, and peace received through the tender compassion of our God. To be baptized into Christ is to share in the cross and the resurrection, giving us courage to hope in life and in death.

Christian solidarity cannot be exclusive, and definitely not against others. Christian solidarity is an embedding of the ecumenical learning about becoming mutually accountable to one another and to the world around us, for the world need the gifts of God’s grace we carry in our hands. This is what it means to be churches together.

### **The quest for unity**

Unity is an expression of the life given by God and a way to live in a new solidarity, we see the significance of the gift and calling of unity in the body of Christ. Christian unity is inextricably connected with the unity of all humanity and creation. We know too well the pain of injustices and conflicts that lead to disunity—the discrimination that occurs in society because of race or gender or economic status or many other factors; the violence between and, even more now, within nations; disconnection from the land.

To be a sign of the coming kingdom of God means to be church together in the world bringing another dimension of hope and vision for life. This is profoundly expressed in several of the documents this assembly receives to make its own. In the harvest of Faith and Order, the document *The Church—Towards a Common Vision* represents a significant effort and landmark, to be received and studied. In the proposed statement on unity for this assembly, “God’s Gift and Call to Unity—and our commitment,” the image of the church is presented as a servant for all, a sign of the coming kingdom of God.

We also know that full eucharistic fellowship and cooperation is—through the last years—possible and practised ever more among many of our member churches, based on mutual understanding and agreement achieved in bilateral dialogues. Actions of reconciliation and forgiveness have taken place. We also have moved forward with the issue of a mutual recognition of baptism, receiving a text from Faith and Order helping the churches to continue this process after the significant reception of the document on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* three decades ago. Still, we know that there is not a eucharistic fellowship among all of our churches and with other churches. Divisions due to doctrinal disagreements or other issues of ecclesial importance reflect the pain of disunity.

But we have glimpses of what unity can do for us and for the world in the experience of 65 years of churches living in a fellowship. Through sharing and discussing, we have experienced the gift of unity, but also in coming to agreement in significant matters through thoughtful processes and in particular through practising consensus methodology in decision-making. This procedure, inspired by the work of the special commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC, has shown us that we are able to move forward working through consensus in significant issues of planning, discernment of the signs of the time in our public statements, approving texts of great significance, and in matters such as accepting new member churches. Yet we also find that it serves our unity to know in which issues we do not press for consensus at the moment, where we know that we have to live with and give safe space to deal with different positions.

We have developed a memorandum of understanding with the Global Christian Forum, affirming the different but supplementary roles of the WCC and conciliar ecumenical bodies and the relationships that can be established through the forum. I was privileged to see how this cooperation can work very well in a great celebration of Christian unity in Indonesia in May this year.

### **Solidarity in mission**

We received a new mission statement in this period, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, based on the work of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). In it there is a new reflection about the call of the church to mission in solidarity. This document has received broad and significant recognition, and has already become a landmark in the work on mission in our time. The participation of missiologists and church leaders from many parts of the ecumenical family, including evangelicals, Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, demonstrates the wide contribution to this document. The mission of the church is *diakonia* and evangelism; showing the love of our God to all, giving hope for this new day God is creating and hope for the day beyond all our days, the day of resurrection and eternal life. To be missional is to be church in solidarity with those who are marginalized in different ways. In fact, mission is defined by and comes to us all from the margins.

This is also a strong dimension in the story of the New Testament. Jesus from Nazareth came from the margins to Jerusalem. We belong to a religion that has one Lord and Saviour, but placed in many centres where God can be worshiped in truth and spirit. We have a faith in the God of life who is present with us everywhere, and particularly where we are marginalized.

The call to share the gospel and bring the hope and values of the coming kingdom of God, with the attitude of Christ, respecting the other, is as significant and vital to us as churches as ever. The document "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World," produced as an initiative between the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the World Evangelical Alliance, has been received and used by many of you and our partners.

## **The way of just peace**

Just peace is a dimension of this biblical attitude of solidarity and accountability. It represents an ethical shift in which justice and peace are inseparable facets of a holistic way of life, a conceptual promise to consistently and intentionally privilege peace over violence and conflict in every aspect of life. We practise just peace whenever there is forgiveness and reconciliation, transformation of conflicted relationship, protection of a fragile earth, or whenever we advocate for fair distribution of resources for all of God's people. Just peace is a way, a journey—a difficult one at times—through which we must address our complicity with injustice and violence in its many forms. Ultimately it is a response to God's promise and gift: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you" (John 14:27).

The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) held in Kingston, Jamaica, 2011, demonstrated that the work of just peace is more than an activity of the WCC but something at the very core of our Christian identity. Inspired by the spiritual life of the Caribbean churches, we could also celebrate the work for peace together.

Justice corresponds to the biblical words of faithfulness; it is related therefore to reliability and solidarity. It is a matter of providing the space and the confidence all of us need as human beings to fulfil our God-given life with everything that is contained in the biblical words about peace. Peace is what we are called to make in times of conflicts. Peace is what we are called to build from below, by making justice a reality, in our communities and between the peoples. Peace is also found in the conditions of fairness and solidarity we need as human beings in sharing the wealth and resources of this world. We need just peace in the market places. To live in accountability to all and to the coming generations, there is a need for just peace in our relation to creation.

The search for just peace must continue as a way to understand the right dynamic between justice and peace, knowing that all contexts are different. We must be open to understand the realities as they are, and see what just peace means as an alternative way forward, and contribute what we can as a fellowship.

In the work of producing the preparatory text for the IEPC, "A Call to Just Peace," the council saw a reinvigorated commitment theologically, spiritually, morally, to this gospel imperative. These impulses must continue in the council as we now as an assembly receive this document and the report from Jamaica. These should serve as inspiration towards a way of just peace throughout the whole of this assembly and beyond. The reflections and discussions about these important questions are at the heart of the theme and the plans of this assembly, as you very well see.

## **Solidarity with peoples and churches in conflict situations**

In light of the fact that an alternative venue for the WCC central committee as the site of this assembly was Damascus, this call to just peace becomes also particularly close to our hearts as we gather for our assembly. Together with the peoples and churches of Syria we—you—have been praying for justice and peace. ACT Alliance

with its many partners have tried to address the human tragedy evolving before our eyes, bringing shelter, food, and support to the approximately seven million displaced persons within and outside Syria.

In September of this year, in the weeks after the cruel and condemnable attack on innocent people with chemical weapons, and fearing the tragic consequences of an external military attack on Syria, the WCC convened a high level meeting with church leaders from Syria, Russia, the United States of America, and numerous European nations. We met in Bossey with Kofi Annan, former United Nations general secretary, and Lakdhar Brahimi, UN-Arab League joint representative for Syria. Mr Annan and Mr Brahimi urged that we, the churches, use the significant role we have to advocate for a peace process, and to be part of a process of reconciliation together with other leaders and communities of faith.

The consultation emerged with a powerful communiqué about the need for a political solution for peace in Syria, a statement that had impact far beyond the WCC. From this experience we see how our common voice, our unity as Christians in advocacy, should and could address the pain of disunity and the affront to just peace in our world in a real and profound way. We plan a second meeting at the beginning of the Geneva II meeting, a meeting that cannot fail in its task to find a peaceful way forward towards a political solution of the conflict.

In these days, following events over several years, we are particularly called as a world community of Christians to be in solidarity with those who live in the land and the lands where the history of our faith started and developed. The Christians and the churches in the Middle East have been facing enormous challenges, and we are particularly aware of how dramatic political and armed conflicts have brought them into even more difficult positions. We think specifically of Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. With them we believe that the way to peace is to move forward into a culture and practice of democracy and equal citizenship with equal rights for all. This requires justice and peace, protection and rule of law, and reconciliation and development, not least for the younger generation to have hope.

The Christian presence and witness in the land of our Holy Bible has been absolutely significant for all of us, from the very beginning until today. The future of the church and the Christians in these countries are and must be a concern for all of us.

There is hardly any place where the people have been in need of a just peace longer than in Israel and Palestine. Only justice with proper space and security for both Palestinians and Israelis can provide a lasting and needed peace. We have taken many initiatives to address the impact of the occupation, to stop violence, and to accompany the peoples in this conflict, i.e. through EAPPI.

In Pakistan, the churches have been deeply wounded by the killing of church members and destruction of their churches. We have called on the government to protect these vulnerable communities and not to allow the blasphemy laws to be abused, harming people of faith. In addition to this, a number of instances of rights of minorities and freedom of religion have been addressed in recent years together with the CCA.

In Canada, the work for right relations with Indigenous peoples has exposed how Christian doctrine has been abused to suppress others, even taking land and culture. We have, as the WCC, learned a lot over the last decades, nationally and internationally, from Indigenous communities through the very difficult processes of truth, reconciliation and justice. We addressed the doctrine of discovery last year, repudiating the use of this doctrine to justify non-Indigenous claims to sovereignty and domination. Miraculously, in spite of this legacy, the local churches of the First Nations peoples are growing in number and spiritual strength; I have myself been enriched and inspired by encounters with them.

I have also met the president of South Sudan who expressed the signs of the new dawn for his people established through the peace agreement of 2011. He personally thanked the WCC for its faithful solidarity and many efforts, together with many partners in the ecumenical family, to work for a sustainable peace for the peoples of Sudan and the liberation of South Sudan. Also visiting the churches in Khartoum, being reminded how they also need our continued attention and solidarity, I was exposed to the reality that cultivating a just peace is a huge task beyond establishing peace after years of war. Now is the time to build institutions and relationships, through education, investments, and hard work as churches, contributing to the new day. The churches in Sudan, both in north and in the south, deserve our on-going attention.

The question, as Jesus formulated it, is always about who appears and acts as a true neighbour? To follow the God of life is to be in solidarity with all; we are not entitled to set limits for our solidarity. If we deepen and expand these perspectives, we see that the call to Christian solidarity is given to all of us, wherever we are. Our task is to find the best way to show that our faith is a support to one another and in that way serves as a sign and foretaste of the justice and peace that the kingdom of God is bringing. This is the diaconal ministry of the church.

In my many visits to see you as churches in all continents of the world, and in many different churches, I have learned again and again that those who often deal with the worst conditions and have the heaviest cross to carry also are those who have the strongest expression of faith and solidarity with others.

## **A Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace**

### **Where are we going?**

Now is the time to welcome, together, the dawn from on high, to get up, to open windows and doors and go together into the new day.

Thus, we are not here to discuss if we can make a difference together as a fellowship of churches, we are here to discern how and with whom we can offer our contributions. Let us remind ourselves why we have the WCC:

The primary purpose of the fellowship 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.

We are called to advance, continuously and consistently, as peoples of faith, to move towards one another and to embody the image of the servant church.

This is why I find that a pilgrimage of justice and peace should be the vision for what we do together in the period until the next assembly. I am increasingly convinced that the proposal from the central committee in 2012 to develop the programme work and life of the WCC as a pilgrimage for justice and peace is very wise.

I have been inspired the last months by a mosaic I found in the church of Plateau d'Assy, not far from Geneva, a church built in the dark 1930s in a village of sanatoriums for people with tuberculosis. The mosaic brings together all kinds of colours and forms into a warm, friendly image of St Francis, the young person who gave up what he had to become a pilgrim—of justice and peace—for the healing and reconciliation of the church, the peoples, the religions, and our life with nature.

We are together here in Busan to make our own mosaic, bringing together our different parts through prayer, sharing, conversations, discernment, and decisions. Together we shall develop an image for us to be guided by in our next years.

So where shall we go? Where are those places still in darkness, still needing our contributions? They can be anywhere and everywhere, where people are struggling against conflicts and injustices. This is where we shall go.

## **A journey together**

To pray to be guided in the way of peace is a bold commitment for us as churches, as a fellowship, and as individuals. It implies a willingness to be moved, to change, to advocate, to abandon complacency, to be missional and prophetic. This is why we cannot separate solidarity and service from communion, unity, mission, justice, and peace. Our programmes and new initiatives should carry this integral vision out together, involving one another and building relationships between us as churches and partners. We should also have universal perspectives of gender, youth, and inter-religious relationships across all of our work, seeking always to build the fellowship as churches and exercise our role for advocacy.

More than ever before, the work of the WCC must reflect the engagement and commitment of member churches. All programmes and projects should prove how they involve you as churches, and also how the ecumenical partners we have are related or involved. The huge potential of our work is the combination of being relevant in the local church, in the national arena, and the international agenda and relations at the same time. People both in a village in Malawi and in the international organization next to us in Geneva should be able to see this uniqueness, and make use of it.

To give one example: In June 2012, we had the first official WCC meeting in the People's Republic of China when the CCIA commission gathered in Shanghai and

Nanjing. We should work more closely with the China Christian Council (CCC), our largest Asian member church, in such a significant context for the church and the world.

We need to find the points of energy for our work, where there is a need for the particular contribution of the WCC. We need to discern where it is relevant to work on these issues as an ecumenical and international body and to bring what happens in different places together to make it stronger, visible, and impactful. This is also where funding partners for projects and programmes can see the particular relevance to invest and to participate, and where the added value of doing this as the WCC can be realized.

Our capacities must be determined according to what we can do with our resources and competencies as staff, commissions, committees and consultations, and what you can do in the churches and as partners with us. As churches you must see what you do as part of what you contribute to this fellowship of churches, in this one ecumenical movement.

This means that we are called to share the resources we need for this work. They belong to God of life, and we are stewards of these resources. You must continue to contribute according to your capacities and to consider what constitutes a fair level of contribution. These offerings may be financial resources and in-kind assistance, but also what you can offer of your human resources for shorter or longer periods, what insights, experiences, and attention you can put forward, and not least include your love and your prayers.

We go into this new day with resources, bringing the legacy and the learning, as well as some of the important initiatives from the past into a new day with a renewed profile and with revised priorities.

## **The spirituality of pilgrimage**

Thus, our ecumenical spirituality should embody this image of pilgrimage. Through our prayer together we should become a fellowship of praying churches, able to be silent as well as to voice our thankfulness and our yearning, open to be led by the God of life. Our prayer together should strengthen our willingness to see the new challenges and tasks together, led by the God of life in simplicity and focused on how to serve the world around us, not preoccupied with ourselves.

We discern our direction by looking always at those who need us most, those for whom the fullness of life that God desires for all people is not yet realized. This was the vision, too, for Martin Luther King in the march for justice and his dream for change uttered 50 years ago. This perspective means that we need to allow our feet to be guided to those places where we can make a difference, and to understand our mission of sharing the love of God from that perspective. We are all familiar with those places that know violence and oppression and discrimination and misuse of creation and spiritual desolation. There are such places wherever we are, and each one of us in the ecumenical movement can be agents of justice and peace in this journey in our own way, in our own context.

Therefore, we should try to see together how our work could be shaped accordingly, as it is divided into three main areas in our programme plans: unity and mission, public witness and *diakonia*, and ecumenical formation.

## Unity and mission

Unity is a gift of life together, which we are called to give to one another, always, not only in times when we agree or when we ourselves need it, but also when there are others who need it more than we do. The first premise of mutual accountability is that we share our wisdom, given through our traditions, knowledge, and experiences, often very costly experiences. What the Spirit has given us is not to be kept as our own property. But we learn only when we really listen to the other and are willing to learn from one another. This principle must remain with us even in times of great disagreement on doctrinal matters and issues of moral discernment.

The challenges of conciliar ecumenical life in recent years do not mean that there is a lesser need for councils, but rather that councils like ours must commit themselves to bring forward into a new time the God-given gift and legacy of the fellowship. The WCC has a special role in this work, by empowering others, ecumenical institutions, councils, the GCF, all of our partners. We must bring the depth of our relationships into the next period, always deepening the fellowship, always being in conversation with the wider church beyond ourselves. We have the capacity to offer a convening role for further conversations with ecumenical actors on the renewal of our institutions and relationships, and this opportunity we must grasp and enact.

We value and nurture our relationship with the whole ecumenical movement. We have seen enriched relations with the Roman Catholic Church, and anticipate even deeper collaboration beyond this assembly through a renewed Joint Working Group. In developing relations with Pentecostals, the Joint Consultative Group will continue to reflect our commitment towards dialogue and mutual learning. Work with Christian World Communions continues particularly in relation to the harvesting of the work of bilateral dialogues.

The identity of the church is missional, defined by the places and people residing in the God of life, and particularly those who too often are pushed to the margins of the societies in which they live. This must be the perspective through which we undertake all of what we do. The period following the assembly will be a rich time in our work on mission and evangelism as we follow the reception of the new mission text by member churches and partners. The changing religious landscape, where in some places we see an increase of secularism, offers the opportunity to engage in creative work on being a missional church in a secular context, renewing our call to evangelism and public witness.

A Faith and Order world conference on renewal in 2017 will be a significant way to mark the 500 years of Reformation, but also to draw the quest for unity and the on-going work on ecclesiology and mission into a study of the life of the member churches. It is a way to explore how we are renewed and by which theological principles. Such a conference will draw on our insights about church vitality, on credibility,

of being church in challenging contexts—everywhere, not just in places of geopolitical challenge. It will be a way to discern how we become servant churches together.

### **Advocacy in public witness and *diakonia***

There is a role for the council to say what is true in the right time and to the right people. In our advocacy role, we must be professional, pastoral, and prophetic. We are compelled to be relevant in all places, to reflect our belief that God can make changes through our faithful witness. But we also should find ways to make our advocacy work in the ecumenical movement more coordinated, to use our resources in the best ways.

By being a fellowship and by being based in Geneva, our efficacy can be realized. We have the opportunity of being partners with other important global institutions with common goals and interests. We see even more that what we are as a fellowship—international, national, local—is a quality that other institutions need of us. We also know that through our fellowship in all corners of the world, we have the potential to effect change everywhere the church is; advocacy, witness, is something in which we all can take a role, whether in the area of climate change, the arms trade treaty, peace in the Middle East, or any range of issues that affect the life God created. And we are ready to contribute to the renewal of the United Nations organization, to become an expression of “we the people” and not only “we the nations,” as the UN Charter itself formulates it. It is not by accident that we are in Geneva and New York.

Our work for justice has been and must continue to be focused on how the God-given dignity can be protected through respect for human rights. We will continue to work in the framework of the UN Human Rights Council. Our work for peace has to be to a continuation of addressing the many issues related to disarmament, peace processes, reconciliation and healing. Together with a new Churches’ commission on international affairs (CCIA) we shall be ready and have the capacities together to both be proactive in taking new initiatives and respond to developing conflicts and crises.

Let me name some examples of new initiatives we are considering, in addition to continuing many of the important initiatives I have already described:

The situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been addressed several times through statements and workshops, and the WCC is asked to make a new, substantial effort for peace and reconciliation together with the churches in that country. This issue must be pursued in solidarity with the people of faith that need our fellowship and the guidance of the God of life.

We have initiated a new project together with the International Labour Organization to explore new ways forward to work for just peace through advocating for access to decent work and remuneration in Egypt, particularly in light of the situation of the young people of Egypt. Together with the churches and other partners in civil society we have to explore new ways for our involvement.

Peace is a condition for justice for all, and the proper human relationships require respect for one another, for human dignity and human rights. Together in this

assembly, we can say something to which the people of both North and South Korea can agree in the process toward reconciliation. The focus should be on finding a political solution to be supported by all the nations concerned.

We have studied the implications of economic structures and economic injustices and how we can respond to these together as the WCC. Together with ecumenical partners we asked a panel of specialists to propose the best strategy for us. Life always requires sustainability. And it must be sustainable for all, human beings and creatures. There is a deep connection between the three words that are so similar, derived from the same root: economy, ecology, and ecumenism. Life requires unity and fellowship, and therefore also justice and peace. A fair economy of life in a sustainable ecological sharing of the resources belongs to our ecumenical vision for the Christian witness of peace in the whole world, in our human family. We must continue to develop this vision of economy of life for all.

Throughout Africa, the churches with the people continue to struggle under several burdens, also the burden of HIV and AIDS, but now with a significant hope of change. WCC's Ecumenical HIV and Aids Initiative in Africa (EHAlA) has helped the churches to approach the challenges of HIV and AIDS from the values of the gospel. We are ready to take the next steps of working with UNAIDS and churches in all continents to make the communities able to deal properly with those who are affected and to find the way forward as human beings caring for one another's dignity.

Already in this assembly we can show our willingness to be in solidarity with those who are forced to move; refugees and others who have to search for another place for themselves and their families. Together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and many partners we have discussed how faith based communities have unique contributions to offer. We have also developed a document to be signed by religious leaders to confirm our readiness to contribute to the stranger in need, and you can even sign it during this assembly. The huge efforts of churches and ecumenical partners for migrants should be also given a proper corresponding contribution from the unique position of the WCC. We have done a lot to bring the ecclesial challenges to the fore; we need also to work on the advocacy dimensions of this task.

The work to make the churches just and inclusive communities is an important dimension of the advocacy role and the mission of the church. But it is also a way to give space for the many resources represented in the diversity among us: human resources, spirituality, moral values, and qualities of relationships. The place of Indigenous peoples in their contexts and in the churches, the rights of migrants and others, all this requires our proper attention and work.

## **Ecumenical formation**

Ecumenical formation ensures the on-going strength of our institution as well as the whole ecumenical movement. As one generation of the ecumenical movement retires, the adequate preparation and formation of a new generation is imperative. The Bossey Ecumenical Institute not only educates, but offers experiential learning

through the development of common life in community. The work of the programme on Ecumenical theological education (ETE) develops theological and ecumenical competencies in all parts of the world. The unique qualities of these programmes as well as the potential for all of our programmes to be fields of learning represents a substantial part of the legacy of the WCC. The ecumenical movement must promote that legacy through ensuring that there are equal chances for those in the north and south, east and west, for men and women, for lay and ordained, to be part of the renewal possible through formation and education.

### **The next generation**

We are part of an ecumenical movement in which younger people and their organizations bring vibrancy and offer us potential for renewal. About 600 of the participants in this assembly are youth. I ask these participants to be our strongest ambassadors for justice and peace at this assembly and beyond it. You provide capacities, relationships, networks and new competence to this global and ecumenical work that we must treasure and cultivate. Learning from our experiences with the ECHOS commission, we need your contributions in all dimensions of the WCC's work. We also need to find more adequate and flexible structures for this than one commission.

### **Communication**

It is not possible to do a lot together for justice and peace if we are not communicating well with one another, with the many who build public opinion, and with the people and institutions of power. This assembly represents new methods of sharing information, material for preparation, communicating with those who are interested in what we are doing and not present here. We will continue to develop publications in a variety of media to communicate the insights of the ecumenical community and lift the voices of those at the margins.

For a global fellowship, and institution the possibilities of sharing and having an impact through electronic media are enormous and must be developed even further than we have developed them today—to save costs, but primarily to be even more able to share the stories of what you are doing and what we are doing together. We have to coordinate with you and your communication departments and resources much more, and we have to develop the mentality and ability to share information. In many ways, we will see that sharing information is not only telling about what we are doing, but a very important means of undertaking together what we mean by a pilgrimage of justice and peace. To be sure that we communicate all the visions, priorities, and recommendations of this assembly, we will give attention to a new communication strategy for the next period of the council's life.

### **A fellowship of women and men**

One of the great legacies of the WCC to be renewed and to be carried forward is the work to improve as a just and mutually supportive fellowship of women and men. The voices and contribution of women should be given even more space in our

fellowship if we mean what we say about solidarity. This requires greater prominence in responsibilities and leadership in all aspects of our common life.

Our commitment to exemplifying just communities of women and men is a measure of the solidarity for which we aspire. Still, too often, women are marginalized and suffer as victims of violence. Their voices are too frequently silenced, and they are not always recognized for their contributions and roles within our common life. The ecumenical movement has been a place where the strength and gifts of women have enriched the whole fellowship. These last days both women and men have been reflecting together in a pre-assembly on how to build a just community of women and men. The WCC should show clearly the significance of sharing our gifts as men and women in the leadership of this organization.

Though the council's work on HIV and AIDS, we can see the benefits of a holistic view of community life, relations based on justice and equality. In ecumenical formation, women have demonstrated leadership and capacity building for the benefit of all within ecumenical organizations and initiatives. In our advocacy work through the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the perspective of religious faith has been brought into this dialogue.

### **Inter-religious relations**

The threats to life show us the imperative we have to develop the quality of inter-religious relations even more, as we share the capacity to speak and work together to promote justice and peace for all. The experience of life is something we all share; by embracing common values and by finding ways of moving forward in conversation and conviction we hold the potential to increase the work on our common goals and at the same time reduce the impact of extremists' violent actions.

We have seen in practice this attitude of mutual listening and sharing in several inter-religious encounters. The joint Christian-Muslim solidarity visit to Nigeria in which religious leaders spoke with those most affected by extremist violence demonstrated a yearning by both Christians and Muslims for peace in their land. The visit was not only an act of accompaniment by Christians and Muslims, but a model for inter-religious dialogue, mutual learning, and action.

As we embark on a pilgrimage of justice and peace, we need to work with all people of good will who share our vision and commitment. We see that our sisters and brothers of other religious traditions have much to offer. Our pilgrimage must include an invitation to walk along side us, to contribute gifts and insights, to reflect the common value of life for all, should continue to strengthen our relations with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and other peoples of faith

The WCC shall both represent the member churches in these relations with those who are ready for dialogue and cooperation. Together as churches nationally and internationally we also need to take new initiatives to encounter and to relate to those who are representing positions and actions we cannot accept, being willing to walk another mile for the sake of justice and peace, where it is needed.

## **Conclusion: The WCC Giving Leadership in the Pilgrimage**

The WCC has a role of leadership in the ecumenical movement, and we take this responsibility seriously. We speak with one another and on behalf of others.

The test of fellowship is our humility, our willingness to listen to the other, to receive gifts, gifts we did not even know we needed. It is in our honesty that we acknowledge we have not fulfilled our calling to unity, that in our advocacy work we do not know everything, yet still we courageously make our contributions for the common good. And it is in our hopefulness that we discover those glimpses of new life we receive when we work together in common witness and service, when we experience greater communion, when we speak truth to power.

It is our time and task now to do even more to make visible what that means in the way we work, in the way we speak and think, but also in the way we are perceived by others. A fellowship of churches means that we are willing to work on how we continue to improve our relationships, and to strengthen our commitment to the common goals God has given us to work toward.

This is a real pilgrimage, not merely one of ideas, but a movement that aims at something that is to be achieved or to be found. It will be marked by many initiatives and by many stages along the way. Our success will be measured not only by our progress, but by the experience of moving *together*. We are here to discern together these directions forward.

In the life of God we can face life as it is. And I believe that the God of life is now creating for us a new dawn of grace, a new possibility for the council. In the fellowship of churches we can share life as it is, and use the WCC as a unique instrument to follow our calling to Christian solidarity with one another and with the world. To prepare for the next years as a people on a pilgrimage of justice and peace is now our task in this assembly.

The dawn from on high is breaking upon *us*.

And so our pilgrimage can begin:

*“Our feet will be led into the way of peace.”*

# ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE REPORTS

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## Report of the Policy Reference Committee

1. “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 fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (Constitution, Article I Basis)

### Mandate

2. The Policy Reference Committee (PRC) presents policy recommendations for assembly action related to the reports of the moderator of the central committee and the general secretary, particularly as they relate to the mandate of the PRC, recommendations related to membership matters, and proposals for amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Additionally, the PRC presents for action the assembly statement on unity: “God’s Gift and Call to Unity—and our commitment” (Unity Statement). In undertaking its work, the PRC has worked in two sub-groups, one that considered the reports of the moderator, the general secretary, membership issues and the constitution and rules and one that reviewed and amended the Unity Statement. The 10th Assembly referred to the PRC documents A01, A02, A04, A05 and the Unity Statement in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 101-105. The PRC also addressed the “Flowchart of Consensus Procedures” included in the Programme Book at p. 94.

### Report of the moderator of the central committee (A 01)

3. The PRC received with appreciation the report of the moderator (A 01). Giving thanks for his leadership as moderator of the central committee during the period between Porto Alegre and Busan, the PRC recognizes in this last report of the moderator personal reflections, as well as an account of the challenges and accomplishments of the period.
4. The PRC noted the moderator’s attention to the importance of integrating the primary streams of work present in the WCC’s programme areas—theological reflection, Christian education, mission, and *diakonia*—acknowledging their mutual interdependence, maintaining a holistic view of the Christian faith and of the ecumenical journey. With respect to maintaining the prophetic voice and vision of the WCC drawing from the spirituality and theology of the member churches, the PRC noted the increased attention of the council to listen to and lift up the insights of the member churches in their particular contexts.

5. The PRC noted the moderator's observation about the changing ecumenical landscape, the growth of Pentecostalism and the increase of Christianity as a whole in the southern hemisphere and in Asia. The PRC notes that the WCC has in place membership policies and criteria for membership, and a common understanding and vision among the member churches related to proselytism. The PRC also notes that the WCC convenes commissions and consultations with churches beyond its institutional boundaries; engaging the wider ecumenical movement, including, for example, the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC and the Joint Consultative Group between the Pentecostals and the WCC, as well as the Global Christian Forum.
6. The PRC welcomed the Moderator's reflection on the presence of the Assembly here in Asia, where the Christian family is a minority living together with other majority religious expressions. Particularly in Korea, the witness of the assembly participants joining in hopeful prayer for unity and peace has a meaningful resonance. The high priority given over the years by the WCC to interreligious dialogue, and the Council's capacity to integrate programme areas is demonstrated in the preparation of joint statements such as the assembly resource document, "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World." (Resource Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 77-81.)

## **Resolutions**

The 10th Assembly of the WCC

- a. expresses its appreciation for the leadership of the moderator Rev. Dr Walter Altmann and vice moderators, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of SASSIMA and Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse, during the period from Porto Alegre to Busan;
- b. joins in expressing appreciation to the local Korean churches for their preparations and hospitality on behalf of the WCC and to local and national authorities of the Republic of Korea for their warm welcome;
- c. joins in expressing appreciation to the former general secretary, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, for his leadership of the council at the beginning of this period and to the General Secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, for their service to the ecumenical movement, diligence, and great personal dedication;
- d. Welcomes the moderator's reflection on the diversity of participants present at the assembly, and recognizes this diversity as providing an opportunity for the churches to reflect further on the implications and opportunities for unity and diversity; and acknowledges that diversity enriches unity and that some divisive issues need to be addressed both in bilateral dialogues and in the work of the

WCC: and urges the WCC to ensure that it is a “safe space” for conversations addressing diversity;

- e. urges the WCC to continue to integrate the work of its various program areas, enhancing the impact and effectiveness of the council’s work and voice.

*APPROVED*

**Report of the general secretary (A 02)**

7. The PRC received with appreciation the report of the general secretary (A 02) and the opportunity to engage the general secretary in further dialogue about matters raised by his report. The PRC expressed appreciation for the general secretary’s spiritual focus, approach and achievements, including careful stewardship of the financial assets of the council during a critical period of financial instability.
8. The PRC noted the efforts of the general secretary for justice and peace, especially engaging with member church and interfaith leaders in Nigeria, with the churches and civil authorities in the Korean peninsula in preparation for the Tenth Assembly and increasingly with high-level contacts at the United Nations around a treaty on the international arms trade and with UN agencies on issues of common concern.
9. The PRC noted the General Secretary’s attention to engage with the churches to discern where God is leading efforts to express Christian solidarity, and witness to justice and peace from the particular vantage point of the churches. The PRC recognized the importance of the council’s focus on accompanying peoples and churches in conflict situations, integrating the expertise from diverse aspects of the council’s work, amplifying the effectiveness and meaning of the WCC’s work and its voice in the world.
10. The particular significance of meaningful “Christian Solidarity” and solidarity with peoples and churches in conflict situations was recalled in two examples, one bearing witness to the past, and one present. The project “Brazil: Nunca Mais!” preserved in the archives of the WCC testimonies from political prisoners in Brazil during the military dictatorship (1964-85). Together, the general secretary and the moderator delivered these archives to the public prosecutor in 2011, where they have been made available electronically to the public at large informing the process of truth and reconciliation. Recently, in Nigeria, the WCC engaged a multi-dimensional approach to the conflict there, sending “Living Letters” to the churches, drawing upon its decades of engagement with leaders of other faiths, consulting with interfaith partners, and engaging the

local interfaith community, all meaningful steps to forestall the intensification of conflicts and to contribute to the restoration of peace.

11. The general secretary recalled that the WCC gathered in Kingston Jamaica concluding the Decade to Overcome Violence—Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace. The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation provided inspiration and resources that will guide the pilgrimage of justice and peace including the future programmes of the WCC.
12. The general secretary noted that the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation will provide an opportunity for a Faith and Order world conference on renewal in 2017. The PRC observed that the world is heading, during the next eight years, toward centennial commemorations that relate directly to the assembly theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace,” especially, for example, the beginning of the First World War and the Armenian genocide, which will provide opportunities for the WCC to speak about the spiritual dimensions of justice, peace and human dignity.

## Resolutions

The 10th Assembly of the WCC

- f. expresses its appreciation for the leadership of the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, commending the general secretary in particular for the spirituality of his leadership and his careful stewardship of the council through its recent financial crisis;
- g. urges continuation of the main program areas for the work of the WCC, including unity and mission, ecumenical formation, advocacy in public witness and *diakonia*, fellowship of women and men, solidarity with peoples and churches in conflict situations, and, interreligious dialogue;
- h. asks that the theme of the 10th Assembly be integrated into the future programmatic work of the WCC, “A pilgrimage of justice and peace,” by using the work already undertaken (e.g., document “Economy of Life”);
- i. affirms the important work of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in all of its dimensions, as a graduate school for ecumenical formation, a venue for ecumenical gathering, and a place of hospitality for the wider community;
- j. encourages the general secretary to continue developing an enhanced communication strategy and policy, with specific reference to new forms of information and communications technology, keeping in mind the importance of inclusion and accessibility, and urges that communication efforts include representations from the life and witness of a broad array of member churches; and

- k. affirms the importance of integrating the spiritual and theological work of the churches and the expertise drawn from commissions of the WCC into the ongoing work of the WCC in all of its dimensions.

*APPROVED*

**Membership Matters (A 05)**

13. The PRC received a report on membership matters that addressed two main dimensions: (1) membership matters related to WCC member churches; (2) membership matters related to non-member churches, especially applications for WCC membership. The PRC was informed that the department of Church and Ecumenical Relations (CER) works under the leadership of the general secretary and in close collaboration with regional relations programme executives and in consultation with the governing bodies to ensure a common, coherent, and focused approach to membership matters.
14. The PRC welcomed the CER's work accompanying mergers and unions of churches in which WCC member churches are involved, and its report of mergers that have taken place since Porto Alegre. The PRC reviewed the rules related to membership adopted in Porto Alegre, particularly as the application of rules adopted during the 9th Assembly have affected membership applications (particularly the criterion of size and exception from the criterion of size), and received a report of new members in categories of member churches, and new formal relationships with international ecumenical organizations and specialized ministries. Additionally, the PRC discussed the implementation of a "pro-active" strategy on membership, encouraging well-established and ecumenically committed churches to apply for membership in the WCC.

**Resolutions**

The 10th Assembly of the WCC

- l. welcomes the mergers and unions in which WCC member churches were involved that have taken place during the period between Porto Alegre and Busan;
- m. directs the CER to continue to monitor mergers and unions in which WCC member churches are involved, providing, if requested, advice and support in close cooperation with the general secretariat, regional relations executives, Mission and Evangelism, and Faith and Order;
- n. welcomes new relationships with international ecumenical organizations and specialized ministries, and welcomes new WCC member churches:
- Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil (2008);
  - Lao Evangelical Church (2008);

- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (2013);
- o. refers to the central committee for reflection and policy proposal on how the ecumenical commitment of an applicant church is defined, so that WCC membership policy is not dependent on other ecumenical organizations' membership policies;
- p. refers to the central committee for further reflection on the meaning of "exceptional reasons" (Rule I.3.b.iii) as relates to exceptions from the criterion of size; and
- q. directs the WCC to continue the pro-active approach to membership, encouraging well established and ecumenically committed churches to apply for membership increasing the global profile of WCC.

### *APPROVED*

#### **WCC constitution and rules (A 04)**

15. The PRC received a report of the process that had been undertaken during the period from Porto Alegre to Busan resulting in the amendment of the rules of the WCC by the central committee in Crete, and the proposal for amendments to the constitution by the central committee. The PRC was reminded that the constitution can only be amended in accordance with Article VII of the constitution, by the assembly following notice to the member churches, and that amendments to rules I (Membership), VI (Central Committee) and XX (Amendments) come into effect only after confirmation by the assembly. The PRC noted that the proper procedures had been followed in accordance with constitution Article VII, including notice to the member churches, and Rule XX. The PRC notes that the amendments included in Rule XX relate only to re-numbering of cross- references.
16. The PRC discussed comments received to Rule VIII (executive committee), section 4, noting that following the central committee meeting in Crete, concerns had been raised related to the finality of financial statements and also related to the clarity of sections pertaining to the delegation of authority from the central committee to the executive committee.
17. Additionally, the PRC discussed the issue of quorum as outlined in Document A 04 as it relates to the responsibilities of members of the governing bodies.
18. The PRC noted an anomaly in the flow charts summarizing consensus procedures and recommends, to avoid misunderstanding, a correction to terminology describing the final step (Programme Book, pg. 94).

19. Finally, the PRC discussed questions that had been raised from the floor of the assembly regarding the interpretation of the term “fair and adequate” as it appears in Rule VI.8.a and relates to Rule VI.8.b, and received an intervention bearing twenty-nine co-signatures requesting that the next central committee include as a priority on the agenda a process to review and address issues surrounding the churches responsibility to reflect the diversity of the churches by meeting target balances set by the WCC. Recognizing that the new Rule VI that addresses these issues had not yet been confirmed and put into practice, the PRC proposes a process of monitoring the implementation of amended Rule VI, along with a recommendation to further explore with the member churches individual and combined commitment to the issue of target balances.

## Resolutions

The 10th Assembly of the WCC

- r. amends the WCC Constitution (as presented in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 37-41); APPROVED by the required majority<sup>1</sup>
- s. confirms the amendments to the WCC Rule I Membership in the Fellowship of the World Council of Churches, Rule VI Central Committee, and Rule XX Amendments (as presented in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 41-44, 50-55 and p. 76 respectively). APPROVED by the required majority<sup>2</sup>
- t. amends Rule VIII.4.b, by deleting in its entirety the text included in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, p. 58, and replacing the deleted text with the following:

### *Rule VIII.4.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.

*APPROVED*

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1. Rev. Dr Jennifer S. Leath abstention

2. Rev. Dr Jennifer S. Leath abstention

- u. amends Rule VIII.4.a, by deleting in its entirety the first sentence “The central committee may delegate some of its powers to the executive committee.” Additionally, amending the next sentence by inserting the words “by the central committee” such that the introductory sentence at Rule VIII.4.a will read as follows:

*Rule VIII.4.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:

*APPROVED*

- v. includes in the supplement to the rules a statement of policy concerning the responsible exercise of fiduciary responsibility entrusted to church representatives elected to the WCC’s governing bodies, with the following explanatory note:
- (i) Members of governing bodies should commit themselves to participate in the entire meeting. Late arrivals and early departures should be avoided. They should constitute a reported and recorded exception, rather than a common practice.
  - (ii) Members of governing bodies may lose the right to be nominated for a second term if persistently departing early or arriving late.
  - (iii) Members of the governing bodies when obliged to leave earlier, should propose a proxy to another member in the meeting.
  - (iv) Proxies to members of the central committee must be approved by central committee; proxies to members of the executive committee must be approved by the executive committee.
  - (v) Each member of the governing bodies is allowed to serve as proxy only for one member who is obliged to leave earlier. The leadership of the central committee should regularly monitor this matter.

*APPROVED*

- w. revises the “Flowchart of Consensus Procedures,” included in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 94, by deleting the words, “Formal majority vote declared and recorded” and inserting the words, “Rule XIX.9.e-f voting procedures.”

*APPROVED*

- x. refers to the central committee monitoring the implementation of amended Rule VI. 8 as it relates to the “fair and adequate” representation in the composition of committees and commissions of the WCC, as well as further reflection on the implications of “target balances” for the guiding policies on representation, and further reflection on devising concrete strategies to encourage the member churches’ individual and combined commitment to the issue of target balances established by the central committee in advance of the next assembly.

*APPROVED*

On the advice of the Business Committee, a recommendation that was originally proposed by the Nominations Committee on membership matters (cf. NC 04, p. 2, recom. C) was included here and acted upon by the assembly.

- y. That the new central committee reviews the WCC Rules referring to “member churches who do not fulfill the criterion of size,” taking into consideration, on the one hand, the changes of the ecclesial and ecumenical landscapes and, on the other, the amendment of the WCC Rules at the 9th Assembly with regard to these member churches and their ways of participating in the life of the fellowship.

*APPROVED*

### **Unity statement**

The sub-committee of the Policy Reference Committee tasked with the responsibility for the revision of the Unity Statement carefully reviewed all recommendations for amendments. As a result of this work, a revised draft of the Unity Statement is appended to the report of the PRC.

### **Resolutions**

The 10th Assembly of the WCC

- z. adopts the attached statement “God’s Gift and Call to Unity—and our commitment.”

*APPROVED*

- aa. urges the WCC to call upon its member churches to respond to the vision and challenging commitments of the Unity Statement.

*APPROVED*

## Report of the Programme Guidelines Committee

### Introduction

1. The mandate of the Programme Guidelines Committee (PGC) is to propose policies for all further programmatic work of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and relationship strategies in the areas of churches and ecumenical developments, unity and mission, and public witness and *diakonia*. In light of this it is then charged to look at possible priorities for future work. The central committee has asked that an integrated and coherent approach to strengthening relations with and between member churches, and more generally in the ecumenical movement, be developed, along with programmatic work which is relevant to the member churches, the ecumenical movement, and the world at large. Therefore, the PGC proposes a vision and strategic direction for the further programmatic work of the WCC. The integrated approach between programmatic and relational work is a new step for the PGC and required that particular consideration was given to questions of methodology.
2. The PGC studied a number of reports prepared by the governing bodies, advisory bodies, and by WCC staff. These were *A Faith That Does Justice: The Journey of the WCC from Porto Alegre to Busan*; *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*; *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*; “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct”; “Economy of Life, Justice and Peace for All: A Call to Action”; “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace”; “Theological Perspectives on ‘Diakonia’ in the Twenty-First Century”; “Ecumenical Covenant on Theological Education”; “Pre-Assembly Programme Evaluation” (September 2012); the report of the core group of the Programme Committee of the central committee (September 2012); the report of the Programme Committee of the central committee (September 2012); the report of the Programme Sub-Committee of the executive committee (March 2013); and “Towards a WCC Strategy 2014-(2018)-2021” (March 2013). Sub-committees also considered the report of Echos—Commission on youth in the ecumenical movement (2011); report of the Continuation Committee of Ecumenism in the 21st Century (2012); report of the Inter-Orthodox Pre-Assembly Consultation (2012); and the Indigenous Peoples’ Consultation report (2012).
3. In addition, members of the PGC attended Ecumenical Conversations, listening for emerging themes and priorities from delegates. Consideration was also given to contributions during plenaries and hearing sessions. Contributions on specific issues were received from various constituencies including Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI), the Create Safe Space Caucus, young delegates and assembly participants, Indigenous peoples delegates and assembly

participants, and delegates from particular countries. We thank all those who provided input. The reports of the Ecumenical Conversations are attached as an appendix to this report and will be used, along with all other contributions, as a resource in the next stage of discussions regarding programmatic priorities.

4. The PGC also reflected on the outcomes of the women and men's, youth, Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network (EDAN), and Indigenous peoples pre-assemblies. The PGC appreciated the important work that these pre-assemblies have done, and their results will be important for future programmatic work. As there is no formal link between pre-assemblies and the assembly itself, the PGC considers it necessary for the work of the pre-assemblies to be formally reported to future assemblies.
5. **Recommendation:** The assembly receives with appreciation the report, *A Faith That Does Justice: The Journey of the WCC from Porto Alegre to Busan*.
6. **Recommendation:** The assembly recommends to the central committee that the work of the pre-assemblies be formally reported to future assemblies, and the current pre-assembly outcomes and recommendations be considered for integration into programmatic work.

## A pilgrimage of justice and peace

7. The PGC would like to express our particular appreciation to the moderator of the central committee and the general secretary for their reports to the assembly. These have been valuable resources in articulating a broad vision for the WCC as a fellowship of churches in the next period. The general secretary introduced the PGC to the recommendation of the central committee that WCC work in the period until the next assembly be understood as "A Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace."
8. Regardless of our confession or denomination our understanding as Christians is that life is a pilgrimage guided to a promised destination by and with God. A pilgrimage expresses our rootedness in our Christian faith. The theme of a pilgrimage to describe the WCC journey over the next eight years is one which resonated strongly with the PGC. The assembly prays "God of life, lead us to justice and peace," a prayer which in its essence suggests we journey together.
9. As the people of God were guided by the "pillar of cloud" and the "pillar of fire" (Ex. 13:21) throughout their pilgrimage, God goes before us ensuring our collective safe passage. We journey toward the same destination as a unified, diverse people of God (Heb. 13:13), empowered by the prayer of Jesus that we might be one that the world may believe (John 17:21). As fellow pilgrims we travel together, knowing and protective of each other's vulnerability, offering each

other hospitality and graciousness, and listening to each other, willing to take risks as we discern together which new territory to enter. We do this recognizing that we must to continue to work at our visible unity as fellow Christians. A pilgrimage of justice and peace acknowledges that many in this world are already struggling for justice and peace, and brings the churches together in a journey of solidarity. We move towards a more sustainable life in dignity and fullness where a glimpse of God's reign gives us hope.

10. The proposal for a pilgrimage of justice and peace was made by the central committee (September 2012) "based on the basic parameters found in the Economy of Life document, Commitments and Call, para. 21-26 at the assembly in Busan (until the 11th assembly) for and of the churches to focus on faith commitments to economic justice (poverty and wealth), ecological justice (climate change, etc.), and peace building" (GEN PRO 10, recommendation 10b). The central committee also recommended "that the WCC initiates a broad theological study process of the issues related to a *pilgrimage of justice and peace* in order to connect to the theological work on ecclesiology (undertaken by Faith and Order), unity, mission (CWME) and others within the member churches" (GEN PRO 10, recommendation 10c).
11. A common call throughout this assembly has been to ensure that all WCC work has a strong theological foundation. Substantial work has been done in various study processes such as Edinburgh 2010, the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (Kingston, 2011), "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World" (2011), "Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All" (2007-13), and the mission affirmation, "Together towards Life" (2012). On the basis of these reflections further theological work needs to be done to gain a full understanding of what it means to have a pilgrimage of justice and peace. Furthermore, in understanding the biblical meaning of pilgrimage, justice, and peace, we reclaim the Christian understanding of these concepts as exemplified by Christ Himself.
- 12. Recommendation:** The assembly affirms the decision of the central committee (September 2012) regarding a pilgrimage of justice and peace. (GEN PRO 10, recommendation 10b and 10c)

### **Walking together as a fellowship**

13. At the 8th Assembly (Harare, 1998) the need to find a new balance between the WCC as a fellowship of churches and the WCC as an organization was acknowledged (*Common Understanding and Vision*). Since the 9th Assembly (Porto Alegre, 2006) the WCC has been in a period of transition because of major financial challenges that necessitated restructuring. Subsequently, there is the likelihood that as an "organization" we will keep facing the prospect of diminished financial resources. As a "fellowship," however, we have much

greater potential, and this is an opportunity to actively reconsider how we want to engage with each other through the WCC.

14. A question that must be asked is, how does viewing ourselves as a fellowship of churches change the WCC's programmatic methodology? Can the WCC continue designing programmes from the Geneva offices, or has the time come that we plan and implement programmatic work more systematically together with the member churches? The PGC believes that our programmatic work has a strong relational dimension, and that relations with our member churches are a condition for effective programmatic work. With respect to the fellowship, the criteria should therefore be that programmes will be run only when they are undertaken in cooperation, at both planning and operational stages, with member churches.
15. At another level, advisory bodies such as commissions and reference groups are important for the work the WCC does as they play a crucial role in connecting the WCC with its member churches. They should therefore be understood as significant participants in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. In light of the need to strengthen the involvement of member churches in the life of the WCC, the role of advisory bodies needs to be reviewed.
16. **Recommendation:** The assembly affirms the above understanding of our future methodology in which programmatic work has a strong relational nature, and relational work strengthens the programmatic work.

### **Sharing the journey**

17. Another part of the WCC's methodology has to do with how we engage our partners, in terms both of other churches and ecumenical partners, and international organizations. Through these relationships we hope to journey together in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. The WCC has a unique position in being able to bring the faith community and the international community together on common issues and convene these partners at a global level.
18. The reports of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, the Joint Consultative Group between Pentecostals and the WCC, and the Joint Consultative Commission between the WCC and Christian World Communions, were received with appreciation and the PGC consider that their proposed directions be affirmed. It is important to foster dialogue and cooperation, and continuing regular feedback to the governing bodies is essential. A pilgrimage of justice and peace also includes cooperation between the WCC and ecumenical organizations such as national councils of churches, regional ecumenical organisations, mission organisations, and development organisations working together in ACT Alliance.

19. Through the report of the general secretary and a presentation in the thematic plenary, the assembly has heard of the need to continue the WCC's prophetic voice to international organisations, such as the United Nations. We are also being called to be in partnership with these organisations on common goals and interests. As an example, we affirm that the WCC offices in Geneva and New York are strategically positioned for this interaction.
20. **Recommendation:** The assembly receives with appreciation the reports of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, the Joint Consultative Group between Pentecostals and the WCC, and the Joint Consultative Commission between the WCC and Christian World Communions.
21. **Recommendation:** The assembly asks the central committee to explore methodologies for engaging the wider ecumenical movement and international organisations in a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

### **Integration of the programmatic work**

22. "A pilgrimage of justice and peace" provides an integrating focus for the fellowship. It requires that there be common perspectives among all major areas of work in order that they enrich each other in creative and innovative ways and are directed towards action. Walking together gives the opportunity for more integration in engaging the fellowship and for more systematic collaboration.
23. The assembly affirms that the WCC structures its programmatic work in three broad areas: unity and mission, public witness and *diakonia*, and ecumenical formation. It is important that these three areas have a focused approach and avoid addressing too many separate issues.
24. Choices for priorities and specific projects should be made based on the outcomes of the biblical and theological reflection, and methodological exploration, as described above. A strategic plan should be developed concentrating on areas where the WCC can offer added value to member churches and other organisations. It should be a tool for monitoring and for external evaluation, should show and measure outcomes and impact, and should set clear priorities and establish appropriate lines of accountability to governing bodies, member churches, and funding partners.
25. A pilgrimage of justice and peace requires the full participation of under-represented groups such as women, young adults, lay people, persons with disability, and Indigenous peoples within the programmatic work, and member churches are further encouraged to include these groups in leadership roles.

26. **Recommendation:** The assembly recommends that a strategic plan be developed and presented to the central committee in July 2014 for approval.

## Overview of programmatic work

### *Unity and Mission*

27. Seeking the visible unity of the church, engaging in deep theological discussion of the manner in which we can work together in the world, is something which is at the core of the WCC mandate. The document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* is an important step toward understanding what it means to be church today, and the Commission on Faith and Order is subsequently encouraged to take the lead in collecting responses from the churches and furthering the process of reception. Building on this process, and in the context of pilgrimage, the commission should start reflecting on contextual ecclesiologies. In light of responses to the document and insights gained in Ecumenical Conversations, reflection should commence on the renewal of churches in their diverse contexts, fully taking into account the traditions and challenges we currently experience.
28. 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.
29. The new mission affirmation, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, is a significant step forward in the ecumenical understanding of the missional nature and practice of churches. The practical guide accompanying the mission affirmation helps churches to renew their engagement in mission and evangelism. Building on the responses to this document and related documents, and in the context of pilgrimage, the reality of migrant churches, churches in numerical minority situations, and the dialogue and cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostal, and evangelical churches needs to be taken up in this process. More work needs to be done on mission and self-understanding in inter-religious and secular contexts.
30. The work of the WCC on inter-religious dialogue and cooperation has resulted in relations of growing trust with other religions, such as Judaism and Islam. This trust is important in fostering justice and peace, especially in areas of conflict. As most churches now live and work in inter-religious contexts, and are in some cases a numerical minority, trust-building becomes an important aspect of a pilgrimage of justice and peace. Doing so it is important to take into account

the recommendations in “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World.” Dialogue and cooperation with other religions also invites reflection on our own faith. Work on Christian self-understanding in the midst of other religions needs to continue as it helps churches journeying along with others.

### *Public Witness and Diakonia*

31. In the responsibility and identity of the church in wider society, public witness and *diakonia* are intertwined and essential. As the WCC embarks on a pilgrimage of justice and peace we affirm the background documents, “Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace: A Call to Action”; “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace; and Theological Perspectives on ‘Diakonia’ in the Twenty-First Century.” The recommendations of these documents should be taken further. On a pilgrimage we are respectful of creation and human dignity, and the provision of basic needs for all. In this assembly we have particularly heard people lift up issues of economic justice, climate change and eco-justice, and social justice. The programmatic work on these particular issues should be integrated into a holistic model, undergirded by theological reflection.
32. Speaking as a fellowship which has the unique perspective of working at local, national and international levels simultaneously, the WCC has a distinctive advocacy role in the context of a pilgrimage of justice and peace, representing not only general opinions but the real experience of, and commitment to, its members around the world. The WCC has a role of being the prophetic voice of the fellowship of churches to the international community and also speaks to its own constituency.
33. Where the WCC has used special envoys to areas of conflict in the past this has proved to be effective. This methodology should be explored further in areas of current and future conflict, and places we have heard of particularly in the assembly where this might be effective are the Middle East, Pakistan, Nigeria, West Papua, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In areas of inter-religious conflict, working with representatives from other faiths may be important.
34. **Recommendation:** The assembly requests the central committee to explore the use of Special Envoys and to implement a comprehensive communications approach that enables the WCC to influence the public debate according to the WCC agenda.

### *Ecumenical Formation*

35. The WCC plays a significant role in ecumenical formation and leadership training. Fostering visible unity and strengthening cooperation among churches in the fellowship needs a profound understanding of the ecumenical movement and a spirituality and ability of journeying together. Forming ecumenical leaders

remains crucial at a time when training within some churches tend to be more denominationally oriented. Leadership training is required especially in fast growing churches. The WCC has a long tradition in ecumenical formation and theological education through its Ecumenical Institute (Bossey) and the Ecumenical Theological Education Programme. In developing a coherent strategy, existing approaches need to be evaluated, and new ways of working, such as a global ecumenical theological institute (such as GETI), need to be explored. This should include attention to ecumenical formation of lay people and to theological reflection through a variety of contextual lenses.

36. **Recommendation:** The assembly asks the general secretary to initiate a roundtable meeting immediately after this assembly, inviting representatives of GETI, the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, and key universities/seminaries in the field of ecumenical theology, in order to establish a new network for ecumenical formation.

## **Conclusion**

37. Our thoughts are centring on the fellowship of churches, which keeps us in committed and caring relationships of love. We give thanks for the gift of a common pilgrimage following the God of life and for the gifts of member churches, which will join each other in a pilgrimage of justice and peace and invite all member churches and ecumenical partners to participate in it, sharing their gifts with each other as we pray “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”
38. **Recommendation:** The assembly invites member churches and ecumenical partners to commit to working together as a fellowship in “A Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.”

*APPROVED*

## Second Report of the Public Issues Committee

1. The Public Issues Committee (PIC) was mandated in the first day's business plenary to work on draft proposals of four statements prepared in advance through a series of consultations and reflections as originally endorsed by the central committee and the executive committee of the World Council of Churches in their meetings of September 2012 and March 2013 respectively. These were:
  - a. Statement on politicization of religion and rights of religious minorities
  - b. Statement on human rights of stateless people
  - c. Statement on peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula
  - d. Statement on the way to just peace
  
2. In addition to these, the assembly also adopted the recommendation of the executive committee, at its meeting held on 28-29 October 2013, to consider the following additional items:
  - a. Statement on the presence and witness of Christians in the Middle East
  - b. Minute on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo
  - c. Minute on the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide

On 31 October, in the business plenary, the PIC introduced to the assembly a draft Statement on politicisation of religion and rights of religious minorities. The first report of the PIC was presented in the business plenary on 1 November.

3. The Public Issues Committee received 22 new proposals within the stipulated 24-hour time frame after the announcement of the proposals in the first business plenary session, and these were reviewed by the PIC. As not all of them met with the stipulated criteria, the PIC decided to recommend to the 10th Assembly the following statements as public issues actions:
  - a. Statement on the current critical situation of Abeyi in South Sudan
  - b. Statement on nuclear energy and Asia Pacific maritime militarization
  - c. Resolution asking the US to engage in direct, unrestricted, meaningful dialogue with the Cuban government regarding travel restrictions and financial blockade against Cuba, etc.
  - d. Minute on Indigenous peoples' rights to ecological justice, self-determination, and an economy of life

The proposals below also were received, and the PIC referred these for appropriate actions by the general secretary and the CCIA. Several of these proposals are within the remit of certain other mandated statements, and the PIC has

therefore decided to incorporate those concerns within those statements. Others did not meet the required criteria or have been referred to other committees:

- a. Resolution requesting the release of Oscar Lopez Rivera, Puerto Rican in a US prison: the PIC decided that this proposal be referred to the general secretary, so that a letter of concern might be sent, and other appropriate actions taken, through the CCIA.
- b. A Statement on helping to build a just peace by strengthening communications rights: this is to be included in the existing just peace statement and to be sent to the central committee for consideration by the communications committee.
- c. A Statement on peace against Asia Pacific maritime militarization: the PIC decided that this proposal be combined with a statement proposed on a nuclear energy-free world.
- d. A Resolution on asking the UN to take action on the outbreak of cholera in Haiti: it was noted that action has already been taken by the UN and a resolution would therefore be inappropriate at this time. The central committee is asked to follow this situation closely and respond accordingly.
- e. A Statement on the injustice of US policy and practices in prisons and military actions: this did not meet the necessary criteria, but will be taken into consideration for future reference by the PIC of central committee.
- f. A Minute on the witness of churches in an Islamic extremist context: the concerns will be included in the statement on politicization of religion and rights of religious minorities.
- g. A Statement on steps towards a nuclear-free world: this is to be included in the statement on building a nuclear-free world and Asia Pacific maritime militarization.
- h. Reference to “Allah” issue in Malaysia: this is to be included in the Statement on politicization of religion.
- i. A need for strong collaboration between WCC and ACT on ecology: this was not a specific proposal meeting the criteria.
- j. A Statement or Minute concerning persons of African descent: this did not meet the necessary criteria.
- k. Sexual minorities: this did not meet the necessary criteria but will be kept in consideration for future reference by the PIC of central committee.
- l. A Statement on witness to the human rights of people with disabilities—referred to the PIC of central committee for further study and preparation of a statement because there was insufficient information presented at this time.
- m. A Statement on nuclear issues: this is to be included in a statement on building a nuclear-free world and Asia Pacific maritime militarization.
- n. A Statement on climate change: this is referred back to the business plenary for inclusion as a minute.

- 15) A Statement on alteration in the constitution of Japan on freedom of religion: did not meet the necessary criteria, with insufficient information for consideration at this time.
- 16) A Statement on Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims in India: did not meet the necessary criteria.
- 17) A Statement on West Papua: this did not meet the necessary criteria. The executive committee issued a statement recently.
- 18) A Statement on disabilities and accessibility at this WCC assembly meeting: this was referred to the business committee at this meeting.

Based on the discussions and suggestions during the business plenary and subsequent discussion between the moderator of the PIC and delegates from Denmark, the PIC decided to add an additional item on the agenda, being a minute on climate justice, as they had already submitted the proposal within the stipulated time frame.

Therefore the PIC recommends that a minute on climate justice also be adopted.

4. The PIC therefore proposes the following public statements:

- PIC 02.1 Statement on the politicisation of religion and rights of religious minorities
- PIC 02.2 Statement on the human rights of stateless people
- PIC 02.3 Statement on peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula
- PIC 02.4 Statement on the way to just peace
- PIC 02.5 Minute on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- PIC 02.6 Statement affirming the presence and witness of Christians in the Middle East
- PIC 02.7 Minute on the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide
- PIC 02.8 Statement on the current critical situation of Abeyi in South Sudan
- PIC 02.9 Statement on moving towards a nuclear-free world
- PIC 02.10 Resolution on urging improved United States-Cuba relations and the lifting of economic sanctions
- PIC 02.11 Minute on Indigenous Peoples
- PIC 02.12 Minute on climate change

It should be noted that the proposed statement on moving toward a nuclear-free world did not achieve consensus in the PIC.

5. Given the overwhelming number of requests for public issue actions by the assembly and the inability to deal with them properly in terms of adequate research and solicitation of authentic views, especially reaching consensus, the PIC recommends the following:

That in the future member churches be encouraged to submit their proposals well in advance of the assembly to allow adequate time for research and development of a first draft.

That the existing procedures for proposing new public issues items during the first days of the assembly remain in place.

*APPROVED*

## **Report of the Finance Committee**

### **1. Financial stewardship from Porto Alegre to Busan**

The accomplishment of the council's work from 2006 to 2013 depended on the generosity and partnership of the member churches, specialized ministries, congregations, and individuals who offered active engagement and contributions, whether financial or by other means. The assembly finance committee (AFC) expresses its profound gratitude for this continued solidarity and commitment.

Since 2006, the total income has decreased by 31 percent, from CHF 44.6 million to a forecast of CHF 30.9 million in 2013, repeating the trend of the previous period (1999 total income CHF 61 million: decrease of 27 percent to 2006). Foreign currency rates fell sharply against the Swiss franc following the global financial crisis of 2008, adversely affecting the value in Swiss francs of programme and membership contributions received in Euros, US dollars, and other currencies from 2008 onwards.

There was an increase in the number of members participating with membership contributions from 177 (in 2009) to 255 in 2012 (44 percent increase). However, with almost 10 percent (25) of the contributing member churches paying the minimum of CHF 1,000, and a further 30 percent (74) paying less than the minimum, the increase in numbers contributing did not offset reductions in contribution by other member churches. Membership contributions declined by 39 percent from CHF 6.6 million in 2006 to a forecast of CHF 4 million in 2013.

In 2009, the council completed a fire security renovation project in the Ecumenical Centre (CHF 6.6 million), and the renovation of the Visser 't Hooft Hall (CHF 1.6 million). In 2011, a conference centre was developed at Bossey at a cost of CHF 6.6 million, financed by a loan of CHF 6 million.

In addressing the critical situation of the WCC retirement fund (WCC RF), the council granted an extraordinary contribution of CHF 24 million to the WCC RF in 2012, financed by a loan. The assets and obligations of the WCC RF were transferred to an independent collective pension fund scheme, securing pensions and closing out risk to the council. In 2012, following a tender process monitored by a steering committee appointed by executive committee, the council entered into a partnership

agreement with a leading Swiss construction company with the objective of developing the Ecumenical Centre estate. In the expectation of a first transaction in 2017, the objectives of the project are to reimburse the loan, and fund the renovation and reconstruction of the Ecumenical Centre, while retaining ownership of sufficient property to generate a substantial contribution to operating expenses. Close accompaniment of the project by governing bodies will be required in order to achieve the financial goals.

The programme structure defined for 2007-09 focused on how each project fulfilled aspects of the unique role of the WCC and a planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) process was implemented. Certain project work, particularly related to grants activity, was concluded during the period. In 2010 a further revision of the project structure was implemented, including definition of programme objectives to be met by the 10th Assembly, the achievements being highlighted in the report, *A Faith That Does Justice*.

Prudent budgets were set during the period and general reserves exceeded target by CHF 1.4 million in 2011, reaching CHF 8.9 million. In 2012, executive committee assigned CHF 3.1 million of general reserves to a designated fund for the building project, to cover loan interest and consultancy fees for a period of five years.

The actions taken fulfilled important recommendations from the AFC report from Porto Alegre which highlighted the need for realistic budgets, capital expenditure limits, and treasury plans; the development of longer-term objectives; and the need to establish a PMER process.

In 2013 programme funds are estimated to close at CHF 2.7 million, this being a record low. Careful planning, accurate budgeting and financial monitoring will continue to be essential skills for effective programme management in the coming period.

The AFC concurs with the recommendations of the pre-assembly programme evaluation which propose that the WCC “facilitate where possible that members and partners take increasing responsibility for the common work” and that the “goals of the programmes be defined more specifically and increasingly prioritized.” In facing the challenges of the coming period, the WCC is encouraged to involve member churches more closely in planning and evaluation, while implementing alternative ways of working which draw on ecumenical cooperation, communication and new technology.

The AFC **recommends** that the new central committee:

- a. require that executive committee set realistic annual budgets for a focused programme plan (see 2 (i)), reviewing at each meeting the required level of general reserves, capital expenditure, and treasury plans;
- b. give direction for further investment in the PMER process, including use of external consultants for training and implementation of outcome and impact assessment to strengthen the profile of the project work;

- c. encourage and nurture greater coherence in the ecumenical movement by requiring a plan for involving member churches in the programmatic work; and
- d. require that an IT strategy be prepared with the programme leadership, within 2014, to include a cost-benefit analysis for video-conferencing; a feasibility study for an IT platform for participative project work and exchange between member churches, ecumenical partners and the WCC; and use of social media.

*APPROVED by consensus*

## **2. Four-year financial plan**

In March 2013, executive committee approved the proposal that a strategic programme plan be developed for the four-year period 2014 to 2017 on the basis of clear indicators and milestones. The AFC considers that a strategic programme plan requires to be developed with reference to realistic financial parameters. With reference to the financial scenarios reviewed, the AFC determined that the most realistic projection presents total programme income of CHF 20 million in 2014, and CHF 18.9 million in 2017, still offering considerable potential for focused initiatives and project work, particularly if new working methods are implemented.

In preparing such a financial strategic plan, consideration should be given to the following:

- a consultation with the principal programme funding partners to discern their medium-term preferences and potential commitments;
- the setting of a staffing budget for 2014 corresponding with the level of income projected for 2017, applying the implied income margin in 2014 to fund short-term contracts and consultancies;
- the medium-term target for infrastructure costs at 15 percent of total programme income, with the target to be attained by 2017;
- a mapping of project work conducted by ACT Alliance, LWF and other related organizations to identify complementarities, and also potential for synergy in consortium initiatives;
- the development of an action plan for the steps required to implement the financial strategy, particularly with regard to the prioritization of projects.

The AFC supports the income development strategy, and the target milestones which are included for fund-raising initiatives. The financial strategy should be adapted when the goals in the income development are met.

The AFC **recommends** that:

- a. with reference to the assembly mandate, central committee approve a categorization of the WCC's focused work identifying elements which are indispensable, those which are considered important, and those which are desirable to be applied as a reference point for the development of budgets; and
- b. central committee approve a financial strategy for the four-year period 2014 to 2017, developed under the above guidelines, and reviewed by executive committee in February 2014.

*APPROVED by consensus*

### **3. Membership contributions**

Membership contributions are the principal source of unrestricted income necessary for the funding of the work of the general secretariat, governance, communication and for the support of certain important programme work.

In 2012, membership contributions totalled CHF 4.3 million, compared to CHF 6.6 million in 2006. Following a campaign and the involvement of the fund-raising advisory group, 255 (74 percent) member churches paid their membership contribution in 2012, representing a significant demonstration of solidarity and commitment compared to the total of 177 (51 percent) member churches which contributed in 2007. The AFC expressed serious concern at the number of member churches not contributing or contributing less than the minimum required, being every second member church. The AFC expressed its gratitude to those member churches which continue to increase or maintain their contributions, but was also concerned at the decline in total value of contributions, and discussed the reasons.

Improved financial participation should follow if the council coordinates its way of working within the membership.

The AFC reviewed a report on the development of the membership scheme and campaign. The current scheme, implemented in 2003, is not well adapted to the diversity of the member churches and their contexts. Adjusting the existing scheme to factor in the human development index (HDI) to a calculation of a number of cents per declared church member did not result in a viable new structure for a scheme, since the same flaws remained. The proposal was to base a new approach to the campaign on the level of contribution made by each member church in 2012, then evaluating with each member church their possibility to contribute further, setting some annual targets for growth to be defined.

The AFC discussed the proposal that an annual increase in membership contributions of 2 percent to 5 percent be included in the plan and found that in general this expectation would not be easily received. However, the AFC notes that further discussions are required on this subject.

The requirement to take into account executive committee's decision of March 2013 that the member churches should contribute annually to the assembly fund from 2014 was discussed. The AFC notes that regardless of whether specific contributions are received or not, the funding of the assembly should be planned for in the annual budgets of the WCC.

The AFC emphasized that despite its flaws, the current plan includes values of fairness, transparency, and objectivity, and was concerned that the new approach include these same values. The AFC noted that the level of contribution in 2012 be the base point for the new approach.

The AFC welcomed the amendment to Rule VI in the constitution and rules in which the responsibility of member churches to "assist in assuring the financial stability of the World Council of Churches" is included.

The AFC **recommends** that:

- a. the revised approach to membership contributions be further developed to ensure incorporation of the values of fairness, transparency, and objectivity;
- b. there be a focus on strengthening the relationships with the member churches;
- c. a strategy be developed on how to actively involve those churches which do not contribute or are identified as possibly paying less than they could; and
- d. the new membership contributions plan be launched by executive committee in 2014.

*APPROVED by consensus*

#### **4. Income development strategy**

The AFC reviewed the draft "Income Development Strategy 2014–2017," which included sections addressing financial stewardship by member churches, collaboration with specialised ministries, the development of income from new funding partners and fund-raising for the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

The AFC supports the income development strategy, confirming that the approach proposed can result in improved financial stability for the council. The strategy introduces the responsibility of programme executives and leadership to raise funds for projects. In addition, a new WCC communication strategy is to be introduced after the assembly, defining effective approaches for the use of social media. The AFC supports the integration of these factors in the income development strategy. In discussion of the document, the AFC raised the following observations:

- When considering the introduction of new projects and activities to be funded by new partners, care will be required to ensure that the strategic programme plan is respected, focus remaining with projects fulfilling the WCC's unique role, and that new funding partners are suitable partners for the work.
- The initiative to raise funds through working in a consortium with related organizations was encouraged, given that this step had the potential to

create synergies between partners, putting contributions income, perhaps funded by the same funding partners, to even greater effect.

- Retired members may be effective participants in fund-raising efforts.
- The council has not traditionally focused on fundraising from individuals. Recognizing the limitations of staff time, it may nonetheless be possible to raise new funds through both a broad-based approach (e.g., further developing the “WCC Friends” and communicating in a strategic way with these friends) and a targeted approach involving soliciting major donations from specific individuals.
- The council could consider contact and collaboration with companies with corporate social responsibility programmes, which may make contributions or offer other support.
- Concerning Bossey, the council should include a target date earlier than 2017 for the increase in income from self-payers at seminars and courses.

The AFC **recommends** that:

- a. a policy be developed and adopted in 2014 by the central committee defining the criteria for introducing new projects within the WCC’s strategic four-year programme plan, to apply in any case, but particularly where such new projects are to be funded principally by new funding partners;
- b. a policy be developed and adopted in 2014 by the central committee defining the screening process required for the acceptance of new funding partners with reference to the ethical criteria in the council’s *Ethical investment guidelines* and the *Principles of ethical business conduct*;
- c. the income development strategy include milestones for both programme contributions’ development, and as measures for the engagement and effectiveness of leadership and programme executives in fund-raising activities; and
- d. the income development strategy be presented for approval at the first central committee.

*APPROVED by consensus*

## **5. Assembly**

The AFC deeply appreciates the opportunities for development of the fellowship which the 10th Assembly has offered, and the renewed experience of identifying together the hopes and challenges for the council for the new cycle of work. The committee noted that the assembly costs to the WCC from 2010 to 2013 are forecast to close at CHF 6.53 million, quite apart from the direct costs of churches. The AFC also deeply appreciates the substantial contribution-in-kind received from the Korean churches covering the costs of the venue, ground transportation, the weekend programme and local planning and administrative costs.

In planning a future assembly, consideration must be given to developing a new structure for the assembly, including reduction of its length, with a focus on enhancing content and reducing costs. An opportunity to eat together as a fellowship at lunchtimes or in the evening might be included to foster dialogue. Accommodation with local families might be considered as an alternative to hotels. The AFC **recommends** that:

- a. central committee revise the style and format for the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly taking account of the observations concerning length and available budget;
- b. an assembly fund be constituted from 2014 with a target to be set by central committee;
- c. the assembly fund profile be included in the four-year financial strategy;
- d. a report on compliance with the assembly subsidy policy be presented to central committee; and
- e. the central committee conduct a comprehensive review of the subsidy policy for the assembly, governing bodies and commissions. The revised policy should include transparency in the criteria by which a church is deemed to require a full or partial subsidy and a mechanism for its implementation.

*APPROVED by consensus*

## **6. Ecumenical Institute and Bossey guest house and conference centre**

The total costs of the Ecumenical Institute in 2012 were CHF 2.1 million. In 2012 programme contributions and other income covered almost all costs. It had been planned in 2011 on the opening of the new conference centre that an annual surplus would be generated from that facility to be credited to the work of the Institute. In 2012 and based on forecast 2013, deficits of CHF 0.5 million have been and will be incurred by those activities. On the basis of a study by an external consultant in October 2012, who confirmed that the site has the potential to generate a net surplus, an action plan has been developed, with one significant step being the recruitment of a sales and business manager in May 2013.

AFC members observed that the costs of academic courses and seminars are relatively high. The AFC noted that the tariffs and scholarship policy for the academic courses needed review in order to enhance participation and the global profile of the student body.

The AFC **recommends** that:

- a. an integrated strategy be developed for the use of the “Chateau de Bossey” which respects the original purposes of the Ecumenical Institute, to be reviewed in draft by executive committee in February 2014 and finalized for approval by central committee at its first meeting; and
- b. financial targets for the guest house and conference centre be included in the four-year financial strategy, with a target to reach at least break-even in

2015, in order to generate an annual surplus in favour of the Ecumenical Institute.

*APPROVED by consensus*

## **7. Report of the audit committee**

The AFC received the report of the audit committee which confirmed for the period 2006 to 2012 that “there have been no matters of contention concerning the annual statements under review, nor material issues raised concerning financial controls.”

The five-year mandate of the auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), comes to an end in 2013 and an offer for tender will be required in 2014 for the appointment of WCC’s auditors for the period 2014 to 2018.

The AFC recognized with appreciation the voluntary commitment of the independent professionals who have served on the audit committee alongside executive committee members during the period under review.

## **8. Status report on the pension fund and the pension fund committee**

The AFC reviewed a brief report summarizing actions taken since the transfer of the assets and obligations of the WCC Retirement Fund (now in liquidation) to an independent collective pension fund institution. The report described the monitoring conducted by the WCC steering committee, the formation of the new pension fund committee and work in progress.

The AFC questioned the level of liability and risk remaining for WCC with regard to pensions after payment of the extraordinary contribution of CHF 24 million. It was confirmed that following the change of plan, financial responsibility is limited to the annual contributions due under that pension plan.

## **9. Other policies and issues from the report of the finance committee of the 9th Assembly**

The AFC received a report on actions taken on the recommendations of the 9th Assembly concerning finance. Actions had been taken to address all recommendations, except for the following matters which require further attention:

- a policy defining the status of “non-active member”<sup>3</sup> had been introduced by central committee in 2006 following the recommendation of the assembly. The policy is not applied consistently and its value and purpose require to be reconsidered.
- it had been recommended that staff policy be developed setting standards to address the cases of staff in offices outside Switzerland. Such a staff policy

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3. The 2006 central committee accepted by unanimous consensus the recommendation that “churches which have not paid membership contributions for three consecutive years nor have had any communication with the WCC during three years be declared non-active as recommended by the Assembly” (Minutes of WCC central committee, 30 August-6 September 2006, p. 37).

has not yet been prepared. About 20-25 staff in seven locations are concerned, with either local contracts or Geneva consultancy contracts.

The AFC **recommends** that:

- a. the central committee revise the “non-active member” policy; and
- b. the review of staff regulations currently in progress be extended to include the policy for staff in offices outside Switzerland, to be completed early in 2014.

*APPROVED by consensus*



# **ACTION ON PUBLIC ISSUES**



## PUBLIC ISSUES STATEMENTS

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### 1. Statement on the Politicization of Religion and Rights of Religious Minorities

As Christians, we confess the dignity accorded to all human beings by God the creator. This forms the basis for a Christian understanding of human rights. We consider freedom of religion a foundational and distinctive human right of particular importance. We want to acknowledge with gratefulness that in many contexts the importance of religious freedom as expressed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is acknowledged and safeguarded as a right for all to experience.

The World Council of Churches (WCC), from its inception, has consistently expressed its concern regarding the freedom of religion. The WCC through its Commission of the churches on international affairs (CCIA) engages member churches through various initiatives in addressing specific situations of freedom of religion and human rights. However, the WCC has never dealt with the issue of the right to religious freedom in isolation. The 1st WCC Assembly in 1948 stated its conviction regarding “freedom of religion as an essential element in good international order” and also affirmed that in “pleading for this freedom, Christians do not ask for any privilege to be granted to Christians that is denied to others.” The 10th Assembly meeting in Busan during the year of the 1700th Anniversary of the issuance of the Edict of Milan granting tolerance to Christians and all religions reiterates its commitment to religious freedom. The WCC has upheld these principles during the past decades of its struggle for religious freedom and human rights.

Over the years, the WCC has adopted different statements addressing questions related to freedom of religion and human rights as well as responses to specific situations of denial of the right to religious freedom. In recent years the WCC has been concerned about the alarming trend of growing instances of hatred, intolerance, and discrimination based on religion or belief in different parts of the world where religious minorities have been forced to live in vulnerable circumstances. There have been a number of instances reported in recent years from different parts of the world of a rise in the denial of religious freedom to religious minorities. It is in this context that the WCC has taken several initiatives during the past three years specifically to address problems related to the rights of religious minorities.

#### **Freedom of religion: An inherent human right**

Respect for freedom of religion should be treated as an inherent human right and political virtue which is a fundamental prerequisite for the democratic and peaceful progress of human society. Freedom of religion cannot be enjoyed without equality

and justice. There can be no real freedom without equality and there can be no equality without the potential inclusion and participation of all citizens in any society. An adequate Christian understanding of human rights emphasizes freedom, equality and participation as embodiments of human rights. Freedom of religion is based on the intrinsic dignity of a human being, who is endowed by God with reason and free will. The cardinal principle of right to religious freedom, besides being a natural human right and a civil right, is rooted in biblical teaching and a theological emphasis on human dignity. We reiterate our affirmation that all human beings are created in the image of God, and Jesus Christ is the one in whom true humanity is perfectly realized. The presence of the image of God in each human person and in the whole of humanity affirms the essentially relational character of human nature and emphasizes human dignity. Widespread and grievous violations of this freedom affect the stability, security and development of any society and severely impact upon the daily lives of individuals, families and communities and the well-being of the society. It is therefore essential first to affirm that all people are endowed with inherent dignity. This is not only because human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), but Christians make the further assertion of this universal and inherent value of all from a trinitarian perspective.

The WCC has always recognized the significance of international human rights regimes and standards relating to the freedom of religion and belief. During the work of the United Nations while drafting the UDHR of 1948, the CCIA took an active role in formulating Article 18 of the UDHR, which articulates, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." It contains normative core values which constitute the minimum standard that should be protected: inner freedom, external freedom including the propagation of one's religion, freedom from compulsion or coercion, freedom from discrimination, respect of the rights of parents and guardians and the right of the child to religious self-determination, as well as corporate freedom and legal status of religious bodies. This includes the right of conscientious objection as well as reasonable accommodation of employees' belief by employers.

This commitment was subsequently affirmed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of 1966. This was further expanded in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, of 1981. These rights also extend to those who do not profess a religion as their thought and conscience enjoy the same freedom. It is our firm conviction based on our theological underpinnings that human rights do not constitute a goal in themselves for protecting the interests or rights of only certain groups, but we see that human rights show us the direction in which society should develop toward peace with justice. They are a vehicle enabling the life of everybody to acquire fuller and richer quality. It is in relation to life that all aspects of human rights must be

assessed and in this context the rights to freedom of religion and freedom of expression by individuals must be realized in every society.

We have reiterated the principles and values of freedom of religion and the duty of states and governing authorities to respect, protect and promote the freedom of religion or belief, in all its dimensions, for all individuals under their jurisdiction or control without regard to their religion or belief. It is with these convictions that the WCC emphasizes the need to strengthen the existing protection mechanisms and devise effective safeguards against violations of national and international law relating to religious freedom. We are of the opinion that there should be concerted and coordinated efforts on the part of religious, civil society and state actors in order to protect the right to freedom of religion. In the current context, the fear is quite real that religious minorities may be further suppressed in certain countries by a rising wave of religious extremism. The rights of minority religious communities to live in peace and harmony amidst their neighbours belonging to majority religious communities is vital not only for the people belonging to faith minority groups but also for overall stability and democratic governance, especially in countries that are liberated from past elements of authoritarianism.

Rights of religious minorities in all contexts should be rooted in a democratic principle that majority and minority are to be treated as equal beneficiaries of the state, and that dignity and human rights of all people be respected and valued. Governments, religious communities, national and international human rights institutions and civil society organizations should play different roles in order to protect the rights of religious minorities and promote religious tolerance, especially when politicization of religion intensifies religious hatred and violates rights of religious minorities. Violations of freedom of religion or belief against persons belonging to religious minorities, whether perpetrated by states or non-state actors, need to be combated, be they in forms of disinformation, discrimination or persecution. Individual and communitarian rights of people belonging to all religious minorities should be respected. This is what the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief pointed out in his recent report, saying that, in keeping with the principle of normative universalism, “the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities cannot be confined to the members of certain predefined groups. Instead, they should be open to all persons who live *de facto* in the situation of a minority and are in need of special protection to facilitate a free and non-discriminatory development of their individual and communitarian identities.” The rights of persons belonging to all minority religious groups therefore should be treated as fundamental human rights.

### **Politicization of religion and religionization of politics**

The contemporary world is witnessing a trend of politicization of religion. As religion occupies a more and more critical space in politics and public life, the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics have become pervasive phenomena in many parts of the world. The trend is that politicization of religion adds to political polarization, and hence the religious divide manifests itself in almost every corner of

the globe. When religion becomes a dividing force in the social and political arena, in its more intensive and durable form, it can contribute to a religious chasm. Choosing political allies with more radical positions allows a religion better to defend its interests in the political arena so as to win a privileged position and favours from the government. In recent history we have witnessed the multifaceted trend of politicization of religion, but the flip side of this phenomenon, especially the impact of the religionization of politics, has not always been identified.

The religionization of politics, which destroys communal harmony and intensifies religious hatred, is simultaneously being instrumentalized for political purposes. The religionization of politics in this context ultimately leads politics to pander to the interests of religious groups and leaders who would like to influence and control political power. Religion is being used as an effective instrument in several countries during national elections in order to create specific vote banks, especially prior to elections. The problems, by and large, persist in the assumption that parties or movements are only successful if they invoke religious identity during elections. The strategies used by certain religious groups are to devise and carve roles for themselves in politics by way of invoking religious sentiments against other, minority religious groups. At the same time they position themselves as true champions of their religion which is under threat from minority religions and their foreign affiliation. When religion is used for political gain, relations between different religious communities are increasingly impacted by changes in local and national politics which have been largely reconfigured along particular religious lines. This trend also adds reasons for people of different religions to think in narrow terms of religious sentiments and consider that their religion is more prominent than others. The rising trend of the politicization of religion thus causes serious problems not only for Christians, but it affects different religious communities who live as minorities in many areas of the world. The politicization of religion and the rise of religious extremism in many societies mutually reinforce each other. It not only poses a threat to freedom of religion of the adherents to minority religions, but the survival of religious minorities is affected.

### **Rise in religious intolerance and discrimination against religious minorities**

We have observed with great concern several cases where the exercise of freedom of expression has been used as an excuse to violate freedom of religion for religious minorities. While the concept of “minority” is mostly a social and political construct, on a practical level these socio-political constructs can and do have a devastating effect on the group of people who lack the strength of numbers amid a “majority” religious community, although this situation is not restricted to religion alone.

While we recognize and indeed welcome the many positive steps taken toward a fuller respect for freedom of religion or belief in numerous contexts, we are also cognizant of the many serious violations of these rights which are of grave concern, such as the violation of the fundamental right to religious freedom by governments, individuals and majority religious groups. The continuing practices which limit the

right to change one's religious status can result in the separation of families, material and social deprivation or even criminal prosecution, imprisonment, or the death penalty. Anti-conversion provisions, which are open to misuse and contribute to negative public perceptions of, and violence toward, religious minority communities, as found in the legislation of a number of countries should be reconsidered.

We note with concern the tendency in recent years that the discussion on freedom of religion and belief has focused more on issues related to defamation of religion; this negates the spirit of the universally accepted norm of an individual's right to freedom of religion and belief. Moving to an approach that protects religions rather than people only undermines the basic human rights principles and international human rights standards as well as giving way to abuse laws in local contexts that persecute religious minorities. The provisions introduced in criminal procedures to misuse blasphemy laws in several countries are clear examples of this. Article 20 of the ICCPR lays down principles that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law." However, the trend is that "incitement to hatred" has been increasing, even in countries that have acceded to the ICCPR. Hence it has become a major concern that incidents which concern article 20 of the ICCPR are not being prosecuted and punished. At the same time a report of the Office of the United Nation's High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2012, "Rabat Plan of Action on the Prohibition of Advocacy of National, Racial or Religious Hatred," observed that:

the members of minorities are de facto persecuted, with a chilling effect on others, through the abuse of vague domestic legislation, jurisprudence and policies. This dichotomy of (1) no prosecution of "real" incitement cases and (2) persecution of minorities under the guise of domestic incitement laws seems to be pervasive. Anti-incitement laws in countries across the world may be qualified as heterogeneous, at times excessively narrow or vague; jurisprudence on incitement to hatred has been scarce and ad hoc; and while several states have adopted related policies, most of them too general and not systematically followed up, lacking focus and deprived of proper impact-assessments.

We see the danger that, as majority religious groups use their religion as a tool to influence the political system and political rulers, religious minorities living in the same societies are persecuted and discriminated against. Often their strategies lead to violence which threatens the very existence of the religious minorities. The alarming trend we note is that there are cases where a conflict in one place, with its local causes and character, is misinterpreted and instrumentalized as part of a conflict in another place, especially when extremist groups use religion to legitimize violence. However, it is heartening to note that the key role religion plays in conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peace-building is often evident and recognized. In several countries in the world, people who identify themselves as being politically and economically excluded often feel that dominant religious groups that wield power apply

discriminatory standards in dealing with minority rights issues such as freedom of religion. Although the reasons for the problems have their roots in socio-economic factors, social fragmentation, and communal hatred, such actions may increase even in traditionally tolerant societies when religion is mobilized for political purposes. The prevailing situations, especially in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, prove that religions can impact and influence the geo-political contexts of countries and regions. The new developments in the context of the “Arab Spring” witnessed a number of groups and parties in the Middle East and North Africa ascend into dominant positions in the name of majority religion. In countries in the Middle East region such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, religious minorities live in a situation of fear and insecurity.

There are instances that restrict or limit religious freedom of minority religious communities which have been observed in recent years in the United States, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in certain European countries. In practice, the discrimination and intolerance against religious groups in these countries are evident in discourses and regulations introduced by governments that question or ban religious dress, symbols and traditions.

Religious minorities in various countries face discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. Discriminatory legislation and state practices provide a legitimizing framework for wider discrimination in society. Deprivation, social exclusion, and violence toward minorities are the inevitable results of systematic discrimination which threatens the social fabric of society. Numerous religious communities encounter problems in obtaining the legal status necessary to function, as well as in acquiring, building or maintaining properties such as places of worship and burial grounds or facilities. In particular, religious minorities in several countries are denied their rights in this regard. Discrimination against religious minorities is also seriously affecting their ability to access their rights to education, health care, and employment and to participate in the political process. In many instances, educational syllabuses and text books portray negatively or under-represent the role of religious minority groups in society. This also serves to affirm existing societal prejudices and promote intolerance and discrimination. Obligatory religious education of children of minority religious backgrounds in the majority faith violates the rights of parents and children. Existing legislations and state practices with regard to mixed marriages in certain countries negatively impact the right to religious freedom in bringing up children of such marriages of people who belong to religious minorities.

The failure of states to protect religious minorities from violence threatens the survival of communities and is in violation of states’ international obligations. The culture of impunity created by failures to investigate and prosecute crimes against members of minority communities in a number of countries is evident in the politicization of religion. For example, the inaction of government and failure to implement a proper law enforcement mechanism results in gradual erosion of a long-nurtured tradition of religious tolerance. This encourages a culture of politicization of religion that threatens the very existence of religious minorities. In a country like Pakistan,

the politicization of religion by military dictatorships, introduced through changes in the penal code, systematized the misuse of the Blasphemy Law, which is now a major instrument used by the religious extremists against the religious minorities in the country. The politicization of religion in the Indian context constantly threatens communal harmony and peaceful co-existence of people belonging to different faiths. Constitutional guarantees of the right to religious freedom face continual threat and minority religious groups are often under attack from religious extremist groups who try to mobilize religions and religious sentiments for political gains. The politicization of religion and the religionization of politics in different African nations intensify religious hatred, communal violence, and political instability. Religious extremist groups of majority religions as well as political parties are responsible for creating such situations. Northern Nigeria, Tanzania, Sudan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, among others, provide examples of continuing violence in the name of religion and the spread of religious hatred. In certain other situations, ruling governments are using religion to wield the support of majority religions with an aim to create communal vote banks and political power. Often, such actions lead to conflicts and violence, especially when governments deny religious freedom as well as when social and government restrictions on religion or a minority group are imposed. The following are some examples of cases where the WCC has been involved: In Malaysia, where objections to using the word “Allah” by Christians have exacerbated religious hatred and tension over the years, pro-government political parties have been responsible for intensifying the controversy. The Methodist Church of Fiji has been denied its freedom to exist as a religious body and has been continuously denied permission to convene its national assembly in the country due to interference by the government. The government of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has categorically denied the Orthodox Archdiocese of Ochrid the right to registration as a religious body. The interference of the government in the country’s legal system resulted in the illegal detention of the head of the church. Kosovo faced in recent times systematic destruction of over 100 Orthodox Christian shrines while leading to historical revisionism with regard to their cultural patrimony, threatening the very existence of the Serbian Orthodox faithful. In Albania Orthodox churches are not always adequately protected, with regard to recent incidents of extremely violent actions that have occurred during times of living worship.

The 10th Assembly of the WCC held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, therefore:

- A. *Reaffirms* the commitment of the WCC to the principle of the universal right of all persons to freedom of religion or belief;
- B. *Reiterates* our conviction that the Church is an important element in promoting and defending religious freedom and rights of religious minorities, based on its historic values and ethos of upholding human dignity and the human rights of every individual;

- C. *Recognizes* and reiterates that the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief should be the concern and work of the churches and the ecumenical community as part of their prophetic witness;
- D. *Calls* upon WCC member churches to engage actively in defending the rights of all religious minorities and their right to freedom of religion or belief, especially in opposing legislation or regulations that would limit religious freedom in contravention of international human rights standards;
- E. *Recognizes* the positive steps being taken by various states toward a fuller respect for freedom of religion or belief in a number of contexts;
- F. *Expresses* grave concern on the increasing trend of politicization of religion and religionization of politics as well as the growing trend of terrorism that threaten the social fabric of a society and the peaceful co-existence of religious communities;
- G. *Expresses* grave concern on state interference in the decision-making processes of religious groups, and the imposition of religious law and jurisprudence through state sanctions;
- H. *Calls* upon the ecumenical community around the world to mediate with their respective governments to develop policies of providing effective protection of persons and communities belonging to minority religions against threats or acts of violence from non-state actors;
- I. *Calls* upon governments to strengthen the existing protection mechanisms and enact legislation to protect the rights of members of religious minorities and introduce effective measures and apply universal normative status regarding freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; including the right to change religion and to manifest your belief;
- J. *Urges* states to repeal criminal law provisions that misuse blasphemy laws, apostasy laws or anti-conversion laws to punish deviation from majority religions or to discriminate against religious minorities and violate their right to freedom of religion or belief;
- K. *Urges* states to implement anti-discrimination legislation to protect persons and communities belonging to different religions, especially to end discrimination and persecution for their faith or belief;
- L. *Commends* the UN for its advocacy of freedom of religion or belief and *calls* on the UN, especially the Human Rights Council, to give the same priority to freedom of religion or belief as is given to other fundamental human rights and to resist any attempts to weaken the principle of freedom of religion or belief;
- M. *Calls* on the UN to strengthen the office of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; and

- N. *Calls* for concerted and coordinated efforts on the part of religious, civil society, and state actors in order to address violations of rights of religious minorities and their freedom of religion and belief.

## **2. Statement on the Human Rights of Stateless People**

Nationality is a fundamental human right, which is affirmed in article 15 of the UDHR and is a foundation of identity, human dignity, and security. Nationality is an essential prerequisite to the enjoyment and protection of the full range of human rights.

Currently, there are more than ten million people around the world who live without any nationality: they are stateless people. Most of these stateless people have not left their country of origin.

Statelessness can occur for a number of reasons. Some relate to technical aspects of nationality laws and procedures for acquisition of documents which prove nationality. More often, however, the cause is discrimination. Minorities are often arbitrarily excluded from citizenship due to discrimination on racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds.

This kind of discrimination in the nationality law has rendered stateless more than 800,000 Rohingya, an ethnic Muslim minority living in Rakhine State, despite their ties to Myanmar that date back centuries. Over the past 30 years, the Rohingya have been subjected to widespread discrimination including the denial of citizenship, denial of freedom of movement, and denial of the right to marry. They have suffered forced labour and detention. As a result of discriminatory conditions inside the country, more than 200,000 Rohingya have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh, though fewer than 30,000 are officially recognized as refugees. Most unregistered Rohingya live in unofficial makeshift refugee settlements, where shelters are falling apart, and malnutrition is widespread. In spite of these conditions, aid agencies have sometimes been denied permission to assist unregistered refugees. Without residence or work permits, unregistered refugees live in fear of detention and forced repatriation to Myanmar. The lack of documentation also makes Rohingya women and girls particularly vulnerable to physical attacks, sexual violence, and trafficking. Rohingya populations are also found in the Gulf countries and many have made the perilous sea journey to other countries in Asia—or have died trying.

The Bhutanese in Nepal—also called Lhotshampas—are another example of stateless people. These descendants of Nepalese migrants who settled in Southern Bhutan in the late 1890's were originally recruited by the government of Bhutan to clear the jungles of southern states. In 1958, the Bhutanese government passed the Citizenship Act, which granted the Lhotshampas Bhutanese citizenship. However, in the 1980s, Bhutanese authorities adopted a series of policies known as “Bhutanisation,” aimed at unifying the country under the Buddhist Druk culture, religion, and language. After

the 1988 census the Lhotshampas were re-classified as “illegal immigrants” and the government established new requirements for citizenship that deprived many ethnic Nepalese of their nationality. By 1991, many tens of thousands had fled to India, with most going on to Nepal. Over half of the 110,000 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal have now been resettled to third countries while the remainders continue to live in camps in wait of a solution.

In Côte D’Ivoire, hundreds of thousands of people descended from migrant workers brought to the country in colonial times have been denied Ivorian citizenship because they are deemed “foreigners” and not eligible for nationality. This discriminatory treatment was a root cause of the continual conflict there. The government is now taking steps to resolve the situation of many of the people affected.

The 2004 Dominican government General Law on Migration put an end to the automatic right of Dominican nationality to be granted to Dominicans of Haitian descent. The law was applied retroactively, turning all children born of Haitian immigrant parents, who had arrived in the country 50 or 60 years earlier, stateless. Amendments to the constitution of the Dominican Republic in 2010 established new standards of citizenship along the same lines. Recently, on 23 September 2013, the constitutional court of the Dominican Republic declared that the children of undocumented Haitian migrants in the country, even those who were born on Dominican soil decades ago, are no longer entitled to citizenship. This situation is now affecting the status of tens of thousands of people in the Dominican Republic who have never been part of any other nationality. This ruling denies Dominican nationality to anyone born after 1929 who does not have at least one parent of Dominican blood.

In addition to being often stigmatized and discriminated against, a great number of Roma people scattered in different European countries are stateless. Their lack of nationality, and therefore of identity documents and of administrative existence, hinders their access to basic human rights such as education and health services, registration of birth or marriage, etc., and increases their vulnerability to continued marginalization.

With regard to the Russian-speaking population in Latvia, although a Russian minority existed on the territory before Soviet times, approximately half a million former Soviet citizens who found themselves on Latvian territory were rendered stateless by being deemed “non-citizens” by Latvia’s 1994 citizenship law.

Statelessness can also arise when citizenship laws do not treat women and men equally. Over 25 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East continue to prevent mothers from passing their nationality on to their children on an equal basis as fathers. Where fathers are stateless, absent, or unable to confer their nationality to their children, these children are left stateless.

State succession is also a cause of widespread statelessness where individuals fail to secure citizenship in successor states. For example, when the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia broke up, large numbers of people throughout Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Balkans became stateless. Migrants and marginalized ethnic and social groups were most affected.

Stateless people are present in every region of the world. Many migrants become stateless after they have left their countries and find themselves stranded—without nationality—through no fault of their own. Several thousand people from Myanmar, the former Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia and many other places are stateless in the United States. The fact that they are stateless and thus unable to travel to and reside legally in another state does not give rise to protection under US immigration law. It is therefore almost impossible for people without nationality to obtain residency or citizenship in the United States unless they are recognized as refugees. Many end up in immigration detention where they can remain for prolonged periods—even though there is no hope of them travelling to any other country.

Similar hardships caused by statelessness are faced by a range of populations around the world, including children of Haitian descent in the Caribbean, or people known as “bidoon” who did not acquire nationality when Kuwait achieved independence. This being said, some countries, such as Zimbabwe, have made efforts and have tried to address the issue of statelessness through legislation change.

Stateless people live in a situation of legal limbo. Without protection from any state, stateless people are often exploited and—particularly women and children—may be more vulnerable to smuggling, harassment, and violence. Since they are not recognized and registered as citizens of any country, stateless people are also denied concomitant rights such as the right to reside legally, to register the birth of a child, to receive education and medical care and to access formal employment and housing. Stateless people are also often not allowed to own property, to open a bank account, or to get married legally. Stateless people face constant travel restrictions as well as social exclusion. Due to the lack of citizenship in any country, our stateless sisters and brothers face numerous daily hardships—needless separation from their families, and fundamental uncertainty about what their lives might hold or the ability to pursue their hopes and ambitions.

As a result, not only are stateless persons denied their rights and faced with living in limbo, but their situation is rarely recognized by mainstream society. The feeling of being invisible leads to a debilitating sense of desperation. As a result of their plight, many stateless persons are forced to cross international borders and become refugees.

Because states have the sovereign right to determine the procedures and conditions for acquisition and loss of citizenship, statelessness and disputed nationality can ultimately only be resolved by governments. State determinations on citizenship must, however, conform to general principles of international law enshrined in the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which set out basic rights such as the right of every child to acquire a nationality and the principle of non-discrimination. The 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons establishes standards of protection for stateless persons. Together, these treaties establish the international framework for the protection of stateless people and for the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

The church's engagement with human rights has a long theological tradition. The underlying theological assumption of active concern for those who are suffering is the belief that all people created by God constitute an inextricable unity. Solidarity and compassion are virtues that all Christians are called to practice, regardless of their possessions, as signs of their Christian discipleship. Compassion and care for one another and acknowledging the image of God in all humanity are at the core of our Christian identity and an expression of Christian discipleship. Humanitarian conduct is an essential part of the gospel. We are instructed in Micah 6:8 to "do justice." And the commandment of love, the greatest commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, is to love God and to love one another.

The word of God cautions the Hebrew people: "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22:21). Jesus through the Nazareth Manifesto in Luke 4:18-19 also gives expression to God's reign of justice, liberation, and well-being of all. His parable of the judgment of sheep and goats also draws pointed attention to being in solidarity with people who are discriminated, marginalized and suffering (which would include stateless people and minority groups): "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me" (Matt. 25:35-36).

These biblical and theological bases motivate us as churches and Christian bodies to express our Christian commitment and to be engaged in our prophetic witness to speak for the rights of those who are voiceless and marginalized as stateless people. The Christian family, therefore, ought to take up the plight of stateless persons as this struggle reflects our cardinal universal principles and values: that a human being has the right to life, liberty and security; the right to education, equal protection under the law, and to be free from slavery and torture; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and to freedom of opinion and expression; and the right to a nationality. Stateless persons are denied all of these rights and are unrecognized by any nation.

Expressing deep concern on the plight of stateless people around the world, the 10th Assembly of the WCC meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, therefore:

- A. *Affirms* that the right to life, security, and basic human rights are fundamental universal principles and values that every human being is entitled to;
- B. *Recognizes* that the denial of nationality is a major violation of human rights that affects people in every region;
- C. *Encourages* churches to raise awareness of the situation of stateless people living in their countries and around the world and to advocate for the protection of their human rights;

- D. *Calls* on churches to engage in dialogue with states to adopt policies that confer nationality and provide proper documentation to stateless people;
- E. *Acknowledges* positive changes in nationality laws made by some governments, and encourages other states to take similar actions;
- F. *Urges* churches, civil society, human rights entities, as well as United Nations agencies and regional organizations, to collaborate in order to properly and effectively reduce and eradicate statelessness;
- G. *Prays* for stateless people around the world, so that their voices are heard and their plight understood; and
- H. *Requests* the WCC to take up the issue of stateless people as one of its programmatic priorities until the forthcoming WCC 11th Assembly.

### 3. Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula

*For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. (Eph. 2:14)*

We, the delegates of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) meeting in Busan from 30 October to 8 November 2013, bear witness to the suffering of the men, women and children of the one Korean people through decades of violence caused by war and hostility that have left them divided into two nations.

Division, war, and suffering contradict God's will for the fullness of life. Therefore, we call upon the churches of the world, and upon those holding social, economic, political and governmental power, to pursue a lasting and sustainable peace with justice that will reunify and reconcile the people of Korea.

The central theme of our assembly is a simple prayer, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." It is our prayer that the vision and dream of all Koreans, their common aspiration for healing, reconciliation, peace and reunification may be fulfilled.

#### **New challenges to reconciliation and healing**

The present situation in the Korean peninsula prompts us to a renewed engagement in efforts to work for peace and justice throughout the region and for the reunification of a divided Korea. Despite many positive developments in the world during the post-Cold War era, the North East Asia region still contains the world's heaviest concentration of military and security threats. Four of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, who are also recognized nuclear weapons states, have military bases in this region. There are even signs of an emerging "new Cold War," as the geopolitical map of North East Asia shows new shifts in the balance of power. New tensions are arising with the intensified political, economic and military presence of

the United States in the region; and three other “power poles,” China, Japan and Russia, also are active in this region.

Changing geopolitical dynamics among the four major powers could stifle the aspirations and hopes of the Korean people for peace and reunification. Increasing arms build-ups in several Asian countries make this one of the fastest-growing regions for military spending in the world, including nuclear arms and high-tech weapons of mass destruction.

The peace we envision is a condition of justice embracing the whole of life and restoring harmony among neighbours. We are convinced that it is the right time to begin a new process toward a comprehensive peace treaty that will replace the 1953 Armistice Agreement and secure just and peaceful relations among nations in the region while normalizing relations between North and South, and facilitating Korean reunification.

As delegates representing 345 churches and some 560 million Christians around the world, we are prepared to renew our support for peace and reconciliation, and to encourage and assist the national and international leaders whose efforts are indispensable.

### **Our faith commitment to peace with justice**

As a global body of believers in Jesus Christ, we confess our sins in having given in to the powers and principalities of the world in their wars and military conflicts full of hate and enmity, armed with nuclear arsenals and weapons of mass destruction targeting humanity and the whole of God’s creation. Also we lament our failure to adequately acknowledge the Korean people’s long suffering, caused by external powers fighting for colonial expansion and military hegemony.

We hereby join the Christians in Korea in their confession of faith in Jesus Christ, who came to this world as our peace (Eph. 2:13-19); who suffered, died upon the cross, was buried, and rose again to reconcile humanity to God, to overcome divisions and conflicts, and to liberate all people and make them one (Acts 10:36-40); who, as our Messiah, will bring about a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21-22).

With this confession, we join in firm commitment with the Christians of Korea, both North and South, especially in Korean churches’ faithful actions to work toward peace, healing, reconciliation, and reunification of their people and their land.

### **Faith and hope in action**

Ever since its 1st Assembly in 1948 and the Korean conflict that followed, the WCC has felt the pain of Korea’s division and to some degree has found it reflected in tensions among members and partners. We are well aware of the challenges and obstacles on the pathways to peace. We recognize the painstaking effort of Christians in Korea, both North and South, and recall the continued and sustained efforts of the WCC and its ecumenical partners in accompanying the people of the Korean peninsula.

In the midst of an extremely difficult situation, the Korean churches’ ecumenical witnesses and prayers have been pivotal. Such faith in action led them to new

horizons of hope with prayers. The Tozanso consultation, organized by the WCC Commission of the churches on international affairs (CCIA) in 1984, was held at a time when it was difficult for the Korean churches to openly discuss the issue of Korean reunification. The Tozanso consultation was the first attempt by the WCC to bring Christians from a wide spectrum of member churches worldwide together with Christians from Korea, to look at some of the issues raised by the division of the Korean peninsula. The WCC initiative helped to address the issues of the division of Korea and Korean reunification as means to strengthen the Korean people's struggle for peace with justice.

In 1988 the decisive Declaration of Korean Churches for National Unification of the Korean People and Peace in the Korean Peninsula set 1995 as the Year of National Jubilee for the churches in North and South, and affirmed the five principles of (1) self-reliant unification, (2) peaceful unification, (3) national unity through trust and cooperation, (4) democratic unification by people's participation, and (5) North-South relations based on a humanitarian approach.

We recognize the value of ecumenical engagement in advocacy initiated by the WCC addressing peace and reconciliation as well as denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Those initiatives provide avenues for North and South Korean church leaders as well as church and ecumenical partners from Asia, North America, and Europe to come together within the setting of a common platform. The Ecumenical Forum on Peace, Reconciliation, and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, coordinated and facilitated by the WCC/CCIA with the participation of churches in Asia, Europe, and North America in addition to the churches in South Korea and the Korean Christian Federation in North Korea has provided additional and frequent opportunities for mutual dialogue and interactions on peace and reunification. Although progress has been made at various levels, there is still a long way to go to accomplish the mission of peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula.

We recall that major WCC events in the past have been venues for historic meetings of church leaders of North and South, starting with the Moscow central committee meeting in 1989 and including WCC assemblies in Canberra (1991), Harare (1998), and Porto Alegre (2006). Various other international consultations held subsequently with the participation of churches from North and South Korea lent further authenticity to ecumenical advocacy on peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula. The international consultation organized by the CCIA in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the Tozanso process in October 2009 helped to provide new impetus for working toward the goal of witnessing for peace, justice, and unity, and it encouraged dialogue and participation for all who have been affected by the tragedy of division. In addition, visits to North Korea by the WCC general secretaries in 1999, 2009 and 2013 have lent credence to the commitment of the WCC and its member churches in supporting the churches in North and South Korea seeking peace and reunification.

We are conscious of the fact that the prevailing geo-political context of the Korean peninsula warrants that the ecumenical movement develops new ways of

accompaniment and engagement. As the WCC has been accompanying the churches and people in the Korean peninsula in their struggle to achieve peace with justice and reconciliation, and reunification of the divided Korean peninsula, it is imperative that every effort continue to be taken in providing common platforms for both North and South Korean churches to meet together, with a particular focus on younger generations.

We also discern signs of hope and a framework that would enable the Korean peninsula to embrace peace with justice and fullness of life. On the Korean peninsula, shared human security and human rights must become a greater priority than divisive, competitive, and militarized national security. The threat of nuclear weapons has long been recognized, and now serious questions are raised concerning all nuclear energy. With many in the world, the churches share the conviction that a world without nuclear weapons is both necessary and possible. Our shared hope for a nuclear-free world would not only be for the people of the Korean peninsula but for all people in the world, renouncing nuclear weapons and working together for their complete dismantling, leading other regions and showing the way. Hope and possibilities such as these motivate the churches to make greater efforts to work for peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula in response to God's promise to lead us toward justice and peace as hallmarks of God's reign. "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Eph. 2:14).

### **The way toward healing, reconciliation, and peace**

During the 60 long years since combat ceased in the Korean War, through the Armistice Agreement of July 27, 1953, the two Koreas, the US, and China have nevertheless continued in a technical state of war with defensive military build-ups, including the stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The current situation proves the urgent need for a peace treaty to replace the 1953 Armistice Agreement.

Fresh and decisive action is required to enact a peace treaty. A process toward a peace treaty is crucial for the Korean peninsula and in the entire North East Asia region, as well as contributing to the process of building a nuclear weapon-free peace zone in this region. The peace treaty must be discussed and agreed by the parties to the Armistice Agreement and the countries related to the Armistice Agreement. We believe that a declaration of the end of the Korean War shared by stakeholders will accelerate the agreement's conclusion and contribute to mutual trust and confidence-building among them. Participants in the Six-Party Talks (SPT) previously promised to hold peace forums in order to convert the prevailing armistice system into a concrete peace system. We strongly urge South and North Korea, the US, and China to ensure the keeping of this promise. At the same time, the US and Japan should stop imposing blockades and sanctions against the North, while China should act in its facilitator's role in order to resume dialogues, including the SPT.

Taking into consideration the continuing humanitarian crisis in the North, we urge the international community to initiate humanitarian support to the people

while cooperating with the North in projects for its sustainable development. It has become clear that economic sanctions serve primarily as instruments for punishing the people of a country, especially the poor in any society. Therefore, we question the ethical principles as well as the strategic effectiveness of economic sanctions imposed on North Korea. It is in this context that we raise concern about the UN Security Council Resolutions against North Korea. Opportunities for economic exchanges between the North and other countries in the world must be resumed. This will open new avenues for effective economic collaboration. Above all, this will facilitate active engagement through dialogue to normalize relations. The UN should also initiate efforts for peace-building across the Korean peninsula and lift the existing economic and financial sanctions.

### **The way forward—Recommendations**

We believe that peace-building in a globalized and interdependent world is a shared responsibility of sovereign states, the United Nations, and civil society groups, including the churches. Affirming the Christian calling to be peacemakers and responding to the faith witness of the Korean churches, which have proclaimed the Jubilee among the Korean people, the member churches of the WCC, gathered in Busan, Republic of Korea for the WCC 10th Assembly from 30 October to 8 November 2013, together affirm the following:

1. Realizing that as we pray with and for the peoples of Korea the churches and ecumenical partners have a specific responsibility toward working together for peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula with renewed energy, in close partnership and transparent relationships with each other and with the churches and Christians in both North and South of Korea, the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Korean Christian Federation. We, therefore, commit ourselves to:
  - a. *Embody* the spirit of the Tozanso process including courage, caring, communication, confession, conciliation, and commitment;
  - b. *Pray* with the peoples and churches of Korea by designating the Sunday before 15 August as the “Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula”;
  - c. *Provide* a wide ecumenical platform for young generations both in North and South Korea to meet together in order to envision a desirable future of the Korean peninsula;
  - d. *Organize* solidarity visits to churches in North and South Korea that can serve as peacemakers and bridge builders. A first visit can be organized as early as 2014, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the historic Tozanso International Consultation; and

e. *Continue* accompanying the churches of Korea by providing common platforms for churches and Christians from both North and South to meet together in order to advance toward reconciliation and peace. We recognize that a historically symbolic moment for such initiatives could be found in 2015, the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Korea.

2. Furthermore, we commit ourselves to take actions to:

- a. *Work* with our governments to mandate the United Nations Security Council to initiate new efforts for peace-building across the Korean Peninsula and to lift the existing economic and financial sanctions imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- b. *Embark* upon a universal campaign for a Peace Treaty to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953, bringing an end to the state of war;
- c. *Call* upon all foreign powers in the region to participate in a creative process for building peace on the Korean peninsula by halting all military exercises on the Korean peninsula, by ceasing their interventions and reducing military expenditures;
- d. *Ensure* the complete, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons and power plants in North East Asia, by taking steps to establish a nuclear-free world and simultaneously joining the emerging international consensus for a humanitarian ban on nuclear weapons in all regions of the world, so that life is no longer threatened by nuclear dangers anywhere on earth;
- e. *Urge* the governments in both North and South Korea to restore human community with justice and human dignity by overcoming injustice and confrontation, and to heal human community by urgently addressing the humanitarian issue of separated families, by establishing a sustainable process allowing confirmation of the whereabouts of family members and free exchanges of letters and visits, and by offering the support of international agencies where necessary; and
- f. *Work* with the governments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Republic of Korea in providing international cooperation to maintain a truly Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and transform it into a zone of peace.

## 4. Statement on the Way of Just Peace

Just peace is a journey into God's purpose for humanity and all creation. It is rooted in the self-understanding of the churches, the hope of spiritual transformation and the call to seek justice and peace for all. It is a journey that invites us all to testify with our lives.

Those who seek a just peace seek the common good. On the way of just peace, different disciplines find common ground, contending worldviews see complementary courses of action, and one faith stands in principled solidarity with another.

Social justice confronts privilege, economic justice confronts wealth, ecological justice confronts consumption, and political justice confronts power itself. Mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation become shared public experiences. The spirit, vocation, and process of peace are transformed.

As “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace” (ECJP) stated, to take the path of just peace is to enter a collective, dynamic yet grounded process of freeing human beings from fear and want, of overcoming enmity, discrimination and oppression, and of establishing conditions for just relationships that privilege the experience of the most vulnerable and respect the integrity of creation.

### **Together we believe**

Together we believe in God, the Creator of all life. Therefore we acknowledge that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and we seek to be good stewards of creation. In wondrously creating a world with more than enough natural riches to support countless generations of human beings and other living things, God makes manifest a vision for all people to live in the fullness of life and with dignity, regardless of class, gender, religion, race, or ethnicity.

Together we believe in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Therefore we acknowledge that humankind is reconciled with God, by grace, and we strive to live reconciled with one another. The life and teachings, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, point toward the peaceable kingdom of God. Despite persecution and suffering, Jesus remains steadfast in his way of humility and active non-violence, even unto death. His life of commitment to justice leads to the cross, an instrument of torture and execution. With the resurrection of Jesus, God confirms that such steadfast love, such obedience, such trust, leads to life. By God’s grace we too are enabled to take the way of the cross, be disciples and bear the costs.

Together, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the giver and sustainer of all life. Therefore we acknowledge the sanctifying presence of God in all of life, strive to protect life and to heal broken lives.

Based on the teaching of St Paul (Rom. 8:22), “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now,” and as explained by St Peter (2 Pet. 3:13) “But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home,” we can state that: the Holy Spirit assures us that the triune God will perfect and consummate all of creation at the end of time. In this we recognize justice and peace as both promise and present—a hope for the future and a gift here and now.

Together, we believe that the Church is called to unity. Therefore we acknowledge that churches are to be just and peaceful communities reconciled with other churches. Grounded in the peace of God and empowered through the reconciling work of Christ, we can be “agents of reconciliation and peace with justice in homes,

churches and societies as well as in political, social and economic structures at the global level” (8th WCC Assembly, Harare, 1998).

### **Together we call**

The way of just peace provides a basic frame of reference for coherent ecumenical reflection, spirituality, engagement, and active peacemaking.

#### *For just peace in the community—so that all may live free from fear*

Many communities are divided by economic class, race, colour, caste, gender, and religion. Violence, intimidation, abuse, and exploitation thrive in the shadows of division and inequality. Domestic violence is a hidden tragedy in societies everywhere.

To build peace in our communities, we must break the culture of silence about violence in the home, parish and society. Where religious groups are divided along with society, we must join with other faiths to teach and advocate for tolerance, non-violence, and mutual respect, as Christian and Muslim leaders are doing in Nigeria with ecumenical support.

Local churches working for peace reinforce international church advocacy for peace, and vice versa. Ecumenical advocacy at the International Criminal Court is one reason why at least some war criminals today face justice in a court of law, a historic advance in the rule of law.

Churches can help build cultures of peace by learning to prevent and transform conflicts. In this way they may empower people on the margins of society, enable both women and men to be peacemakers, support non-violent movements for justice and human rights, support those who are persecuted for their refusal to bear arms for reasons of conscience, as well as offer support to those who have suffered in armed conflicts, and give peace education its rightful place in churches and schools.

#### *For just peace with the earth—so that life is sustained*

Human beings are to respect, protect and care for nature. Yet our excessive consumption of fossil fuels and other resources is doing great violence to people and the planet. Climate change, only one consequence of human lifestyles and national policies, poses a global threat to justice and peace.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) was among the first to warn about the dangers of climate change. Now, after 20 years of advocacy, churches have helped bring ecological justice into the international debate on climate change. Concern for eco-justice is evident in the attention given to victims of climate change in international negotiations and at the United Nations Human Rights Council. The 10th WCC Assembly meeting in Busan strongly reiterated the ecumenical commitment to climate justice.

“Eco-congregations” and “green churches” are signs of hope. The churches and parishes of many countries around the world are linking faith and ecology—studying environmental issues, monitoring carbon output, and joining in WCC-led advocacy for governments to cut emissions of green-house gases. Some governments, such

as the Seoul city government, are collaborating with local churches to help Korea's sprawling capital conserve energy and recycle waste. In the wake of the Fukushima disaster, Christians and Buddhists already united against nuclear weapons are now united against nuclear power plants as well. They are raising a prophetic call for a nuclear-free world.

To care for God's precious gift of creation, the reform of lifestyles and the pursuit of ecological justice are key elements of just peace. Concerted ecumenical advocacy is needed so that governments, businesses and consumers protect the environment and preserve it for future generations.

*For just peace in the marketplace—so that all may live with dignity*

There is something profoundly wrong when the wealth of the world's three richest individuals is greater than the gross domestic product of the world's 48 poorest countries. Such deep socio-economic injustice raises serious questions about economic growth that ignores social and environmental responsibility. Such disparities pose fundamental challenges to justice, social cohesion, and the public good within what has become a global human community.

Churches should be strongly committed to economic justice. The WCC and its member churches join with peoples' movements and partners in civil society to challenge poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. The churches' analysis of wealth and poverty has led to an ecumenical emphasis on sufficiency and to a strong critique of greed. Some churches have now developed indicators to test how well individuals, corporations and nations are sharing God's abundant gifts.

Establishing "economies of life" is one key to building peace in the marketplace. Economies of life promote careful use of resources, sustainable production and consumption, redistributive growth, workers' rights, fair taxes, fair trade, and the universal provision of clean water, clean air, and other common goods. Regulatory structures must reconnect finance not only to economic production but also to human need and ecological sustainability. Responding equitably to the different dimensions of fair labour is increasingly important in our times.

*For just peace among the nations—so that human lives are protected*

History has seen great advances in the rule of law and other protections for humanity. Yet the present situation of the human race is in at least two ways quite unprecedented. Now as never before humanity is in a position to destroy much of the planet environmentally. A small number of decision makers are in a position to annihilate whole populations with nuclear weapons. Radical threats of ecocide and genocide demand of us an equally radical commitment to peace.

There is great potential for peace making in the nature of who we are. Churches together in the WCC are well-placed for collective action in a world where the major threats to peace can only be resolved transnationally.

On that basis, a diverse network of member churches and related ministries advocated with success for the first global arms trade treaty. The witness of churches in

war-torn communities was heard in high places. Churches from different regions pressed governments from those regions to agree on a treaty to regulate the international arms trade for the first time. A similar approach is now building inter-regional support to make nuclear weapons illegal, a goal consistent with the Vancouver assembly's indictment of the production, deployment and use of nuclear weapons as "a crime against humanity," and its challenge that "the nuclear weapons issue is, in its import and threat to humanity, a question of Christian discipline and of a faithfulness to the Gospel."

For peace among the nations, churches must work together to strengthen international human rights and humanitarian law, promote multilateral negotiations to resolve conflicts, hold governments responsible for ensuring treaty protections, help eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, and press for reallocation of unnecessary military budgets to civilian needs. We must join other communities of faith and people of good will to reduce national military capacities and delegitimize the institution of war.

### **Together we commit**

Peace constitutes a pattern of life that reflects human participation in God's love for all creation.

Together we commit to share God's love for the world by seeking peace and protecting life. We commit to transforming how we think about peace, how we pray for peace, how we teach peace to young and old and deepen our theological reflections on the promise and practice of peace.

Together we commit to building cultures of peace in families, the church, and society. We commit to mobilize the gifts within our fellowship to raise our collective voice for peace across many countries.

Together we commit to protect human dignity, practice justice in our families and communities, transform conflicts without violence, and ban all weapons of mass destruction.

We understand that the protection of life is a collective human obligation today as never before in history. We commit to turn away from planet-changing patterns of consumption as the engine of economic growth, and refuse to accept that any nation's security requires the capacity to annihilate other nations or to strike alleged enemies at will anywhere on earth.

We reaffirm "An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace," which states "While life in God's hands is irrepressible, peace does not yet reign. The principalities and powers, though not sovereign, still enjoy their victories, and we will be restless and broken until peace prevails. Peacemakers will speak against and speak for, tear down and build up, lament and celebrate, grieve and rejoice. Until our longing joins our belonging in the consummation of all things in God, the work of peace will continue as the flickering of sure grace."

## Together we recommend that the World Council of Churches

- A. *Undertake*, in cooperation with member churches and specialized ministries, critical analysis of the “Responsibility to Prevent, React and Rebuild” and its relationship to just peace, and its misuse to justify armed interventions;
- B. *Lead and accompany* ecumenical just peace ministries and networks in the practice of violence prevention, non-violence as a way of life, collective advocacy, and the advancement of international norms, treaties and law;
- C. *Encourage* its member churches to engage in cooperative interfaith programmes in order to address conflicts in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies;
- D. *Request* its member churches and partners to develop communication strategies that advocate for justice and peace, proclaim the hope of transformation, and speak truth to power;
- E. *Facilitate* a programme of reflection and environmental action in member churches and related networks to build sustainable communities and bring about collective reductions in carbon emissions and energy use; promote the use of alternate, renewable, and clean energy;
- F. *Develop* guidelines within the concept of “economies of life” for the right sharing of resources and the prevention of structural violence, establishing useable indicators and benchmarks; and
- G. *Convene* churches and related organizations to work for human rights protections through international treaty bodies and the United Nations Human Rights Council; to work for the elimination of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, cooperating with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons; and to seek ratification of the arms trade treaty by their respective governments and monitor its implementation.
- H. *Reiterate* its existing policy (2009 study) and reaffirm its support for the human right of conscientious objection to military service for religious, moral, or ethical reasons, as churches have an obligation to support those who are in prison because they object to military service.

## We recommend that governments

- A. *Adopt* by 2015 and begin implementing binding regulations with targets for lowering greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the recommendations in the 2013 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;
- B. *Negotiate and establish* a ban on the production, deployment, transfer, and use of nuclear weapons in accordance with international humanitarian law;
- C. *Ensure* that all remaining stocks of chemical weapons are destroyed under the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention and cluster munitions are

destroyed under the Convention of Cluster Munitions at the earliest possible date;

D. *Declare* their support for a pre-emptive ban on drones and other robotic weapons systems that will select and strike targets without human intervention when operating in fully autonomous mode;

E. *Reallocate* national military budgets to humanitarian and developmental needs, conflict prevention, and civilian peace-building initiatives amongst others; and

F. *Ratify and implement* the arms trade treaty (ATT) by 2014 and on a voluntary basis include weapon types not covered by the ATT.

*God of life, guide our feet into the way of just peace!*

## **5. Minute on the Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been facing a series of crises and armed conflicts in recent decades. The country has been passing through a situation of fragile peace, lack of security, poverty, and underdevelopment. With regard to security and humanitarian issues, the situation in the eastern part of the country remains a matter of serious concern, despite the 23 March 2009 peace agreement between the armed groups and the government. As a result, innocent people are constantly under attack. Killings, assassinations, widespread rape, looting, destruction of houses, and setting villages on fire are common occurrences. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) indicates that more than 2,600,000 people have been displaced due to the armed conflict in North Kivu Province which has been going on since April 2012 between the government troops and M23 rebels. We welcome the recent initiative of the M23 rebels to give up their arms in order to facilitate the peace process in the DRC.

Although the Addis Ababa Framework Agreement gave the presidency of the republic an opportunity to organize the administration of the country properly, the real problem remains the continuing lack of a national consensus. With the support of the international community, the first democratic elections were organized in December 2006; these were intended to provide the country with legally established institutions. The presidential and legislative elections were held in November 2011 amidst political chaos and uncertainties. Subsequently, the political situation became highly polarized and all state institutions in the country were weakened. The country is facing a legitimacy crisis today as a result of absence of transparency in the electoral process of 2011. This situation came about due to a dearth of preparation in terms of civic and electoral education among the voters.

The member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Church of Christ in Congo (CCC) organized a consultation on 15-16 August 2013, reflecting on current challenges facing the people of the DRC. As the political stability and security in the country continue to be in peril, it was decided that churches in the DRC should initiate a process of peace-building in the country with the assistance of the WCC. They believe that in order to prepare the Congolese people properly for the coming elections, churches in the DRC should take a leading role in preparing the people to understand the electoral process and democratic governance. This needs to be done prior to the local elections scheduled for 2014 and the general elections to be held in 2016.

The Congolese churches have requested that the WCC general secretary initiate an ecumenical process of peace-building in the DRC. In order to facilitate a peace process in the DRC, the Congolese churches have requested the support of the WCC and suggested that the WCC should play an important role similar to the one it has played in the past, in similar contexts in Africa.

Considering the urgent need of peace building in the conflict-affected DRC, the 10th Assembly of the WCC meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, therefore:

- A. *Acknowledges* and stands in solidarity with all the victims of this protracted conflict;
- B. *Requests* that the general secretary explore possibilities to initiate a programme to support the peace building initiatives of the Congolese churches through dialogue and mediation;
- C. *Encourages* the CCIA to organize continued consultations to evolve a strategic framework for global advocacy on peace and reconciliation in the DRC, in collaboration with member churches, regional and sub-regional organizations, church related and civil society groups;
- D. *Supports* churches in the DRC in their efforts for civic education on electoral processes and democratic governance;
- E. *Urges* the WCC to be an accompanying presence during the forthcoming elections in 2014 and 2016 through monitoring and observation; and
- F. *Calls* on WCC member churches to keep the people of the DRC in their prayers, and to pray for an end to the conflict and lasting peace in the country.

*God of life,*

*We pray for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

*Be with them in their struggle.*

*Bring an end to the conflict.*

*God of life, lead us all to justice and peace. Amen.*

## 6. Statement on Affirming the Christian Presence and Witness in the Middle East

*Jesus said, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)*

*"Take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid."*

### Christians still keep hope

The profound political changes that have swept the Middle East and North Africa since early 2011, following popular uprisings, have carried with them hopes for political systems based on human rights and the rule of law. The seeds of an irreversible transformation have been sown. However, in several countries the efforts toward political transformation have been rejected, which has undermined the demands for peaceful reform. Quite rapidly, large areas of the Middle East and North Africa have succumbed to violent sectarian, ethnic, and tribal animosities, and the reform movement has been distracted by political radicalism and religious intolerance. This has led to a widespread humanitarian catastrophe. In this critical situation, the worldwide Christian community is enjoined to manifest its solidarity with all peoples in the Middle East who are struggling for just and peaceful societies, and, at the same time, affirms that the continued presence of Christians in this region is indispensable for plural and diverse communities, and commits itself to accompany all in the building of democratic civil societies.

The circumstances throughout the Middle East present the churches with a new *kairos* moment as in the "*Kairos* Palestine: A Moment of Truth" document of 2009, when Palestinian Christians joined in a common reading of the situation, and challenged the churches to prophetic action.

In May 2013, in Lebanon, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) convened an ecumenical gathering of Christian leaders and representatives from churches and organizations in the region and from 34 other countries, to explore ways to strengthen the Christian presence and witness. They observed that:

This is a time of crisis with special intensity here in the Middle East, but affects all of humankind. The elements of this crisis include an intensification of religious tribalism, increasing fundamentalism in many of the world's religions, dispersion of the influence of radicalized Islamist groups, widespread violence and insecurity, a deficit in democratic legitimacy and credibility, poverty and lack of opportunity, especially for women and youth, Christian emigration from the region, and a generalized sense of abandonment following decades of unhelpful intervention. Christians, Muslims and Jews all experience the destructive effects of these trends.

## Vibrant Christian Churches

Christians are rooted in the soil of the Middle East. From the manger of Bethlehem of Judea, the refuge of Egypt, the waters of the Jordan River and Sea of Galilee, and the road to the Cross in Jerusalem itself, Christians are as rooted in the soil of the Middle East as are olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane and cedars in Lebanon. It was on the road to Damascus that Paul was converted (Acts 9) and in Antioch that the disciples first were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Despite the ups and downs of harsh and testing historical as well as present circumstances, Christians have continued and will continue to live together with those with whom this soil is shared. The Christians living in this region are an essential part of their lands, contributing to the rich traditions, plural societies and cultural diversity. In the 19th century, Christians in the region struggled to change their status to one where they would be equal with all other citizens in their societies. Christians today are aware that the guarantee of their free, engaged and meaningful existence in these societies is not by protection, nor a bequest given by political powers, but is acquired by forthright participation as citizens, and by persistent patience in encouraging mentalities and structures that enhance the free participation of all. Today, they do not see themselves as minorities. Rather, they view themselves as equal citizens contributing to the well-being of their nations. Their mission and witness in society are evident in multiple spheres of public life such as in culture, politics, education, health services, women and youth development, child protection, social services, relief, and development. Numerical proportion historically has not limited the contribution and role of Christians in the Middle East.

Christians in the region have contributed to the idea that plurality is a gift of God, and that respect for diversity in plural societies is an affirmation that all peoples are created equal in the eyes of God.

In addition to the diversity of religions, diversity also exists within the rich and varied traditions among Christian churches in the Middle East. This has prompted forms of ecumenism that are particular to the region. Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Anglican churches, have together participated in the MECC as an instrument for joint witness and *diakonia*. But ecumenism in the region goes beyond this institutional context to reach the everyday lives of Christians.

2.3 Christian spirituality and witness are revealed by the vibrant monastic communities and parishes, theological faculties, hospitals, schools and humanitarian services. These are essential parts of the creative and continuous witness of the Christians and the churches, offering spiritual resources to all people in the region.

## Christians in the Regional Turmoil Are Called to Work for Justice and Peace

Yet, despite the centuries-long reality of plural communities in the Middle East, some have exploited the current turmoil to advance political radicalism and religious intolerance. Hundreds of thousands of people in the region have been killed, maimed,

imprisoned and displaced. The numbers of suffering, internally displaced people, and refugees into neighbouring countries of the Middle East and beyond have created a crushing humanitarian catastrophe.

In Syria, violence and turmoil have ravaged the lives of millions of people. Abductions of civilians, including clergy, and torture, massacres and extrajudicial killings have become a daily reality. Entire communities, families and individuals, have been forced to flee their homes, to find refuge in other areas of their country, in neighbouring countries and in distant places. Humanitarian relief is unable to meet the desperate needs of dislocated people. The movement of refugees from Syria to neighbouring countries has stressed those in flight and those offering hospitality. The political turmoil within Syria threatens the unity and stability of Syria and its neighbours. This massive movement of population carries serious implications for those who remain and hope for reconciled communities once peace and stability are restored.

In Egypt, political turmoil has provided a pretext to instrumentalize and politicize religion, where again, the Christian population and places of worship have been particularly targeted. The level of violence and tensions has increased considerably and reached an alarming level. It is hoped that the young generation that struggled for freedom, human dignity and equal rights to prevail in Egypt, will continue this long struggle and most importantly, will continue this struggle in an inclusive way with all those who hold these values.

In Iraq, even after the withdrawal of foreign occupying forces, people are still not enjoying human security and dignity. Acts of violence all over the country have reached alarming levels and are affecting the entire population, including the already vulnerable Christian community. Genuine democracy, equal citizenship, the rule of law, reconciliation, and impartial development are still out of reach. Under such conditions, Iraq is at great risk of being emptied of its human resources. It is hoped that Iraqis will work together, healing wounds and building a better future for themselves. It is also essential that dialogue between Christians and Muslims continues in order to promote justice and peace in the country.

Christians in Iran have been living in the country for centuries, contributing to its rich culture and civilization. They constitute an integral part of the society and, along with the rest of Iranians, are suffering from the international sanctions that have a harmful impact on them much more than on the government. Lifting the sanctions will encourage the present government to persevere with the undertaken reforms and to abide by its international obligations under the terms of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

This tension and violence around the Middle East and in North Africa is taking place in the midst of the on-going and longstanding Palestine/Israel conflict in the region, and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories since 1967. This remains a central issue and a major source of concern for all who are working for peace with justice and for reconciliation. It also remains the core problem that is fuelling the logic underlying many of the conflicts in the region, putting at risk international relations and peace. Resolving once and for all the conflict between the Israelis

and Palestinians in accordance with United Nations resolutions and international law, addressing all final status issues, including the right of return, can only help in resolving the other conflicts in the region.

In Jerusalem today Palestinians, Christians and Muslims alike face discriminatory Israeli policies. "Jerusalem is the foundation of our vision and our entire life. She is the city to which God gave a particular importance in the history of humanity" (*Kairos* Palestine document). Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike look to Jerusalem as a place God blessed with the significance of his presence. As a city of two nations revered by the faithful of three religions, it needs to be the place that models for the world the possibilities of living together peacefully in mutual respect.

### **The Gospel Imperative for Costly Ecumenical Solidarity**

Christians reject on principle governance that diminishes and disenfranchises the people's right to express opinion or to fully participate in the formulation of public policy. The popular uprisings and subsequent unrest across the region, however chaotic and dangerous, nonetheless reflect the urgency and capacity of people to claim their right to good governance and protection under the law. These historic events demonstrate the public's repudiation of insecurity in the region, including the manipulation of religious teachings, economic inequalities, failing political alliances, and the imbalances of power that threaten all the people of the region and humankind. Despite the current turmoil in the region, the long commitment of the church must remain steadfast to sow seeds of peace and justice and build on the progress that is being made.

The WCC has consistently expressed its deep concern for all peoples in this region, where the history of our faith was born and grew. More particularly, the Christian presence and witness in the land of the Bible have been of vital significance for the ecumenical family, from its inception up until the present day. The central committee, meeting in Geneva in February 2011, grounded theologically the importance of this presence by stating that

the WCC has viewed the Middle East as a region of special interest, being the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Our living faith has its roots in this land, and is nourished and nurtured by the unbroken witness of the local churches who have their own roots from the apostolic times. Without this Christian presence, the conviviality among peoples from different faiths, cultures, civilizations, which is a sign of God's love for all humanity, will be endangered. In addition, its extinction will be a sign of failure of the ecumenical family to express the Gospel imperative for costly solidarity.

It also expressed the council's principles that guide its policy concerning the Middle East region:

“God’s justice and love for all of creation, the fundamental rights of all people, respect for human dignity, solidarity with the needy, and dialogue with people of other faiths” . . . “political developments in the region point to signs of hope for democratic changes, respect for human rights and the rule of law in several countries.”

In this context the WCC reaffirms the principle expressed by the central committee in 2011 that “peace and reconciliation must be conditioned by justice.” The future of the churches and the Christians in these countries is and must be a concern for the entire ecumenical family.

The 10th Assembly of the WCC, meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea from 30 October to 8 November 2013, therefore:

- A. *Reaffirms* that Christians in the Middle East hold in a unique, tangible way the legacy of the apostolic era, preserving in the footsteps of our Lord the living church. Support of these Christian communities, spiritually and materially, preserves the continuity of the Christian presence for the benefit of all Christians and all people from the region and worldwide;
- B. *Regards* current events in various countries in the Middle East as an irreversible process leading to changes in systems of governance, and hopes for a future of justice, peace and stability, cultural diversity, and plural communities;
- C. *Prays* that Christians, especially in the region, maintain their hope even in these extremely critical situations and that these events will be an opportunity for positive change in these societies and for participatory democracy;
- D. *Encourages* all peoples in the region, including Christians, to initiate actions questioning the abuse of authority and rejecting corruption, as they continue to support one another in the common effort to build democratic civil societies, based on the rule of law, social justice, and respect for human rights, including religious freedom and freedom of conscience;
- E. *Supports* Christians in the region in their commitment to engage in constructive dialogue with other religious and ethnic communities so that their countries’ manifold heritage is protected and secured;
- F. *Recommends* that the WCC reinforces programmes that enhance regional and international advocacy in partnership with Christians in the Middle East and North Africa;
- G. *Calls* upon the WCC member churches to express costly solidarity with Christians and churches in the region as well as with all peoples who are struggling for justice and peace, through:

- i. *Supporting* efforts to reinvigorate the MECC, in order to enable it to continue being the voice of Middle East Christians to the world, and the trusted source of basic objective information;
  - ii. *Accompanying* Christians in the Middle East as they elaborate a common vision for the region;
  - iii. *Facilitating* responsible pilgrimage to the region;
  - iv. *Organizing* solidarity visits in consultation with churches in the region, remaining in active fellowship with them;
  - v. *Disseminating* educational materials that accurately reflect the geography and history of the Middle East and the realities of sister churches located there;
  - vi. *Developing* exchange programmes to facilitate the sharing of experiences, information on interfaith relations and dialogue among the churches and religions; and
  - vii. *Supporting* local churches in empowering women, young people, and children to use and develop their capacities and providing opportunities for their meaningful participation in the churches and society;
- H. *Urges* church-related agencies and all ecumenical partners to strengthen their efforts to address the humanitarian needs in Syria and in all neighbouring countries, focusing humanitarian efforts upon (1) assisting Syrians to remain in their home communities, (2) easing the burden of internally displaced persons and the communities hosting them, (3) easing the burden of host families and communities in neighbouring countries, (4) assisting refugees with the goal and intention to facilitate their resettlement into their own communities and homes in Syria, and *insists* that all governments allow for full humanitarian access, seeking peaceful ways to exert pressure to stop actions of violence;
- I. *Urges* the United Nations, and the international community, especially countries that are in positions of political power, to create policies that promote and reach comprehensive peace with justice for all peoples of the region, and to expand every effort to support cessation of violence and military activities;
- J. *Reiterates* its call to the United Nations to secure and protect the integrity of the holy sites of all religions in Jerusalem and make them accessible to all as well as to end the occupation of East Jerusalem by Israel;
- K. *Demands* the immediate release of the two Archbishops from Aleppo, His Eminence Boulos (Yazigi) Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo and Alexandria and His Eminence Mor Youhanna Gregorios (Ibrahim) Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo in Syria, kidnapped on 22 April 2013 as they were on a humanitarian mission to negotiate the release of two kidnapped priests from Aleppo, as well as Father Paolo Dall'Oglio, kidnapped on 29 July 2013, and all captives and those unjustly imprisoned.

*Great God,  
Hear us as we cry out to you for peace and justice for the peoples and the land itself.  
Grant us homelands where water, land and resources are respected and shared by all.  
Help us share your love with our neighbours and plant the seeds of tolerance in our communities.*

*Comfort us so that our souls are healed from the wounds of wars and conflicts.  
Give us your light that we may walk out of the shadows of death and impunity.  
May your justice truly course through our lands like an unstoppable torrent.  
Teach us to trust in hope that one day soon all may dwell beneath their vines and fig trees in peace and happiness.*

—Opening Prayer, WCC 10th Assembly

## **Minute on the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide**

During the year 1915-16, about 1.5 million Armenians were massacred and thousands more were displaced or deported from the Ottoman Empire in present-day Turkey. The “Armenian Diaspora” today, scattered in different parts of the world, represents the greatest effect of the genocide as more than eight million Armenians now live outside Armenia. Even after almost a century, the Armenian genocide still has serious implications for the Armenian people, as well as the international community. Although most of the survivors of the Armenian genocide have passed away, the Armenian people continue to demand recognition and reparation for the suffering and injustice inflicted upon their ancestors.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has addressed the issue of the Armenian genocide in international fora on several occasions. During the 1979 session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHR), the Commission of the churches on international affairs (CCIA) raised the question of the need for recognition of the Armenian genocide by the UN. The 6th Assembly of the WCC held in Vancouver, recognized the importance of the need to continue to address the effects of the Armenian genocide in appropriate contexts. A minute adopted at the Vancouver assembly stated, “The silence of the world community and deliberate efforts to deny even historical facts have been consistent sources of anguish and growing despair to the Armenian people, the Armenian churches and many others.” We honour the other 600,000 Christians of Aramean, Chaldean, Assyrian, and Greek descent, including Catholics and Protestants, who were also massacred along with their Armenian brothers and sisters. The role of the WCC in “enabling the Armenian churches to speak out and work toward the recognition of the first genocide of the 20th century” was recognized by the Armenian churches over the years.

Prior to the 10th Assembly of the WCC the Armenian churches reminded the WCC general secretary of the historical reality that the 10th Assembly will be held on the threshold of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide in 2015. Requests

have been made by the leaders of the Armenian churches for the WCC to initiate programmes to observe the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide in appropriate ways.

Therefore, the 10th Assembly of the WCC meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, requests the general secretary to:

- A. *Organize* in 2015, around the commemorative 100th anniversary date of 24 April 2015, an international conference in Geneva on the recognition of and reparation for the Armenian genocide with the participation, among others, of WCC member churches, international organizations, jurists, historians, and human rights defenders.;
- B. *Organize* an ecumenical prayer service commemorating the victims of the Armenian genocide at the Cathedral of Geneva in conjunction with the international conference; and
- C. *Invite* member churches of the WCC to pray in memory of the Armenian martyrs around the dates of the international conference and also for recognition of the Armenian genocide.

## Statement on the Current Critical Situation of Abyei in South Sudan

Following a 20-year-old civil war between the North and South of Sudan, since July 2011, Sudan and the newly formed South Sudan have undergone a difficult separation. However, disputes concerning the border demarcation and affiliation of the oil-rich area of Abyei have threatened to drag both states back to war.

The Abyei Area is an oil-rich region criss-crossing the borders of Sudan and South Sudan and is seen as a historical bridge between the two countries. This area of Sudan, about the size of Jamaica, is traditionally a territory of the Ngok Dinka chiefdoms, which the British transferred in 1905 from Bahr-al-Ghazal Province in southern Sudan to Kordofan Province in the North. Initially the struggle associated with this region was about land and pasture claimed by both the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya communities. With the onset of the First Sudanese Civil War (1956–72), these two communities took separate paths, with the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka supporting the north and the southern Anyanya rebels, respectively. Most recently this local dispute exacerbated a wider political conflict between two warring groups that subsequently became Sudan and South Sudan. At the national level, however, the struggle has been about natural resources and the area's strategic location in times of war. Since independence, Sudan has been redrawing its borders to gain access to natural resources and to deprive the South of revenue. The discovery of commercial quantities of oil in Abyei has raised the stakes for control and exploitation.

Several attempts have been undertaken to resolve the Abyei conflicts. The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) brokered the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of 1972, which ended the first Sudanese civil war and included a clause that provided for a referendum allowing Abyei to choose to remain in the North or join the autonomous South. This referendum was never held, leading to tensions and incidents of violence and the establishment of a Dinka unit in the Anyanya II rebellion of 1975. The 1995 Asmara Talks agreed to Abyei's determining whether to join the South or stay in Kordofan. In 2004, Abyei was accorded "special administrative status" by the Protocol on the Resolution of the Abyei Conflict (Abyei Protocol) in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War. In 2005, boundaries were established by the Abyei Borders Commission in yet another attempt to resolve the longstanding dispute. Disputes and violence that followed establishment of these boundaries led to a boundary revision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague in 2009. This revision has since been endorsed by all parties to the dispute. As was the case in the 1972 Agreement, the CPA provided for a referendum that would allow Abyei to choose to remain in the North or join the autonomous South Sudan, a means of permanently resolving the dispute. Considering that the referendum has never been held, the sentiment of the people of this area that they have been let down seems justified.

The difficulties in holding the Abyei referendum have resulted particularly from the failure to implement fully the 2005 CPA, even though the accord was explicit about the time frame and the process of the referendum. Indeed, the Ngok Dinka of Abyei felt much more alienated when South Sudan, alongside whom they had fought against the North, declared independence from Sudan in 2011. Frustrated and tired of waiting, the Ngok Dinka organized and registered voters for their own referendum, held 27 to 29 October 2013. The results showed that 99.9 percent of the voters want to be part of South Sudan. The challenge, however, is that the unilateral Ngok Dinka poll has no legal weight, especially because both Sudan and South Sudan have said they will not recognize the results. This also means the international community will not recognize the results.

The Ngok Dinka community has been compelled to countenance a unilateral referendum because all other options have been closed to them. The Abyei city has been destroyed three times in as many decades. The latest destruction took place on 21 May 2012, when Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) seized Abyei city and the National Congress Party of Sudan (NCP) dissolved the Abyei Administration. The conflict that erupted in the following days and weeks led to the killing of more than thirty civilians and displacement of more than 60,000. In June the UN established the Interim Security Force for Abyei (ISFA), composed of 1,400 Ethiopian troops. The assassination of the Paramount Chief of the Ngok Dinka in June 2013 was carried out in spite of the presence of the UN peace-keeping force. This convinced the Ngok Dinka that protection by the international community is not guaranteed. As a result, they decided on the unilateral referendum as a last resort.

The Abyei issue, more than any other unresolved conflict, constitutes the most likely source of violence between the Dinka and the Misseriya. Such violence would not be limited to those two communities; it may involve the two sovereign states, South Sudan and Sudan in a war between two nations. Should that happen, then all the democratic, political, and economic gains following the independence of South Sudan would be rolled back, with all the adverse implications for regional security.

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, therefore:

- A. *Welcomes* the African Union (AU) statement of 21 October 2013, which expresses the AU's disquiet about Sudan's delay in implementing negotiated agreements and calls on the two countries to resume their discussion on the final status of Abyei;
- B. *Encourages* the AU to expedite the planned visit of its Peace and Security Council to Abyei to finalize the arrangements for the referendum;
- C. *Urges* the governments of South Sudan and Sudan, who are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the decision to have the CPA-agreed referendum for Abyei, to ensure that such is implemented without further delay;
- D. *Commends* South Sudan for acceding to all the provisions in the AU-sponsored Agreement on the Abyei referendum. But without a corresponding assent by Sudan, the implementation is severely hampered; therefore we call on Sudan to accede to the said agreement, so that the CPA-agreed Abyei referendum may be carried expeditiously;
- E. *Urges* the international community, particularly the guarantors of the CPA, to re-engage the issue of Abyei as a matter of moral conscience in ensuring justice for the people of Abyei;
- F. *Urges* the United Nations, the African Union, and the Troika (Norway, UK, and US) to do what is right for the people of Abyei: to urge the government of Sudan to implement the process for the referendum; and
- G. *Recommends* the churches and the international ecumenical community to re-engage the process for Abyei referendum and to give it the necessary moral and material support.

## **Resolution Urging Improved US-Cuba Relations and Lifting of Economic Sanctions**

Longstanding, complex issues of US-Cuba relations, affecting the people of both countries, have drawn the attention of the participants of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Relations between the US and Cuba have been strained by tensions and confrontations since the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The long standing US embargo was reinforced in October 1992 by the Cuban Democracy Act and in 1996 by the Cuban Liberty and Democracy Solidarity Act. These acts prohibited US companies' foreign-based subsidiaries from trading with Cuba, US citizens' travel to Cuba, and foreign remittances to Cuba.

On 21 October 2013, 21 leaders of various Christian denominations in the US addressed a letter to the US president, urging the US to take concrete actions pursuing a path toward improved relations with Cuba. The letter specifically urged the president of the US to initiate direct, high-level dialogue with the Cuban government; to remove Cuba from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism; and to lift all restrictions on people-to-people travel between the US and Cuba. The delegates of the 10th Assembly of the WCC endorse the opinion of the US church leaders and the concerns and recommendations expressed by them.

The delegates of the assembly also noted that the United Nations General Assembly, on 29 October 2013, voted overwhelmingly for the 22 time to condemn the US economic embargo against Cuba. We believe that the economic, commercial, and financial blockade against any country causes enormous pain to its people, especially the poor and vulnerable. In this context, the delegates of the 10th Assembly of the WCC urge the US government to lift the economic sanctions against Cuba and to normalize relations between the US and Cuba.

## **Minute on Indigenous Peoples**

The assembly theme, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace," has guided and enriched discussions during the 10th Assembly, reminding participants repeatedly of the need for increased awareness of the rights and dignity of Indigenous peoples.

The unique rights of Indigenous peoples derive from their cultures, histories, and spiritual traditions; from their political, economic, and social structures; and from their historic rights to specific lands, territories, and resources. Indigenous peoples in the world today are vulnerable in face of situations in which their lives and security are threatened. It is necessary to dismantle oppressive laws and policies of governments, particularly trade agreements and international and national practices that promote resource extraction to the detriment of Indigenous peoples' human rights and sovereignty. Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples. Yet Indigenous peoples in many parts of the world face constant threats to their lives and survival as communities. They also, as individuals, have the right to life, integrity, liberty, and security of person in each context.

The WCC has a longstanding commitment to solidarity with Indigenous peoples and to promoting their concerns, especially the need to respect and uphold their inherent rights and dignity.

While reaffirming the commitment to work on Indigenous peoples' issues, the WCC assembly, meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013:

*Calls* on member churches to

- respect Indigenous peoples' spiritualities and support the aspirations of self-determination of Indigenous communities around the world;
- reflect upon their own histories and seek greater understanding of the plights of Indigenous peoples in different contexts;
- provide assistance to Indigenous peoples' delegations to participate in advocacy efforts at the United Nations;
- support and strengthen the efforts of Indigenous communities working to dismantle oppressive laws and policies that legitimize continued colonial practices on their lands; and
- coordinate communications among the member churches of the WCC and ecumenical actors working for Indigenous peoples' rights.

*Recommends* that the general secretary

- give special attention to Indigenous people's issues during the next programme period of the WCC; and
- maintain the Indigenous Peoples' programme with adequate staff in the WCC's Geneva office, to coordinate, facilitate, and realize its programmatic commitments.

## Minute on Climate Justice

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the water. (Ps. 24: 1-2)*

*Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (Is. 1:16b-17)*

Climate change is today one of the most challenging global threats affecting especially the most vulnerable. The World Council of Churches (WCC) was among the first to warn about the dangers of climate change. Now after 20 years of advocacy, churches have helped bring ecological justice into the international debate on climate.

The WCC governing bodies have developed policy on climate change. Furthermore, the WCC has also presented statements to the high level segment of the Conference of Parties (COPs) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In recent years churches and specialized ministries have increased their advocacy efforts.

Together with Christian churches, interfaith initiatives have also shown how faith communities have reached consensus in addressing the climate change crisis.

Despite being a most crucial issue, climate change has lost priority on the public and political agendas. While there are some encouraging signs, nonetheless climate change negotiations at the international level have not realized the stated goals.

In September 2013, the first part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report was delivered confirming the gravity of climate change and the consequences it already has, among them the rising of sea level, the melting of glaciers and polar ice, the further increase of the strength and frequency of floods, tropical storms, and droughts. The report also evidenced the growing consensus in the scientific community on the human causes of climate change.

The effects of climate change are being experienced now. Churches in countries like Tuvalu, Kiribati, Bangladesh, the Philippines. The UN and other international organizations are already addressing the tragedies associated with climate displaced people.

Victims of climate change are the new face of the poor, the widow and the stranger that are especially loved and cared for by God (Deut. 10:17-18). When creation is threatened in this way, churches are called to speak out and act as an expression of their commitment to life, justice and peace.

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, 30 October—8 November 2013, therefore:

- A. *Reiterates* the concerns of the churches over climate change and its adverse effects on the whole of creation and especially on vulnerable communities in many parts of the world;
- B. *Encourages* member churches to support the role of the WCC in enabling an ecumenical pilgrimage for justice and peace to strengthen links between churches and communities in various parts of the world working together to care for creation and eco-justice;
- C. *Calls* upon churches and ecumenical organizations to insist that the respective governments look beyond national interests in order to be responsible toward God's creation and our common future, and urge them to safeguard and promote the basic human rights of those who are threatened by the effects of climate change and particularly those church representatives present at COP19 in Warsaw, Poland, to urge the Polish COP presidency to increase the ambitions of the Warsaw outputs; and
- D. *Welcomes* the climate change plan of the White House and calls upon the president of the US to reject the building of the Keystone pipeline in the United States of America.

# **GREETINGS TO THE ASSEMBLY**



## MESSAGE FROM THE HOSTING CHURCHES

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### Greeting of the Chairperson of the Korean Host Committee

*Jesus Christ, the Gospel of Hope in a Critical Future*

Mr Moderator, general secretary, delegates from member churches of the WCC, distinguished guests, brothers and sisters in Christ,

I welcome you all in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost on behalf of the Korean Host Committee.

The Korean people have become accustomed to greeting favoured guests by raising their arms above their heads and making a heart, while saying, “*Sarang Hapnida!*”

Why don't we try and greet each other like this together. *Yeoreoboon, Sarang Hapnida!* I love you all!

The Korean churches are grateful to God for his grace, which has allowed us to host this 10th Assembly of the (WCC) in Korea. The Korean church is a younger church with a relatively short history, and so I am very pleased that the WCC has accepted our invitation and has decided to hold its 10th Assembly here in Busan. I know it will be a historic moment.

Korea, and the Korean churches have experienced spectacular growth in a very short period, achieving economic growth as well as political democracy. In addition, the Korean churches have also become the second largest in terms of sending missionaries overseas, following in the tradition the early Antioch church. The Korean churches have also worked hard to fulfill their calling to serve and bear witness to the gospel of life in a suffering society.

However, the Korean peninsula still suffers from more than 60 years of division, and is currently under the threat of nuclear weapons. The Korean peninsula, indeed the entire region of Northeast Asia is currently being reshaped. Military, economic, and cultural conflicts continue to rise in the region. We witness the suffering caused by widespread poverty, and discrimination and numerous forms of oppression. These challenges exist not only in Asia but in every corner of the world. The whole of humanity and creation itself is facing a crisis in all realms never before experienced.

The World Economic Forum, a gathering that brings together academics, politicians, and economists, published “Global Risks 2013,” which brought together the work of 1000 specialists. The contents of this report are very shocking. It states that

humanity and the earth can encounter a critical crisis within the next ten years. It also declares that the results of this failure and the severity of the consequences are impossible to predict.

We are living in the midst of a world that is without hope for the future. The crisis we are facing cannot be resolved through human efforts. We are not able to offer any paths that can lead us out of this crisis.

The theme for this 10th Assembly of the WCC is, I believe, a response to the needs of our world today: “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.” God can and will provide. The crises we face today are because we have forgotten that we live and have our being in God.

“Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven” (Lam. 3:40-41).

Sisters and brothers in Christ, we have received an historic calling from God in this critical hour in human history to gather in Busan to pray together, to confirm our common calling, and to commit ourselves to working together in proclaiming the message of hope that brings life for all creation.

First, we must confess that Jesus Christ is our only hope. Jesus is the way, the truth, the life, and the salvation. Only by the Gospel of the Cross of Christ can humanity and creation have life. Second, by the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, the church of Christ must regain its apostolic calling for bearing witness to the life-giving gospel of Christ through its work of evangelism, mission, and service, the church must recover the person and spirituality of Christ. Third, we need to acknowledge that the path to life is found in God’s written word, the Bible. In the midst of overflowing information we have lost our understanding of the truth, that one source of information that leads to life found in the holy scriptures. In addition, we must renew the call to pray and reclaim it.

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ. This 10th Assembly of the WCC must proclaim a message of blessing and hope that brings life to the world. Historically, Asia has been the birthplace of many civilizations and cultures. I thank God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that we have been given the opportunity to open a new era in the 21st century through our meeting here in Busan, Republic of Korea. This new era, the new culture of life, can be made manifest in this world only when the gospel is proclaimed through each and every one of us who have been called for God’s glory in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Shalom! Hallelujah! Thank you.

*Rev. Dr Kim Sam Whan*

Chairperson

Korean Host Committee for the 10th WCC Assembly

## MESSAGES FROM CHURCH LEADERS

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### Message to the 10th Assembly *by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*

Beloved brothers and sisters of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches,

We greet you from the See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in “the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.” We are with you in spirit and prayer as you gather from all parts of the world, calling upon the “God of life to lead us to justice and peace.”

The commitment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the vision of the WCC—from the very beginning through the more contentious periods—has been *unwavering*. Indeed, our personal dedication to the World Council of Churches is amply evident in our extensive participation in executive roles and responsibilities over many decades. More recently, we spoke at the WCC’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and addressed the last central committee in Crete in 2012.

#### **Justice and peace as purpose**

The theme of this 10th Assembly appropriately encompasses *purpose, perspective, and prayer*. It comprises our vision and target in ecumenical activity, our attitude and approach in ecumenical action, but also the divine gift and blessing for ecumenical integrity.

In praying for the “God of life to lead us to justice and peace,” we must *renew our commitment to the essential vision* of the WCC to confess the Lord Jesus Christ and glorify the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We can never separate issues of social consequence from those of theological significance; we cannot isolate challenges to human rights from dialogue about religious doctrine. Our doctrine should inform our life; our creed should conform to our liturgy; or, to adopt the language of the programs of the WCC, our “faith” should complement our “order.”

#### **Justice and peace as perspective**

Furthermore, in praying that the “God of life may lead us to justice and peace,” we recall *that justice and peace must accompany every program that we initiate, every aspect of our mission*, as well as our effort to care for “the least of our brothers and sisters,” in accordance with our Lord’s commission in Matthew 25. Moreover, with the words of the Orthodox liturgy, we “pray for the peace of the whole world and for the unity of all,” particularly the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. Most especially, we remember our brothers and sisters struggling for justice and peace in the Middle East.

This is surely what informs our responsibility and accountability before critical problems of global importance, such as economy and ecology. We cannot remain idle spectators in a world pervaded by social injustice and plagued by suffering and oppression. There can be no comfortable way of sitting on the cross. The words “economy” and “ecology” reveal that the world is our home, our *oikos*; thus, everyone and everything are our intimate family, our brother and sister, our flesh and blood, beyond racial and religious differences. This is the foundation of our social and ecological justice, measured by our compassion toward the poorest of all people and the most vulnerable of God’s creatures.

### **Justice and peace as prayer**

In praying that the “God of life may lead us to justice and peace,” we humbly *recognize our dependence on God’s mercy for reconciliation and healing* among ourselves, with other people, and in all of creation. The truth is that we are on a journey toward justice and peace; ecumenism is rightly called a “movement.” It is this notion of pilgrimage that uniquely distinguishes the Christian way.

This means, dear participants, that we are obliged to work toward visible unity, a goal that still eludes us despite the Lord’s prayer in the gospel of John, that his “disciples may be one.” We must remind ourselves and one another that communion (*koinonia*) is not just a sociological term describing the work that we do together. It is primarily a sacramental term defining our relationships as member churches. As such, the vision of *koinonia* should never be diminished or disregarded simply because it complicates our cooperation. On the contrary, it should compel us as disciples of the living God to a model of ecclesiastical coexistence and collaboration. We must patiently and persistently explore the causes of our historical and theological divisions so that our diversity is not a scandal to the world but the ground for rejoicing and reconciliation.

### **Our common journey beyond the Assembly**

As we consider the tasks before the assembly and anticipate the decisions beyond Busan, we have the following reflections to offer:

- a. We value the growing cooperation between the WCC and its member churches. Indeed, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is committed to such collaboration. We must never forget that all our efforts and activities are only instruments that serve *the unity of the church* as the ultimate vision of the ecumenical movement and all its institutional expressions.
- b. We welcome the initiative of the WCC to enlarge its membership. Yet, our primary commitment is to the WCC as the only global ecumenical organization with broad Orthodox participation and Orthodox expectation.
- c. We recognize the new roles of the WCC within the rapidly changing ecclesial and ecumenical landscape, but we expect the council, especially the Faith and

Order Commission, to continue to lead the multilateral theological dialogues and assist churches in their sacred task of calling one another to visible unity.

- d) We appreciate the council's presence in international advocacy and are grateful for its ongoing solidarity with member churches, including the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But we wish to see similar prominence in the search for common witness in our contemporary world, the ecumenical formation of our younger generation, relationships with the Roman Catholic Church and other non-member churches—namely, in all areas that strengthen Christian unity and further promote interfaith dialogue.

Beloved participants of the 10th Assembly, may your encounter in Busan be the source of renewal for our churches and our “life together in faith, hope, and love.” May it pave the way for respect and compassion toward every human being so that all people may be welcomed, honored, and embraced as unique pieces of a sacred puzzle constituting the marvelous mystery of God's wonderful creation. May God bless this assembly and your deliberations.

Prayerfully yours,

*Bartholomew*

*Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch  
At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 15th of October, 2013*

## **Greetings Delivered by Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

On behalf of the Anglican Communion I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and bring you our very best wishes for this assembly in Busan. It is a great privilege—more than I can express in words—for me to be here at the opening of the 10th Assembly. Ever since the 1st Assembly at Amsterdam in 1948, Archbishops of Canterbury have been present at Assemblies, a personal sign of how important the fellowship of churches has been, and still is, for Anglicans. As a result we have sometimes been uncomfortably challenged and even moved to reform ourselves. We have learned so much from our participation in the life of the fellowship. We have made so many friends. Friendship is the seed bed in which unity, the visible unity of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, grows and flourishes.

This is my first assembly. I am enjoying a sense of wonder at my smallness, my tiny place among God's great church, which draws together women and men, young and not so young, lay and ordained, from different continents and cultures and different

ecclesial traditions. Being here together provides a fresh vision of that to which we are called. It is an opportunity for genuine encounter, an opportunity to learn about one another and to learn from one another. We must learn to hear Christ through one another. We renew our commitment to the ecumenical journey and the ecumenical task. We need one another.

We have travelled to this place praying, "God of life: lead us to justice and peace." Peace and justice begin with us and God. When we are not at peace with God through Jesus Christ, we cannot be peacemakers in the world. God calls us to be reconciled reconcilers, reconciled ourselves to God and to each other. Peace and justice become in us a cause for which any sacrifice is worthwhile when they are given birth in each of us and in the church by the Holy Spirit. For that reason we need to be seen again to be a people of prayer; faced with the God of peace and justice, our hunger for unity grows, we are able to forgive and love one another with the love that God puts in our lives.

It is God who is the perfection of unity. In God is the one Father, the one Lord, the one Spirit, who in Christ draws us into unity with God and with one another. (This is a paraphrase of Lambeth 1920). We are to be one, visibly one, so that the world may believe. We are to be one so that the gospel we preach is not denied by the way we live in separation. We are to be one because we are more effective together than apart. We are to be one—one people worshipping one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eating and drinking around the one table of the Lord, for that is Jesus' prayer for his disciples, then, and for us now.

The fellowship of churches in the WCC has helped us Anglicans to understand something of the unity that is God's gift and our calling. But so often we have made God's amazing and precious gift sound like an impoverished unity, the life of an inward-looking, self-absorbed community, only intent on self-preservation.

Only institutions that are willing to lose their lives for the sake of the good news, the gospel, and for Christ, will find the life God offers. As Anglicans, as the WCC, we must die to live.

When we look to God, our eyes are turned outwards to his world, and we hear again the command, as Pope Francis said, to be a poor church for the poor. The children of Christ act instinctively to love those who suffer, as he loves us. If justice faints, hope fades. But when justice is loved, and lived, the poor have hope and the whole world begins to sing. Our vision has to be of God and God's world and the church made sense of in that perspective. The unity statement before this assembly tries to capture this vision. To fulfil that vision we need a fresh confidence in the good news as the best way for every human being on the planet, a fresh Spirit of grace to one another, and a fresh commitment to sacrifice all in the name of Christ for unity that reveals him. "God of life: lead us together in unity to justice and peace."

## Greetings from Pope Francis

To my venerable brother Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

On the occasion of the 10th General Assembly of the WCC, I ask you to convey my cordial greetings and good wishes to all gathered in Busan, and in a particular way to General Secretary, Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, and the representatives of the Christian communities present. I assure you of my close pastoral interest in the deliberations of the assembly and I willingly reaffirm the commitment of the Catholic Church to continuing its long-standing cooperation with the WCC.

The theme of the assembly, “God of Life, lead us to justice and peace,” is above all a prayerful invocation of the triune God who draws all creation to its fulfillment through the redemptive power of the cross of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit. Truly, wherever the gift of life is cherished, and justice and peace prevail, God’s kingdom is present and his sovereign power is already at work.

For this reason, I trust that the present assembly will help to consolidate the commitment of all Christ’s followers to intensified prayer and cooperation in the service of the gospel and the integral good of our human family. The globalized world in which we live demands of us a common witness to the God-given dignity of every human being and the effective promotion of the cultural, social, and legal conditions which enable individuals and communities to grow in freedom, and which support the mission of the family as the fundamental building-block of society, ensure a sound and integral education for the young, and guarantee for all the untrammelled exercise of religious liberty. In fidelity to the gospel, and in response to the urgent needs of the present time, we are called to reach out to those who find themselves in the existential peripheries of our societies and to show particular solidarity with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters: the poor, the disabled, the unborn and the sick, migrants and refugees, the elderly, and the young who lack employment.

Conscious that the soul of ecumenism remains authentic conversion, holiness, and prayer (cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 8), I pray that the general assembly will contribute to a new impulse of vitality and vision on the part of all committed to the sacred cause of Christian unity, in fidelity to the Lord’s will for his church (cf. *Jn* 17:21) and in openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Upon all gathered in Busan I invoke the abundant blessings of almighty God, source of all life and of every spiritual gift.

*From the Vatican, 4 October 2013, Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi*

## **Message of His Holiness Aram I Armenian Apostolic Church—Holy See of Cilicia**

Dear participants to the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches,

We greet you warmly from the Catholicosate of Cilicia as you are convened in Busan for the 10th Assembly of the WCC.

The 10th Assembly is an important landmark, a time to harvest the fruits of more than half a century of ecumenical work and a time to set the framework for the way forward.

We vividly recall our involvement in the life and work of the WCC, and invite all of you to contribute to the ecumenical movement in general and the WCC in particular with renewed vision and firm commitment. Your gathering in South Korea brings to mind our memorable visit to Korea in 1999 as moderator, when we witnessed the difficult life of a divided Korean peninsula and the vigour of our member churches.

The 10th Assembly's prayerful theme, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace," resonates deeply in our thoughts and feelings as we write to you from the Middle East, where Christians are courageously responding to the challenges of injustice and war as obedient witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ, encouraged by the words of the Prince of justice and peace: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12.32). For Christians and Muslims in the Middle East, coexistence has always been expressed through a dialogue of life aimed at justice and peace.

Life is a gift of God; it is also a God-given vocation to humanity. In our world today, however, life is destroyed daily by spiritual, physical, moral, and environmental damage. Destroying life is a sin against God. Building awareness to protect life in all its aspects and expressions is integral to the church's mission and the way to justice and peace. Therefore, life, justice, and peace are intertwined. True life implies justice and there can be no peace without justice. This holistic understanding is at the heart of the biblical teachings.

In 2015, we shall commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, which was perpetrated by Ottoman Turkey, and which today is still denied by the Republic of Turkey. We have asked General Secretary Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit to mark this tragic event and ask for the prayers and solidarity actions of member churches.

An assembly of the WCC is a blessed occasion for prayer, celebration, reflection, and deliberation. Protecting life, promoting justice, and working for peace are at the core of the ecumenical vocation and missionary engagement of the church. This is, indeed the *esse* of being church and being ecumenical.

With these thoughts in mind we join you in your prayers, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace."

*Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia*

4 November 2013, Antelias—Lebanon

## **Message from Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I Iwas**

Dear brother in Christ, the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC General Secretary,

We give thanks to God Almighty for giving us this great opportunity to address through the WCC general secretary, the esteemed members of the general assembly, who are gathered here in Busan, Korea. In the joy of the Holy Spirit and with enormous admiration, we highly appreciate the efforts and hard tasks of the WCC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, and his honourable staff as well as the generous hospitality of the sister churches in Korea who are hosting the 10th general assembly.

We pray for the 10th general assembly to be a milestone in the modern history of Christendom. Unfortunately, our world of today is going through many regional conflicts and there are many international sensitive issues to be resolved. The church is called today to pray and act for peace, justice, and unity among nations such as Korea and Syria.

The theme of our 10th general assembly, “God of life, lead us to Justice and Peace,” speaks to us as churches as well as countries and nations to evaluate the goodness of life which the Creator of the universe offered to us in order to fulfill Justice among peoples and peace on earth. The Holy Bible summons us as Christians to be peacemakers among peoples of different nations and never to be withdrawn from this task.

We joyfully take this opportunity to sincerely thank the government of South Korea for giving the space for the 10th general assembly to be held in Busan. The people of Korea in the south and north are daily held in our prayers. We beseech our most merciful God to shower on this nation his blessings and to bring them together into full harmony, peace and unity.

In conclusion, we continue to pray for all the participants in the general assembly that your gathering will be a glorious manifestation of the love of God to all humanity. May the Grace of God be with you all, and we gladly extend our apostolic blessing and prayerful wishes to you all.

*Ignatius Zakka I Iwas*

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church

# MESSAGE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

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## Message from the Secretary General of the United Nations

I am pleased to send greetings to all participants at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. I applaud the WCC for its work with the United Nations to advance our common goals.

Our world today is beset by challenges that cross geographical, cultural, and religious lines. Climate change, poverty, environmental degradation, conflict, and other threats demand a global response by governments along with other partners, including non-governmental organizations and religious groups.

As we focus on broad global challenges, we must pay close attention to people as key agents of change. Religious leaders can have an enormous influence on their followers, and are well-placed to help bring about a change in mind-sets that can lead to progress in society. By spreading messages of respect, compassion, and love, WCC members can combat bigotry and hatred, and foster greater tolerance and trust.

Twenty-first century realities such as economic integration, migration flows, and environmental concerns underscore how we must work across identity lines to reach our shared goals, from resolving conflicts to empowering young people to bringing the poor and vulnerable in from the margins

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations provides a platform where governments, religious leaders, businesses and civil society groups, especially those representing young people, can stand up for inclusivity and against extremism.

I count on all of you to contribute to this effort by helping to lay the foundations of trust and friendship on which we can build lasting peace and prosperity in our world.

*Ban Ki-moon*

Secretary General, United Nations

# MESSAGES FROM COMMUNIONS OF CHURCHES AND ECUMENICAL PARTNERS

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## Greetings from the Korean Christian Federation

In the name of the Lord, the Korean Christian Federation extends its cordial greetings to the ecumenical church representatives and colleagues present in the 10th assembly of the WCC being held under the special grace of our Lord and the great concern of the ecumenical colleagues in the world.

In view of the peace-summons of the Lord, the WCC has put forward the issue of Korea reunification as an urgent issue in achieving the sacred cause of justice and peace in the world and conducted vigorously, in close cooperation with its member churches, the ecumenical movement for achieving peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula since 1984 and thus manifested clearly that the Korea peaceful reunification is the divine providence of God and the unanimous desire of ecumenical community.

Today the urgency of peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula is intensifying more than ever before with each passing day as it is the key to achieving justice and peace in the world. In this context, the enthusiastic desire of the ecumenical colleagues to dedicate themselves positively to the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula is now increasing to fulfill their basic mission befitting creator and steward of justice and peace.

However, these days too, large-scale war exercises and hostile moves against the DPRK ceaselessly wage in and on sea waters off the Korean peninsula, so that the situation of the Korean peninsula continues to be aggravated.

The Korean Christian Foundation (KCF) expresses its regret at not being able to participate in the 10th Assmby of the WCC owing to the constantly deteriorating situation prevailing on the Korean peninsula.

But KCF believes that the ecumenical church representatives and colleagues present in the assembly share the views of the KCF, which is the same partner church in the Lord, and will take positive and practical steps to stop anti-DPRK moves, understanding that these hostile acts, which are destroying the atmosphere of peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, are contrary to the peace commandment of the Lord. In this way, the assembly will contribute positively to the sacred cause of peaceful reunification on the Korean peninsula.

The KCF expresses the belief that the ecumenical church representatives and colleagues, by doing so, will enable the 10th Assembly of WCC to be conducive to terminating the tragic division, which is against the desire of God, and achieving reunified prosperity on the Korean peninsula. A fruitful assembly will vigorously

encourage the ecumenical solidarity movement toward restoring the original state of the Korean peninsula created by God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9) as the “God of life leads us to justice and peace.”

*Korean Christian Federation*

October 30, 2013

Pyongyang

## **Greetings from the All Africa Conference of Churches**

*Delivered by the Rev. Dr André Karamaga, AACC general secretary, during the Justice Plenary at the WCC 10th Assembly.*

It is my pleasure and honour to greet this august assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) gathered in Busan under the theme: “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.

I greet you all on behalf of Regional Ecumenical Organizations (REOs), National Councils of Churches (NCCs), and particularly in the name of the Church in Africa, under the fellowship of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). We salute and congratulate the WCC for bringing all of us together in order to dream and celebrate together a great miracle.

### **Let us celebrate together a great miracle**

During the first week of June 2013, the AACC brought together about one thousand persons in Kampala, Uganda, for its Jubilee Assembly under the theme: “God of Life, lead Africa to peace, justice and dignity.” These people came from each corner of Africa and beyond. We thank God because until recently Africa was considered as the most missionary field in the world. Now I can assure you that the good news has reached each corner of Africa. From this assembly we celebrate not only that this miracle of the gospel has reached each corner of Africa, but also that we reached a stage of a new understanding of African reality. For Africa has often been considered a continent of pagans, some even qualifying its spirituality as animism. This consideration is insulting because current studies, especially the second edition of Prof. John Mbiti’s book, *Concepts of God in Africa*, prove sufficiently that Africans have believed in one God from time immemorial. Indeed African Monotheism which is proven by the existence of a name of God in each African language, has evidently influenced Judaic Monotheism, if we consider the fact that Jewish people spent 400 years on the African continent. One can go even deeper and say that people of Israel could not have become a nation if the sons of Jacob had not benefited from African hospitality

and given space for reconciliation. We want to express forgiveness to those who qualified us as pagans and animists. But from now, this unacceptable prejudice has to stop.

We are here in Busan for the 10th Assembly and we are from each corner of the earth as the expression of this miracle, only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus commissioned 11 of his disciples with the mandate to take the good news from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, he also commanded them that this good news was to reach each corner of the earth. How can 11 persons achieve this commission?

I wonder what the debate would be if this mission was given for the first time to this assembly of more than 3000 people, many speaking more than three languages. I imagine that a number of persons would move motions commanding feasibility study and budgeting including big provision for communication and interpretation.

The same Jesus also told his disciples: "All Authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28, 18-19).

Whenever I attend an assembly of WCC, and this is the third I have the privilege to be part of, I feel privileged to be part of generations which witnessed the miracle of seeing that the good news has reached each corner of the earth. Therefore, our gathering is an eloquent expression of the reality of the church today and we have all reasons and right to celebrate the achievement of this miracle.

This doesn't mean that the mission of the church is no longer necessary. The mission for spreading the gospel has to continue, but perhaps the time has come to change the approach instead: of moving from the centre to each corner of the earth we may focus on moving from each corner of the earth towards a centre that could be a space to experience together unity and fellowship.

It is also necessary to move from one corner to another in order to avoid self-isolation, because a corner of the earth or a denominational corner could become a prison.

When it comes to the centre, here we need to be careful because each corner could struggle to impose itself as a new centre. Africans have a problem with this because some of our friends who want to please us keep on repeating that Africa has become the *new centre of gravity* of the world Christianity. This temptation is to be vehemently rejected, because the centre of gravity of Christianity is Jesus Christ.

We need not fall into the same temptation like the first disciples, who invested much time debating on who is the first or the best, forgetting that the first is the one who launched the Christian movement, namely Jesus Christ.

But the centre could also be a rotative space, like Busan now, where we meet after Porto Alegre and Harare, and to organize that centre space for fellowship is really the specific call of our worldwide organization, the WCC.

## **The challenging need for unity**

We also notice that Jesus who commissioned his disciples prayed for them and for those who would come after them, so that they may be one for the credibility of the gospel (John 17: 21). It is along this imperative of sharing faith and the gospel message that, at each period in the history of the church, the mission continued to reach new places and communities.

We all know how difficult it is to manage the extended family. We are many, we are diverse, but our unity is challenged by the success of the mission given to the disciples and missionaries of all the times. How can we manifest the unity for credibility for which our Lord prayed from the bottom of his heart and made meaningful our belonging to the common “Father who is with us.”

At all times, the challenge of unity continues to be faced and the threat of division remains a reality.

## **The great value of complementarity**

Like other Regional Ecumenical Organizations, the AACC happens to have almost common membership as the WCC. The fact that we have worked together in choosing themes for our respective assemblies has been appreciated by our common constituency in Africa. You have resolved to use the prayer: “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.” Consequently, we decided to use the common affirmation of: “God of life” and ask him to lead Africa to peace, justice and dignity.

No one was surprised by the fact that we added “dignity” in our formulation. During the preparatory process, people of various ages in Africa were sensitized to the affirmation that “dignity” is not only a right, but also a gift from God who made everyone in his image.

Allow me to take this opportunity to ask this wonderful gathering to help us to bring to an end the humiliating and general practice of identifying and confusing misery, suffering, and hopelessness with Africans by using images and photos of Africans while talking about this reality, as if hopelessness, leading in some cases to suicide, doesn't exist in other parts of the world.

We continue to believe that our respective programmatic thrusts after our assemblies will continue to be informed by our togetherness, including each other in the struggle for life with hope and dignity.

## **Conclusion**

We have underlined the challenge of managing our diversities and the success of the mission, which has reached every corner of the earth. Called to be the salt and the light of the earth, we will continue to count on the coordinating leadership of the WCC. The interaction between our global and regional dimensions could be transformed into blessing and complementary. I want to ask WCC to receive our warm congratulations for a successful assembly, rich in its dimensions, contentwise, and logistics. We are proud of you.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can grow together and make our unity of vision and unity of action a reality for the glory of God and for the credibility of the gospel.

*“God of Life, lead all of us to justice, peace—allow me to add dignity not only in Africa, but in the World “*

Thank you for your kind attention.

## **Greetings from the Global Christian Forum**

*Delivered by the secretary of the Global Christian Forum, the Rev. Dr Larry Miller, at the Peace Plenary.*

We are living at an opportune time in the history of the Church, when God is at work in fresh ways for Christian unity. The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a significant manifestation of the movement toward the unity of all things envisioned in the letter to the Ephesians. The Global Christian Forum (GCF) is another sign of this movement of the Spirit—and this forum brings you these fraternal greetings and heartfelt thanks.

The last century has seen considerable changes in world Christianity, including the emergence and growth of the Christian faith in new ways and dramatic demographic shifts towards the “global South.

Reflecting on these challenges and affirming the WCC’s responsibility to “strengthen the one ecumenical movement,” the WCC general secretary presented to the 8th Assembly in Harare (1998) a call to explore the formation of “a forum of Christian churches and ecumenical organizations” in which participation would go beyond formal membership of the WCC. “The forum, it was said, would “be open to all bodies and organizations which share in the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the scriptures and which seek to be obedient to God’s call” (*Together on the Way*, p. 98). The assembly affirmed the idea and encouraged the central committee to develop such a forum.

On the basis of the decisions taken at the 8th assembly, the WCC offered support for the creation and growth of what has become the GCF, initially providing staff and fostering space for the engagement both of churches who are WCC members and of those who are not.

So it is with a particularly profound sense of indebtedness to you and thankfulness for you that today we extend greetings of love and respect. Your humble and prophetic initiative 15 years ago provided the GCF with a birthright. Your steadfast support and exemplary ecumenical hospitality ever since have undergirded the forum

as we carry out the mission to which you were the first to call us—and in which you now participate fully as one of the “pillars.”

Our prayer is that the one ecumenical movement, committed to gather all parts of the divided body of Christ into a covenanted fellowship, will find strength, courage, and mutual love through the power of God’s Holy Spirit moving in the 10th Assembly. Our prayer is that you, the WCC, will flourish in the days and years ahead as a growing, merciful, joyous, and mutually accountable community of those in every part of the world who, empowered by the Spirit, follow Christ in life daily.

May we all be led together in pathways of justice and peace in this world so loved by God.

On behalf of the Global Christian Forum,

*Larry Miller*  
Secretary

## Greetings from the ACT Alliance

*Delivered by its general secretary, John Nduna, to the WCC 10th Assembly Peace Plenary*

Dear general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit, dear sisters and brothers,

I bring you greetings from the ACT Alliance family on this occasion of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Today I am here on behalf of the ACT Alliance, which is part of the body of the church putting faith into action. The body is one unit and yet has many parts. As all the parts form one body, so it is with Christ. As you know, the human body is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. Suppose a foot says, “I’m not a hand, so I’m not part of the body!” Would that mean it’s no longer part of the body? We all remember the words of Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians: *the church as the body of Christ*.

We are here to say, “we are your hands,” and we don’t mean that in an exclusive way, because we know there are others who also play that role. But we belong to the body and without the body we are nothing. We spring from the life of the churches and we want to contribute to the flourishing of the body.

The ACT Alliance is composed of more than 148 churches and specialized ministries working in over 140 countries to provide humanitarian relief, supporting long-term development and engaging in advocacy on behalf of people in poverty or suffering from injustice. We have extended the voice of the churches in the global climate change negotiations, we continue to respond to humanitarian crises across the globe in a way that enhances the dignity of those most affected by involving them

directly in rebuilding their own lives and livelihoods and we support the on-going drive to build the capacity of churches and specialized ministries to do their work better.

We are grateful to the WCC for making us part of this life of this 10th Assembly and pledge our continued support to sustaining global *Diakonia*. We congratulate the WCC for creating space for the alliance and specialized ministries to play their full part in the life of the global church and look forward to continued partnership; a partnership that is not passive but one that is active; one that leaves room for exploring boundaries and differences but always with the knowledge that we are part of one body.

This assembly has chosen a theme of justice and peace, two concepts at the heart of Christian living. For us, as ACT, every aspect of our work and that of our members centres on these values. In our vision statement we say, ‘In the common task of all Christians to manifest God’s unconditional love for all people, ACT Alliance works towards a world community where all God’s creation lives with dignity, justice, peace, and full respect for human rights and the environment.’

Many of our members are present at this assembly and have actively contributed to the workshops, the Madang and the ecumenical conversations. We will leave Busan energized and enriched by the spirit experienced at the assembly, and through our strategies and programmes we pledge to continue the work on the shared journey to justice and peace.

God bless you all!

*John Nduna*

General Secretary

ACT Alliance

## **Greetings from the Lutheran World Federation**

*Presented by Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, President of the LWF, at the Mission Plenary*

Mr Moderator, Rev. Prof. Dr Altmann, General Secretary of the WCC Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, honorable assembly delegates and participants, dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

God of life—lead us to justice and peace!

It is a joy and a privilege to greet today the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches gathering here in Busan. I bring these greetings on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation, a communion of 142 churches in 79 countries bringing together more than 70 million Christians of the Lutheran tradition.

Commitment to the quest for Christian unity has been an integral part of the self-understanding of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) since its formation in 1947. Theological dialogue is the backbone of our ecumenical commitment as it is expressed in our bilateral dialogues, which we understand to be our major contribution to the wider ecumenical conversation.

Through these processes we have learned that as much as ecumenical dialogue is about theological discernment it is also about accompanying each other. It is about sharing the journey of faith, listening carefully to each other's experiences, and seeking justice in all contexts. The apostolicity of the church calls us to continue the tradition of visitation and hospitality, sharing spiritual, theological and diaconal gifts as we respond to the call to participate in God's mission.

Looking against the background of two thousand years of the Christian church, the achievements of the last 50 years of ecumenical dialogue are remarkable. Our joint theological engagement has been transformed into processes of healing of memories, leading our churches from fragmentation and conflict toward growing communion and joint witness in the world. We thank the Lord that the Holy Spirit continues to guide us again to hear the prayer of Christ: "That they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me" (John 17:23).

The 9th WCC Assembly approved a resolution on the role of Christian World Communions as partners of the WCC, calling the WCC to explore structures providing expanded space for Christian World Communions and confessional families to meet within the framework of WCC assemblies. Based on this resolution, the Busan assembly has now provided wider space for an active participation of Christian World Communions during the preparation process as well as in the life of the assembly. This is particularly valuable for our commitment to critically assess and to look for reconfiguration of the ecumenical space.

From its beginning, the LWF has committed to the call to serve our vulnerable and marginalized neighbors. We are grateful for the opportunity to bring our diaconal vocation to the joint effort to serve the world and to work for sustainable development and humanitarian response. The ACT Alliance is a vital expression of this shared effort. Our joint service has transformed not just the communities we serve, but has become an important conduit of greater understanding among Christian communions.

As the LWF is now looking together with our ecumenical partners toward the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, there is an increasing need to strengthen the link between theological discernment and service in the world. As people who have been encountered by Christ we are called to meet and accompany the poor and vulnerable. In this accompaniment, the message of reconciliation entrusted for us allows us to proclaim wholeness in the midst of a fragmented world.

Knowing that we receive these gifts from God alone, we continue to believe that the church has to raise its prophetic voice in our fragmented world, and to address issues of justice and peace and human rights, including gender justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and religious freedom. We continue to work for justice in

and for the unity of this peninsula on which our assembly is being held. God of life, bring justice and peace to this country and to all who call it home.

As I bring this greeting to you in my capacity as president of the LWF, I bring it also with my own identity and history as an Arab Christian and with my specific rootedness in the Middle East. Hence, I bring you also the greetings from the Holy City of Jerusalem, a city yearning for wholeness and peace. With the entire LWF communion, I continue to believe that peace based on justice, and reconciliation based on forgiveness is still possible in the Middle East. We continue calling for a shared Jerusalem for the three religions and two nations. I want to express our gratitude to the WCC for on-going support through both the Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) and the Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel. Together with the work of the LWF on the Mount of Olives and many other ministries of Christian churches in Jerusalem, these are all powerful signs of hope that need to be sustained. I want to particularly give thanks for the strong resolve with which the WCC is taking up the challenging realities regarding the Christian presence and witness in the Middle East. God of life—lead us to Justice and peace.

The theme of the assembly is a prayer. A prayer in which the children of God are turning to the Creator, the source of all life, asking for liberation and guidance—show us the way to justice and peace! We know that working and praying for justice and peace is our mission in this world as Christians, but that we as human beings, fallen and hence depending on the grace of God, are not able to fulfill that mission alone. This is why God sends Jesus Christ who opens the way for us and, through his death and resurrection, establishes justice and peace for the whole creation.

May the Holy Spirit lead the work of this assembly. “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). “God of life—lead us to justice and peace!” May God bless you.

*Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan*

President, Lutheran World Federation

## **Greetings from the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization**

*Delivered by Dr Michael Oh, executive director/CEO of the Lausanne Committee,  
during the Unity Plenary.*

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for this very kind invitation to bring you greetings from the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, commonly known today as the Lausanne Movement. It was a joy to have Dr Olav Tveit and other guests with us in Cape Town, South Africa, at the Third Lausanne Congress in 2010.

Many of the participants at Cape Town are leaders in churches that are a part of the WCC, including some of our key leaders from the Majority World where the

church has experienced its most dramatic growth, including Methodist Bishop Hwa Yung from Asia, Anglican Archbishop Henry Orombi from Africa, and Lutheran pastor/theologian Valdir Steuernagel from Latin America. These are leaders with a tremendous love for the gospel of Jesus Christ and a tremendous heart for world evangelization.

One of my great joys as the new executive director / CEO of the Lausanne Movement is in being able to bring the headquarters of Lausanne here to Asia!

My appointment as the first Asian leader of the Lausanne Movement was a bold statement about the strength of our commitment to the partnership of leaders from every corner of the globe, not to mention our strong intention of developing and incorporating younger leaders choosing a 41-year-old CEO like me who looks like he's 30!

As some of you may know, the Lausanne Movement was founded under the leadership of Dr Billy Graham. Billy's 95th birthday is in two days, on Thursday.

The Lausanne Movement is thankful for the legacy of truth and trust that the Lord has established through the leadership of Billy Graham and John Stott, who have been among the greatest evangelical leaders of our time. They shaped the Lausanne Movement and personified its vision and values.

Our vision is to see the *whole church* bring the *whole gospel* to the *whole world*.

It is a vision that emphasizes *unity*—a unity that recognizes our own failures, a unity grounded upon the gospel of Jesus Christ and enshrined in the unchanging word of God, and a unity for world evangelization and discipleship of the nations.

The Lausanne Covenant opens with these words that apply very much today:

]We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization. We believe the Gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to all mankind and to make disciples of every nation.

In this I believe we have common roots and opportunity to dialogue with and influence one another—the Lausanne Movement and the World Council of Churches.

The “Father of the Ecumenical Movement,” John R. Mott, stated, “Evangelism without social work is deficient; social work without evangelism is impotent.”

The Lausanne Movement has been influenced by the vision for Christian social responsibility. The Lausanne Covenant states, “We should share God's concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression.”

Thank you for the influence of your commitment to justice and for standing against violence and oppression.

An area of dialogue and influence that we would seek to encourage with your assembly is another point of commonality in our history. At the 1910 Edinburgh

Mission Conference, John Mott (who was the first honorary president of the WCC) shared these words:

It is a startling and solemnizing fact that even as late as the twentieth century, the Great Command of Jesus Christ to carry the Gospel to all mankind is still so largely unfulfilled. . . . The church is confronted today, as in no preceding generation, with a literally worldwide opportunity to make Christ known.

The WCC is the organizational heir to the 1910 Edinburgh Mission Conference; but it could be said that the Lausanne Movement is among its spiritual heirs.

In light of this shared heritage, the Lausanne Movement would very much welcome dialogue on the *glorious nature* and *wonderful* mystery of the *gospel*; what the Bible teaches about our enjoyment and stewardship of the gospel; and the impact of the gospel through our Savior Jesus Christ in the church and among all the nations.

I hope that you would find the Lausanne Movement to be a rigorous but gracious partner in dialogue and interaction. We believe in speaking the truth in love; we also believe that love softens truths that can become hard. And that truth strengthens love that can become merely sentimental.

Thank you again for the kind invitation to be with you. With more “worldwide opportunities” today than Mott could have ever imagined a century ago, I am prayerfully looking forward to what the Lord has in store for his church global in this gospel that we so love.

## **Greetings from the World Evangelical Alliance**

*Delivered by Prof. Dr Thomas Schirrmacher, Chair of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, Ambassador for Human Rights, during the Mission Plenary.*

### **Greetings**

Thank you very much for the invitation to bring greetings to the plenary session of the general assembly of the World Council of Churches and its many member churches from around the globe represented here—on behalf of the World Evangelical Alliance, representing churches with some 600 million Christians worldwide. I do this on behalf of our secretary general, Geoff Tunnicliffe, the director of Ecumenical Affairs, Rolf Hille, who is among us, as well as on behalf of the International Council, the Theological Commission, the Religious Liberty Commission, and the Mission Commission, which are all represented at this assembly.

## **“Christian Witness in a Multicultural World”**

When the WEA was established in 1846 it sought to work in four primary areas of concern:

1. Christian unity
2. Human rights, and in particular at that time the abolition of slavery
3. World evangelism
4. Religious freedom for all

One hundred and sixty years later these are still primary commitments of the WEA.

Those four areas never were combined more clearly than in the first-ever joint document signed by the Vatican, the WCC and the WEA, entitled “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct.” The general secretary of the WCC already emphasized its historic importance in his report to the general assembly. The document speaks clearly against any kind of unethical way of doing mission. Witnessing to the gospel should never be done in a way that overrules the human dignity and the human rights of others. This is a document that fulfills all four of the historic concerns of the WEA: Christian unity, human rights, a positive outlook on mission and evangelism, and a major step towards religious freedom. Having been involved in the process for five years myself, I was amazed about the agreement found in the first sentence:

Mission belongs to the very being of the church. Therefore proclaiming the word of God and witnessing to the world is essential for every Christian. However it is necessary to do so according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings.

We are grateful to the WCC for its flexibility in including the WEA in this project and keeping the process going for several years. Finally, the WEA became a full partner in the drafting, with the result that our members in 128 nations agreed to the text. This has resulted in a historic document in which for the first time the three large global Christian bodies representing the majority of world Christianity have spoken with one voice. Presently the document goes from one country to the next and furthers Christian unity on a very broad base.

## **Global Christian Forum**

Thus, the WCC and WEA have a common experience in giving Christian unity worldwide a higher priority than furthering their own organizations. One well developed example—again together with the Roman Catholic Church—is the Global Christian Forum (GCF), which the WEA fully endorses on a global and on a regional level. This open platform makes it obvious that our organizations are no longer the main focus, but the unity of Christians itself. And it reaches out to those churches

and Christians who for some reason or the other are still outside any global ecumenical community. The GCF can become a useful resource in helping resolve some of the ongoing conflicts within the Christian family. In particular I mention the situation in the Middle East and Holy Land.

### **Holistic mission**

“Evangelical” is a broad term that can be used to designate all kind of groups. Definitions vary. So we ask you not to mix what so-called “evangelicals” do and say and what the WEA stands for. We want to take responsibility for what we as a global community say and do, but we cannot influence what happens outside our membership. Often enough we are ourselves the goal of attacks by others.

Evangelism is the proclamation in word, deed, and Christian character of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross and through the resurrection. He alone overcame sin and can forgive and overcome sin. Yes, evangelism lies at the core of the identity of being evangelical. Our churches are committed to seeing the gospel proclaimed and demonstrated in all nations of the world. The WEA stands for what we call holistic evangelism or integral mission. We emphasize the connection between both proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ in word and practising it in our actions. Both are necessary for the integrity of the gospel. Furthermore, personal conversion must result in the growth of Christian character and witness. There have been times when mistakes have been made and evangelicals have struggled to link the proclamation of the gospel with acts of justice and peace. Yet in our history there have been many strong voices and lives that exemplify the holistic nature of evangelism and—by God’s grace—are on a good path to recover this aspect of witness to the gospel in the world.

Further, I would add that the WEA is deeply committed to biblical engagement. While there are more Bibles available in our world than ever before, we find growing biblical illiteracy. Given the reality that our work and mission in the church is built on the authority of the scriptures we must emphasize a recommitment to not only reading but following the holy sScripture. This also is the necessary backing for holistic mission, as it is the Bible that also calls us to feed the hungry, help the poor, speak for the oppressed, and utter our prophetic voice against structural evils in societies such as corruption or racism.

### **Religious freedom/Korea**

As mentioned, religious freedom was a central focus of the WEA already as early as the mid-19th century, as was the fight for freedom and human rights, at that time especially in the fight against slavery. Our International Institute for Religious Freedom is offering a workshop and a Madang exhibition stand in Busan.

I cannot finish my greetings without mentioning our lovely host country. We join others in working towards the reunification of Korea. Coming from Germany I can understand the feelings accompanying this, even though the situation of the two divided countries is very different in detail. But as in Germany we believe that human

rights and freedom, including religious freedom, is the real goal, and reunification can be the result or even the means to achieve this, not the other way round. South Korea has a good history progressing from dictatorship to a functioning democracy. Receiving many shocking reports about the situation in North Korea, we want to work and pray for a day when the people in North Korea will experience freedom including religious freedom, and Christians in the North and South can unite in worshipping the Saviour.

## **Blessing**

Thus we ask God's blessing on all the ongoing work of the assembly of the WCC. May God the Father give us all the strength to work on behalf of his creation. May Jesus Christ, Son of God, who saved us from sin and death, be our example willing to give his life for the good of others. And may the Holy Spirit keep us all from evil ways and unjust thoughts and lead us into the growing truth promised to his church on earth.

## **Greetings of the Pentecostal World Fellowship**

*Delivered by the Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam, chairman of the Pentecostal World Fellowship, to the Asia Plenary.*

Good morning!

My appreciation to Dr Olav Tveit and the WCC council for their kind invitation and the privilege to greet the assembly as the chairman of the Pentecostal World Fellowship. It is an honour to be here to greet you.

I also had the privilege to attend the 2012 WCC central committee meeting in Crete, where I learned more about the WCC. I was much encouraged by the unity of faith and purpose shown by the leadership drawn from the rich diversity of various Christian confessions and traditions.

I appreciate the general secretary's report at this congress in Busan and the challenges we face to bring the gospel that offers hope to the helpless and the needy.

I greet you all on behalf of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF), a cooperative body of Pentecostal and charismatic churches that encompasses more than 600 million Pentecostal and charismatic believers in the world who are committed to fulfill the Great Commission through the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

The objectives of the Pentecostal World Fellowship are embodied in our missions statement:

1. Promoting and encouraging alliances amongst Spirit-filled leaders and networks
2. Coordinating worldwide prayer amongst Pentecostal believers

3. Fostering world missions and supporting humanitarian efforts, providing relief aid when and where possible
4. Speaking to governments and nations in defense of the faith, social justice, and persecuted believers
5. Serving as a cooperative fellowship for Pentecostal theological institutions

Today we live in a world wrecked by poverty, corruption, and religious extremism. To address these challenges we must go beyond national strategies to bring about economic transformation, social equity, religious freedom, educational reforms, technological advances, and many more.

The Church of Jesus Christ has the answer and needs to demonstrate the love and power of God through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. To impact this world, we as the church must be united while recognizing and celebrating diversity in the expressions of our faith and mission.

I believe this is the time for organizations such as the WCC, PWF and other Christian agencies to be open and willing to accept each other to further the kingdom of God. This will hasten the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us take note of what John said to Jesus in Mark 9:38, “Teacher ... we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.” Jesus responded to John, “Do not stop him ... For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us” (Mark 9:39-40). May we seriously take this admonishment to heart.

I am sure that this congress will be successful and will accomplish that which you have set out to do.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus, the Love of the Father and the fellowship of the Spirit lead and guide the WCC in all your deliberations and decisions.

And may our constant united prayer be, as the theme of this conference so aptly directs us, “God of Life, lead us to justice and peace.”

God bless you,

*Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam*

Chairman, Pentecostal World Fellowship

## MESSAGES FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

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### Message from the Rassemblement des Églises et Communautés chrétiennes de Genève

Dear General Secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Tveit, dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

This message comes to you on behalf of the Rassemblement des Églises et Communautés Chrétiennes de Genève, a body which assembles 26 Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches in the Canton of Geneva, with our very best wishes and above all with the assurance of our prayers for this very important event of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Together with the member churches of WCC, we are witnesses of the presence of the triune God in our fragmented world. We believe that Christ empowers us to work together for the unity of the church and to work together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world, and we are sure that the Holy Spirit will guide us all together wherever we are in every moment. Be assured that we will accompany you with our prayers.

We wish you good and fruitful deliberations and discussions.

We promise you that we contribute humbly today, during the assembly, and after the assembly to the extremely important theme you have chosen.

Together with you we pray: “Lead us in the way of justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

With our very respectful greetings we remain with you united in Jesus Christ, our Lord,

On behalf of the RECG,

*Mr Bogdan Ioanescu*, President

*Ms Dagmar Magold*, Vice-President

## **Greeting from the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP)**

*Delivered by Prof. Dr Din Syamsuddin, president of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia, and president-moderator of the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP) to the Unity Plenary.*

Eminences, esteemed Christian leaders, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to the World Council of Churches for inviting me to this great assembly. I feel that I am really honoured and delighted to be here meeting with so many Christian leaders from all over the world. Allow me to convey the warmest greeting to all of you from Muslims in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world, in particular from members of my organization, Muhammadiyah, which is sometimes labelled as “Protestant Islam,” and from the large family of the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP) or Religions for Peace—Asia.

The organizing of this assembly is timely and urgent. We are all now facing tremendous challenges in today’s world. The promise of a peace dividend brought about by the new era is yet to materialize. Our common dream of a new world civilization based on peace, social justice, equality, prosperity, and harmony has yet to become a reality. It is indeed disheartening to see that conflicts remain a defining characteristic of today’s world. Tension between the Muslim world and the West, especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks, has brought about phobia among certain communities in some Western and Muslim countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are now living in multicultural and multi-religious societies. No single society is monolithic. All great cultural and religious traditions have to deal with plurality and diversity of cultures and religions. These pluralities are both given and generated. As mentioned in many verses of the Holy Qur’an, God created mankind in races, nationalities, and ethnicities with different skin colours and languages with one purpose: that is, to engage in mutual understanding, mutual respect, and cooperation. Plurality of religions is also a part of God’s will. Indeed, plurality represents observable signs or evidence of God Almighty for intellectuals, and knowledgeable persons.

Cultural and religious plurality becomes more complex as development progresses and interactions between people of different faiths and cultures take place. Plurality has resulted from creativity and adaptation of people to cope with realities, changes, and challenges.

As a matter of fact, Christianity and Islam, together with Judaism, are from the same root, the Abrahamic faith. Therefore, despite their differences especially in theology, with each having its own way of conceptualizing the Almighty God; there are many similarities between Islamic teachings and the teachings of Christianity.

Therefore, it is urgent for Christians and Muslims, especially, to find a common word, that makes clear, inter alia, that each of our respective religions is indeed from God but also concerned with the welfare of human beings and humanity. Therefore, it is important for Christians and Muslims to engage in emphasizing their commonalities rather than sharpening their differences. This is a time when we need to curb any tendency to dramatize our differences, and instead to emphasize our similarities. It is much better for us to find our common word, in order to face our common enemies.

Our common enemies are not the religious others, but problems faced by our societies, such as poverty, illiteracy, injustice, discrimination, violence and terrorism, and many other forms of the absence of peace.

By acting in concert, we the people of different faiths will engage together in common actions. This is, indeed, positive unity. Thank you.

## **Greetings from the Community of Sant'Egidio**

*Delivered by Leonardo Emberti Gialloreti during the Peace Plenary*

Mr. moderator, dear general secretary, dear sisters and brothers,

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to transmit to you the greetings of the community of Sant'Egidio, a Catholic community from Rome.

Having been invited to this Peace Plenary, and having in mind that war is the mother of all poverty, I was asking myself: How can we, children of the God of Life, be, in words and deeds, also authentic disciples of the Lord of peace?

In this age of globalization, it may seem our common sky is empty of visions, dreams, and hopes. But the spiritual dimension of our being here speaks of a greater hope, of a dream for this world, of a dream of peace: Christians, in unity, can give the whole humanity a new courage to hope. Convening here is therefore a precious reservoir of hope in societies which are often poor in hope.

Christians—like those of us here—do not have military or economic means, but they have their own spiritual and human strength—in our community, we call it a “weak strength”—aimed at transforming the world by transforming individuals, by transforming hearts. It is the “weak strength” of human contact, dialogue, friendship: A strength which is not arrogant, but humble and tenacious. This is what Sant'Egidio is trying to do in those places where we are now acting as peace mediators: In Mindanao and in the Philippines. In Casamance and in Senegal. In the Central African Republic. In other places where peace negotiations are going on.

We discovered that the inherent strength of the work of Christians for peace rests first and foremost in not having any interest—whether political or financial—other than the achievement of peace as such. Christian selflessness can exert a persuasive

force in the healing of conflicts. Yes, there is a huge need of people for whom peace is a passion and not a profession. That is why peace needs Christians.

Peace needs Christians, because there is a human factor that is crucial in deciding between peace and war. Certainly, unfair systems and unjust structures need to be changed. But Christians cannot blame the others alone, or blame sinful structures, if peace is not fulfilled in our world. This attitude risks transforming Christians into lazy repeaters of exhausted formulas. No, we have also to ask ourselves how our thinking that we are righteous, our resignation, and our divisions, have made us obstacles to peace.

I therefore thank the Lord for these days here, where we are helping each other to delve deep in the wells of our faith. Because we need one another. Thinking to be self-sufficient in one's own denomination risks making us blind to the grief and anxieties our world. No, diversity is not contrast or contradiction, but persuasive and polyphonic strength. Here—if we want—we can find the spiritual resources that enable us to embrace others and to bring peace.

Christians can be powerful instruments of peace. Not because we are always on the right side of history, but because we recognize ourselves as sinners who have been forgiven. And that is how we become able to forgive and to bring hope and peace to the peoples.

Dear friends, the task is huge. We men and women are small and weak. But, we believe that our Lord is greater still.

## **Message from the Focolare Movement**

Dear Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit,

Thank you very much for inviting two members of the Focolare Movement as guests with the capacity of advisor to the general assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, Republic of Korea from the 30th October to 8th November 2013.

It is an honour for Focolare to be part of such an international ecumenical event that will surely be important to advance Christian unity.

The theme of the assembly, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace,” is extremely pertinent to the current world situation, in which Christians are called to “leaven” and be the “soul” of society. Their coherent witness of the gospel, and particularly of the new commandment lived in daily life, can bring about change in the social context and be instrumental in contributing to world peace and justice.

I assure you of my prayers for the preparation and work of the assembly that it can be a milestone in ecumenical history.

In unity of prayer “ that all may be one.”

*Maria Voce*

President, the Focolare Movement

## **Message from the Life and Peace Institute, Uppsala**

Dear Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit,

Greetings in the name of the Lord!

Only a few more days to go before the ecumenical family gathers in Busan as a response to the call from the World Council of Churches. Even through the Life and Peace Institute (LPI) planned to be present, we unfortunately had to change the plan for our physical presence, but in prayers and thoughts there are no limitations on how to participate!

The call to replace violence with a culture of peace is a mission to be carried out by us all, and the conflict transformation that the LPI does together with its partners in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region can be seen as a direct contribution and response to fulfil the mission.

LPI is an institute with presence on the ground with partners and a mission formulated by the global ecumenical Life and Peace Conference 1983 in Uppsala, Sweden. With our experience we see the need for a larger coordinating ecumenical body to use its network capacity and its strengths to support the positive changes needed in international norms, practices, and laws related to peace. The WCC is, to our understanding, the best situated ecumenical body to take up the responsibility to coordinate an initiative beyond the Busan assembly and to develop a WCC peace network consisting of member churches and ecumenical organizations engaged in peace-building and peace advocacy.

The LPI would welcome such an initiative and with the call and prayer; God of life, lead us to justice and peace, we will pray for a successful 10th Assembly in Busan. God's blessing in your important mission!

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Karlsson Sjögren*  
Executive Director, LPI

## Message from Rissho Kosei-kai

*Delivered by the Rev. Yasutaka Watanabe, Chair of Rissho Kosei-kai's Board of Trustees, to the Asia Plenary*

Good morning, everyone. It is such a great pleasure and honour for me and Rissho Kosei-kai to greet you today on the occasion of this 10th World Council of Churches (WCC) Assembly. We are grateful for this opportunity.

Rissho Kosei-kai is a lay Buddhist organization based in Japan. Its members try to contribute to world peace by practising the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha in the home, the workplace, and their local communities. Rissho Kosei-kai was established in 1938, and has about 1.29 million member households, 238 Dharma centres in Japan, and 68 Dharma centres in 21 other countries. While committed to the spread of the Dharma, or the Buddha's teachings, we collaborate in efforts for world peace with people of other religious and cultural backgrounds, not only in Japan but worldwide.

Taking a look back at the history of our inter-religious cooperation, it was in 1969 that Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, the founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, visited Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, then WCC general secretary, in Geneva, to seek the WCC's cooperation in preparations for the establishment of the World Conference of Religions for Peace. Since then, we have continued our cordial relationship with the WCC. We have been given opportunities to participate in every WCC assembly since 1983, and also have supported some WCC programmes in the Middle East and Asia. In 1986, the Niwano Peace Foundation, affiliated with Rissho Kosei-kai, awarded its fourth Niwano Peace Prize to Dr. Phillip A. Potter, a former WCC general secretary, for his consistent commitment to inter-religious understanding and dialogue. That was another memorable moment in our history. Moreover, in 1999, Dr. Konrad Raiser, then WCC general secretary, visited Rissho Kosei-kai headquarters in Tokyo and gave a speech at one of our ceremonies.

In the world today the WCC is a unique fellowship in its mission, history, and scale. Many Christians have long wished for a union of their churches. For this great goal, the WCC has promoted not only studies and discussions but various concrete efforts addressing real issues and respecting people. This is a great accomplishment in recent history, for which we express our deepest respect. Today the WCC enjoys the participation of major Christian churches and a strong relationship with the Catholic Church. Indeed, it is a real global fellowship, and its achievements have been internationally recognized.

Moreover, the WCC has engaged in not only ecumenical activities but also inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, from a perspective of how Christians can live in harmony with people of other religious traditions. One fruit of those efforts is a document titled "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct," which was jointly promulgated in 2011 by the WCC, the Pontifical

Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in 2011. We, as Buddhists, have learned a lot from the document, which recommends some important attitudes for Christians toward people of other religions.

This morning, this plenary session focuses on Asia. It is a region where the WCC could fully exert its potential, which I have described. Asia is a region of rich diversity in people, cultures, and religions. Asia is like an immense, richly colourful tapestry. Because of this, the wisdom such as the document “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct” is greatly needed. The WCC’s concrete activities have included the organization of programmes this year and in 2010 for dialogue with non-Christians in Thailand. We of Rissho Kosei-kai have learned much from those programmes and are hoping for further collaboration in the future.

World peace cannot be achieved in one day. However, I believe that we can reach it step by step by through inter-religious dialogue and cooperation based on the common visions and ideals in our hearts. It is my earnest hope that we all together share this idea here today, and that we will humbly continue to do our utmost to live together in harmony.

Many meetings and programs have already convened since the beginning of this assembly on October 30th, and more events await us. I would like to conclude my greetings by praying that all the participants in these events will interact earnestly and cordially, and that this assembly will bear abundant fruit thanks to the wonderful hospitality of our Korean friends.

Thank you.

## Greetings from Religions for Peace

Esteemed members of the assembly:

*Greetings.* Religions for Peace (RfP) extends to the World Council of Churches (WCC) its heartfelt good wishes and principled solidarity on the occasion of its 10th Assembly.

RfP greatly values WCC’s irreplaceable role in advancing multi-religious dialogue and cooperation for Peace. RfP—the world’s largest multi-religious organization—is honoured and pleased to regard WCC as a fraternal partner.

### **Commitment to multi-religious action for peace**

RfP is committed to advancing principled multi-religious action on the basis of carefully discerned *shared elements of peace* and *shared threats to peace*. Rooted in diverse religions, these are expressed in terms of shared values, and great care is taken to avoid a “syncretistic” blending of the beliefs of diverse religions doctrines.

The WCC’s authentic Christian vision of peace and its discernment of the central threats to peace are irreplaceably important to the RfP. They contribute powerfully to the basis for common action in RfP.

*Shared Elements of Peace.* A central element of the RfP multi-religious vision of peace is the recognition of human dignity and the unity of humanity.

RfP affirms a common humanity in which all men and women are recognized as human beings endowed with inalienable dignity, and with the rights and responsibilities that flow from that dignity. RfP recognizes that each distinctive religious tradition has its own understanding of the foundation of human dignity and common humanity, whether these are perceived as God-given, a reflection of divine nature, derived from cosmic laws, or an inherent sacredness or oneness with the universe. By affirming our common humanity, RfP is also able to affirm our other forms of identity, such as religion, race, age, sex, ethnicity, and status, as part of the wonderful diversity of human life.

*Threats to Peace.* From its beginning, RfP has laboured to build a values-based consensus on the major *threats to peace*, such as war and the vast proliferation of arms, extreme poverty, environmental degradation, preventable child mortality and thwarted childhood development, and major abuses of human dignity and the human rights that flow from it.

*Rising Hostility: A New Threat to Peace.* Today, RfP is adding to its historic threats to peace the rising tide of hostility, in society and within and among religious communities. Hostility toward the “other” takes the form of intolerance, and too often violence. The targets of hostility are often vulnerable populations, including members of national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, refugees, migrant workers, and immigrants. Hostilities arise from all sectors of society—governments, individuals, organizations, and social groups.

A growing number of governments are placing restrictions on religious beliefs and practices by minority religious groups. Attempts to contain the spread of fanaticism often breed greater hostility. In attempts to curb terrorism worldwide, fundamental principles of human rights are often violated by states, fostering greater insecurity. Efforts to combat extremism often contribute to the demonization of entire groups, resulting in the loss of fundamental freedoms.

RfP respectfully turns to WCC for its own discernment of and potential collaboration in responding to the rising tide of hostility.

## **Welcoming the other—Discerning a new shared element of peace**

RfP will work to discern at its next assembly (November 2013) if there is an emerging multi-religious consensus that a shared positive vision of peace calls on all people of faith to “welcome the other.” RfP is grateful that representatives of WCC will partake in this assembly.

In its preparatory work, RfP is convinced that “welcoming the other” requires robust support for tolerance. Diverse faith traditions can promote tolerance in both law and society and on a more basic level in their cultivation of an essential existential respect for the other.

“Welcoming the other” also calls each religious community in its own terms to go beyond tolerance by pro-actively standing in solidarity with the dignity, vulnerability and well-being of the “other” with the full force of its respective spiritual and moral teachings. Such teachings can include the willingness to bear innocent suffering, return good for evil, forgive the unforgivable, and cultivate unrestricted compassion or love for enemies.

Advancing human dignity “welcomes the other” when it protects human dignity whenever or wherever it is threatened. Importantly, “welcoming the other” also includes the commitment to stand in solidarity with the positive flourishing of the “other’s” human dignity. As religious communities, we are called to advance the full flourishing of human dignity through the comprehensive development of human beings on all levels: physical, intellectual, affective, artistic, moral and religious. “Welcoming the other” includes the proactive commitment to help the “other” to develop and unfold his or her human dignity in the holistic terms of a shared positive vision of peace rooted in each believer’s religious tradition.

“Welcoming the other” is also advanced whenever we work together to overcome threats to shared well-being. We are called to work together to promote spiritual and moral virtues—rooted in each tradition in its own way—essential to building up shared well-being. These are virtues such as honesty, tolerance, care for others, respect for nature, the willingness to stand in solidarity with, and even sacrifice for, the well-being of all, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

In addition, “welcoming the other” by advancing shared well-being necessarily includes efforts to build just political and legal regimes that honour the rights of all, fair and ecologically balanced development schemes, common healing, common living, and common security.

We “welcome the other” when we work together to resist threats to shared well-being and when we stand in solidarity with the human dignity of all. We can do this by welcoming each person into the co-building, co-nurturing, and co-stewarding of our shared well-being, which includes respect for nature and developing in harmony with it.

RfP relies on the WCC to be a leading religious force in “welcoming the other” in its various activities, including its commitment to multi-religious action.

### **“Innocent suffering” in a multi-religious context**

Diverse religious communities—each in its own way—have an appreciation for innocent suffering.

In RfP, Christians, including many who are part of the WCC, have shared what some have termed “Law of the Cross,” a conviction that evil is to be confronted and transformed by the followers of Christ in the way Jesus confronted and transformed it. The irrational, destructive, life-denying aspects of evil—both personal and structural sins—are to be transformed by replacing all forms of evil with good. Christians have shared that for Christ, this involved *voluntary* suffering, and that baptism into

his death and resurrection invites all Christians to share in their Lord's willingness to bear innocent suffering in love.

Members of the WCC have—and may they continue to do so—shared their priceless religious experience in RfP's multi-religious work of building peace. This, in turn, has invited members of diverse other traditions to share their respective heritages of the spiritual meaning and healing power of innocent suffering. In turn, these teachings have significantly influenced RfP multi-religious action programmes.

Modestly and with humility—respectfully acknowledging large religious differences—RfP finds that there is a slowly growing appreciation across diverse traditions of the power of innocent suffering.

This is a cause for great joy. For, if (only) an eye transformed by mercy can see mercy, so, too, a heart willing to suffer for the “other” can recognize the seed of that great love in another heart wherever he or she may be found.

RfP extends its gratitude, esteem, and good will to the WCC.

## **Greetings from the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations**

*Delivered by Rabbi David Fox Sandmel to the Mission Plenary.*

*Shalom.* It is my honor and privilege to bring greetings on behalf of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations to this Plenary Session of the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The International Jewish Committee on Inter-religious Consultations represents Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jewish movements, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith International, the Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Relations, and the World Jewish Congress. It was founded over 40 years ago to cultivate relations with other international religious bodies.

This past week, as part of synagogue worship around the world, Jews read from the book of Genesis about the birth of Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca, who seemed, from their very conception, to be in conflict with one another—“and the children struggled within her.” (Gen. 25:22) Throughout the centuries, Jewish and Christian biblical commentators often understood the relationship between our two traditions to be reflected, if not foretold, in this struggle. Each community considered itself to be Jacob, or as he came to be known, Yisrael—Israel, God's true and only covenantal partner. Each saw the other as Esau, who rejected God and God's promises. These mutually exclusive interpretations resulted in distrust and enmity, violence, and persecution, including, within living memory, the destruction of six million Jews in the *Shoa*, the Holocaust. It is, therefore, with gratitude that we remember that the WCC, at its founding meeting in 1948 in Amsterdam, stated unequivocally “anti-Semitism is a sin against God and man.”

In light of this history, we Jews view with horror the growing violence against Christians and Christian communities in places such as Egypt, Syria, India, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Pakistan. We are dismayed that the world seems to ignore the suffering that is being inflicted. It is particularly unjust to the peoples in those places, and prolongs their pain, when their plight is minimized, and hypocritical when other conflicts are spuriously given as the reason for their situation, let alone identified as more important.

We gather here in Busan as Israelis and Palestinians are in the midst of negotiations that, we pray, will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel so that Jews, Christians, and Muslims can live in peace with one another and worship without fear at their holy sites. We are heartened by those on all sides who are working not only to achieve a political solution but who also strive together to overcome trauma, such as the Parents Circle Family Forum, a joint Palestinian Israeli organization of over 600 families, all of whom have lost a close family member as a result of the prolonged conflict, and whose activities have shown that the reconciliation between individuals and nations is possible. These brave families teach us that peace can only come if the subjective perceptions of justice on all sides are considered and respected. I note here as well Israeli hospitals where Jewish and Arab physicians and nurses are treating hundreds of wounded Syrian men, women, and children as well as IsraAid, an Israeli NGO that provides disaster relief around the world and is currently working quietly with Syrian refugees in Jordan.

These examples show us how people from different nations and traditions can be, in the words of Isaiah, “repairers of the breach and restorers of the lanes for habitation.”

I now turn back to Genesis: we should also remember that the conflict between Jacob and Esau is not the end of the story of their relationship. In two weeks, we Jews will read about the reconciliation between the two brothers (Gen. 33) and how they later cooperated with one another to bury their father Isaac (Gen 35:29). It seems that they were able to overcome the strife that began in the womb. Today, in many parts of the worlds, Jews and Christians now live in harmony. While we disagree about whether the Messiah is to come or come again, we are, in the felicitous phrase of the Christian theologian Clark Williamson, “partners in waiting.” Until that day, we can and must work together to alleviate suffering, promote justice, and repair our world for the reign of God. *Ken yehi ratzon*, may this be God’s will. Amen.

## Greetings of Peace from an Inter-religious Guest

*Ram Puniyani, Emeritus professor of biomedical engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, and chairperson of the Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai, India. Reception of this message was acknowledged with gratitude by the WCC general secretary during the Justice Plenary.*

Dear friends in peace and justice,

I am honoured to be invited by this august body, which is deliberating on the global peace. I do thank the organizers for inviting me to participate and experience the ongoing striving for global peace.

We in India are witnessing that the world today is gripped by violence of various types, and much of this violence is couched under the label of religion. I do hold that most of the religions of the world stand for peace and it is tragic that some political forces are using the cover of religion to fulfil their political and economic agenda. We in India have been witnessing violence against the religious minorities, Muslims and Christians in particular. It is not due to Hindu religion but due to political streams that want to grab power and suppress the human rights of weaker sections of society. Hinduism stands for the concept of Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam, (the whole world is one family). The present violence against religious minorities is against the values for which Hindu saints like Kabir, Tukaram, and Narsi Mehta stood and committed themselves for a better society. This violence is against the values of the greatest Hindu of 20th century, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. As a matter of fact, this Hindu apostle of peace was murdered by a person believing in the political ideology that is currently rampaging through our country in the name of Hindutva. This Hindutva is not Hindu religion, it is a political word that is against the values of traditional Hindu saints, including the one's like Gandhi.

As such, India has been the land where most of the religions of the world flourished in great harmony with each other. While Jainism and Buddhism arrived thousands of years ago, India was also privileged to host Christianity right from 1st century CE. It started from Malabar Coast in Kerala in India, and was accepted by the people of India. Its slow and steady march in India has been due to the dedicated work in the area of education and health in remote places, due to its message of peace and co-existence. Christianity helped us in bringing many a positive changes in our society. It is one of the religions that has deep impact on Indian culture.

Christianity made an important contribution in the uplifting of poor and needy. It also made a great contribution in the field of education and health. Many followers of this path were key people in India's struggle for freedom, contributing to the process of India as a nation in the making. I do appreciate this humane and long-lasting

contribution of this religion, along with other religions that are prevalent in India, in taking us to the path of peace and progress.

I offer my heartfelt greeting to this assembly, with the hope that India will continue to offer a safe and secure atmosphere for progress of moral values coming from Christianity as well as other religions. Do please accept my heartfelt gratefulness for your efforts in the path of Peace and Justice.

# APPENDICES



# APPENDIX 1: ASSEMBLY TIMETABLE

## World Council of Churches, 10th Assembly, Busan, Republic of Korea "God of life, lead us to justice and peace"

Draft	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
11/07/13	30 October	31 October	1 November	2 November	3 November	4 November	5 November	6 November	7 November	8 November
08:30 09:00	Registration and Orientation	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer		Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer
09:15 10:15		Bible Study	Bible Study			Bible Study	Bible Study	Bible Study	Bible Study	Committee Reports
10:15	Break	Break	Break			Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10:45 12:15	Gathering Prayer	Theme Plenary	Asia Plenary	Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Peace with Korean Churches	Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Peace with Korean Churches	Mission Plenary	Unity Plenary	Justice Plenary	Peace Plenary	Closing Plenary or Reports
12:15	Lunch	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)			Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch
14:15 15:45	Opening Plenary	Business Plenary	Business Plenary			Madang Programme (Workshops)	Madang Programme (Workshops)	Madang Programme (Workshops)	Madang Programme (Workshops)	Sending Prayer
15:45	Break	Break	Break			Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
16:15 17:45	General Secretary and Moderator Reports	Ecumenical Conversations	Ecumenical Conversations	(Committees)	(Committees)	Ecumenical Conversations	Ecumenical Conversations	Committee Reports	Committee Reports	WCC Central Committee
17:45	Break	Break	Break			Break	Break	Break	Break	
18:15 19:45	Business Plenary	Regional Meetings	Confessional Meetings	(Committees)	(Committees)	Elections	Committee Reports	Committee Reports	Confessional Meetings	
20:00 20:30	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer			Prayer	Prayer	Prayer with Korean Churches	Prayer	X
20:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner			Dinner	Dinner		Dinner	X



## APPENDIX 2: ASSEMBLY DELEGATES AND PARTICIPANTS

*[The list of delegates and participants represents people who were present at the assembly in Busan. The titles used are those requested by the participants themselves. The name of the country in parenthesis indicates the participant's place of residence. The abbreviations following the name of each participant indicate: y=youth (30 years of age or younger); m=male; f=female; o=ordained; and l=layperson.]*

### **Delegates of member churches**

- Aano*, Mr Kjetil, mo, Church of Norway (Norway)
- Abdelmalek*, Rev. Dr Beshowy, mo, Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Abernethy*, Bishop Alan Francis, mo, Church of Ireland (United Kingdom)
- Abiog*, Rev. Noel, mo, Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines (Philippines)
- Abuom*, Dr Agnes, fl, Anglican Church of Kenya (Kenya)
- Acquah*, Ms Joyce N.E., yfl, Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Ghana)
- Adhikari*, Mr Joyanta, ml, Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha (Bangladesh)
- Adinugroho*, Rev. Abednego, mo, Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW) (Indonesia)
- Agidew*, Dr Agidew Redie, ml, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
- Abio*, Rev. Dr Finau Paila, mo, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga) (Tonga)
- Ajapahyan*, Bishop Mikael Gevorg, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Akaroa*, Ms Anna, yfl, Cook Islands Christian Church (Cook Islands)
- Akoi*, Mr Jeffrey, mo, Church of Melanesia (Solomon Islands)
- Akpama*, Rev. Dr Mercy Mbang, fo, Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Al Laham*, Mr Samer, ml, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Syrian Arab Republic)
- Alagbada*, Rev. Ibilade Nicodème, mo, Eglise protestante méthodiste du Bénin (Benin)
- Aleksiejuk*, Rev. Dr Artur, mo, Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Poland)
- Alemezian*, H.G. Archbishop Nareg, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) (Lebanon)
- Alexander*, Mr Georgie Cherukara, ml, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (United Arab Emirates)
- Alexander of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese*, H.G. Bishop, mo, Orthodox Church in America (United States of America)
- Alsted*, Bishop Christian, mo, United Methodist Church (Denmark)
- Altmann*, Rev. Dr Walter, mo, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil (Brazil)
- Amanor*, Very Rev. Jemima, fo, Methodist Church Ghana (Ghana)
- Amedi*, Ms Gifty Nana Akosua, yfl, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (Ghana)
- Amenu*, Rt Rev. Francis Robert Kwami, mo, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (Ghana)
- Anazodo*, Mrs Chinelo Ngozi, fl, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) (Nigeria)
- Anba*, H.G. Bishop David, mo, Coptic Orthodox Church (United States of America)
- Anburaj*, Ms Reeta Sweetlin, yfl, Church of South India (India)
- Anderson*, Rev. Mozelle, fo, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. (United States of America)
- Andraous*, Mr Khaleel, ml, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem (Israel)
- Andrianarivelo*, Mr René Olivier, ml, Eglise de Jésus-Christ à Madagascar (Madagascar)

- Andrianos*, Dr Louk Aourelieu, ml,  
Ecumenical Patriarchate (Greece)
- Aneyé*, Mrs Jeannette, fl, United Methodist  
Church (Ivory Coast)
- Angaelos*, H.G. Bishop, mo, Coptic  
Orthodox Church (United Kingdom)
- Anie*, Rev. Dr Gold Okwuolise, mo,  
Nigerian Baptist Convention (Nigeria)
- António*, Rev. José, mo, Igreja Evangélica  
Reformada de Angola (Angola)
- Antonio da Silva*, Rev. Moises, mo,  
Protestant Church in Timor Lorosa'e  
(Timor Lorosa'e)
- Antonio Matamoros*, Rev. Cora Luisa, fo,  
Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua (Nicaragua)
- Aravena Reyes*, Rev. Israel Antonio, mo,  
Iglesia Pentecostal de Chile (Chile)
- Arends*, Rev. Dietmar, mo, Evangelische  
Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Aristarchos of Constantina*, H.E. Archbishop,  
mo, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of  
Jerusalem (Palestine)
- Aritonang*, Mrs Tetty Bonawaty, fl, Christian  
Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI)  
(Indonesia)
- Arzoumanian*, Ms Christine, fl, Armenian  
Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)  
(Lebanon)
- Asana*, Rt Rev. Dr Festus Ambe, mo,  
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon  
(Cameroon)
- Aspinall*, Most Rev. Dr Phillip, mo, Anglican  
Church of Australia (Australia)
- Attarian*, Rev. Dimitrios, mo, Greek  
Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All  
the East (Brazil)
- Audu*, Mr Marcus, ml, Nigerian Baptist  
Convention (Nigeria)
- Augoustides*, Rt Rev. Protobresbyter  
Adamantios, mo, Church of Greece  
(Greece)
- Auken*, Ms Kirsten, fl, Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in Denmark (Denmark)
- Avome-Nze*, Mrs Marie-Madeleine, fl, Eglise  
évangélique du Gabon (Gabon)
- Awanyoh*, Rev. Agbenoxevi Mawuli, mo,  
Eglise évangélique presbytérienne du Togo  
(Togo)
- Aydin*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr Mor  
Polycarpus, mo, Syrian Orthodox  
Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East  
(Netherlands)
- Ayebo*, Mrs Rita, fl, Church of the Province  
of West Africa (Ghana)
- Ayenuw*, Dr Abba Haile Mariam Melese, mo,  
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church  
(Ethiopia)
- Ayete Nyampong*, Rev. Dr Samuel, mo,  
Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Ghana)
- Aykazian*, H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken, mo,  
Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See  
of Holy Etchmiadzin) (United States of  
America)
- Ayokunle*, Rev. Dr Samson Olasupo Adeniyi,  
mo, Nigerian Baptist Convention  
(Nigeria)
- Azariah*, Bishop Samuel Robert, mo,  
Church of Pakistan (Pakistan)
- Bachus*, Rev. Reginald, ymo, National  
Baptist Convention USA, Inc. (United  
States of America)
- Badejo*, Mrs Olubunmi Adedoyin, fl,  
Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide  
(Nigeria)
- Bae*, Rev. Dr Hyun Ju, fo, Presbyterian  
Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Bae*, Rev. Tae Jin, mo, Presbyterian Church  
in the Republic of Korea (Republic of  
Korea)
- Baltimore*, Rev. Dr Carroll A., mo,  
Progressive National Baptist Convention,  
Inc. (United States of America)
- Baniuri*, Mrs Cyrilline Sopiariiki, fl,  
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu  
(Vanuatu)
- Bao*, Rev. Jiayuan, mo, China Christian  
Council (China)
- Baonizafimanana*, Mrs Jeannette, fl, Eglise  
luthérienne malgache (Madagascar)
- Barnett*, Ms Tina, fl, Methodist Church in  
Ireland (United Kingdom)
- Barus*, Rev. Matius Panji, mo, Gereja Batak  
Karo Protestan (GBKP) (Indonesia)
- Batome Henga*, Rev. Isaac, mo, Eglise  
évangélique du Cameroun (Cameroon)
- Bayrakdarian-Kabakian*, Dr Nora, fl,  
Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of  
Cilicia) (Lebanon)
- Bedford-Strohm*, Bischof Dr. Heinrich, mo,  
Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland  
(Germany)

- Bedona*, Mr Von Lovel, ml, Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (Philippines)
- Bello*, Rt Rev. David, mo, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) (Nigeria)
- Benyamin*, Rev. Sargez, mo, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran (Iran)
- Berinyuu*, Rev. Abraham A., mo, Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Ghana)
- Berjekian*, Rev. Vartan, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Israel)
- Berkeley*, Bishop Claude, mo, Church in the Province of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Berkvens-Stevelinck*, Rev. Prof. Dr Christiane, fo, Remonstrant Brotherhood (Netherlands)
- Bezara*, Mrs Pierrette, fl, Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean (Madagascar)
- Bibong*, Mr Jean Roger, ml, Eglise protestante africaine (Cameroon)
- Bishop of Damietta*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, mo, Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Black*, Rev. Geoffrey A., mo, United Church of Christ (United States of America)
- Bojorge-Estrada*, Rev. Joel de Jesús, mo, Convención Bautista de Nicaragua (Nicaragua)
- Bol*, Rt Rev. Moses Deng, mo, Episcopal Church of the Sudan (South Sudan)
- Bölskei*, Bishop Dr Gustáv, mo, Reformed Church in Hungary (Hungary)
- Bole*, Rev. Jacques Wacalo, mo, Eglise évangélique en Nouvelle-Calédonie et aux Iles Loyauté (New Caledonia)
- Borcholt*, Rev. Hans-Peter, mo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Borlado*, Mr Jec Dan S., yml, Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (Philippines)
- Bosse-Huber*, Bishop Petra, fo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Bossman*, Bishop Michael Agyakwa, mo, Methodist Church Ghana (Ghana)
- Bostock*, Ms Jasmine, yfl, The Episcopal Church (New Zealand)
- Boukis*, Rev. Dimitrios, mo, Greek Evangelical Church (Greece)
- Bouknight*, Dr Jeanette L., fl, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (United States of America)
- Brekken*, Ms Marianne, yfl, Church of Norway (Norway)
- Brodner*, Ms Raluca, yfl, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Brunne*, Bishop Eva, fo, Church of Sweden (Sweden)
- Bu*, Dr Ja, fl, Myanmar Baptist Convention (Myanmar)
- Bukowski*, Pfarrer Peter, fo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Bullock*, Rt Rev. Brenda, fo, Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Burley III*, Dr Ulysses, yml, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (United States of America)
- Byfuglien*, Rt Rev. Helga Haugland, fo, Church of Norway (Norway)
- Calpińska*, Ms Marta, yfl, Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Poland)
- Cammerin*, Rev. Dr Sofia, fo, Uniting Church of Sweden (Sweden)
- Campbell*, Rev. Sarah, fo, United Church of Christ (United States of America)
- Canagasabey*, Rt Rev. Dhiloraj Ranjit, mo, Church of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)
- Cantwell*, Rev. Jordan, fo, United Church of Canada (Canada)
- Cende*, Mrs Klauđija, yfl, Serbian Orthodox Church (Serbia)
- Chackalayil John*, Mr Anoop, ml, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (India)
- Chai*, Rev. Dr Unha, fo, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Chang*, Rev. Dr Sang, fo, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Charbonnier*, Rev. Michel, mo, Waldensian Church (Italy)
- Charkiewicz*, Mr Jaroslaw, ml, Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Poland)
- Chavel*, Rev. Frédéric, mo, Eglise protestante unie de France (France)
- Cheifetz*, Rev. Laura Mariko, fo, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)

- Cheng*, Rev. Prof. Dr Yang-En, mo,  
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan)
- Chipesse*, Rev. Augusto, mo, Igreja Evangélica  
Congregacional em Angola (Angola)
- Choudhrie*, Dr Deepa Anna, fl, United  
Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India  
(India)
- Chrysostomos of Messinia*, H.E. Metropolitan  
Prof. Dr , mo, Church of Greece (Greece)
- Clapsis*, Rev. Prof. Dr Emmanuel, mo,  
Ecumenical Patriarchate (United States of  
America)
- Clark*, Mrs Ruth, fl, American Baptist  
Churches in the USA (United States of  
America)
- Colgan*, Ms Emily Jane, fl, Anglican Church  
in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia  
(New Zealand)
- Collange*, Prof. Dr Jean-François, mo, Union  
des Eglises Protestantes d'Alsace et de  
Lorraine (UEPAL) (France)
- Connor*, Rev. Dr Errol Lorenzo, mo,  
Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies  
Province (Virgin Islands (US))
- Corkin*, Rev. Terence, mo, Uniting Church  
in Australia (Australia)
- Correa Montecinos*, Rev. Pedro María, mo,  
Iglesia Metodista de Chile (Chile)
- Cortez de Huevo*, Rev. Guadalupe del  
Rosario, fo, Iglesia Luterana Salvadoreña  
(El Salvador)
- Coster*, Rev. Ray, mo, Presbyterian Church of  
Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand)
- Cowans*, Rev. Dr Gordon, mo, United  
Church in Jamaica and the Cayman  
Islands (Jamaica)
- Daeli*, Rev. Dorkas Orienti, fo, Banua Niha  
Keriso Protestan Kantor Sinode (BNKP)  
(Indonesia)
- Dafla*, Bishop Basliyos Tesfay, mo, Eritrean  
Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Eritrea)
- Dali*, Rev. Dr Samuel Dante, mo, Church of  
the Brethren in Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Dalipi*, Ms Alketa, yfl, Orthodox  
Autocephalous Church of Albania  
(Albania)
- Damanik*, Mrs Flora M., fl, Huria Kristen  
Batak Protestan (HKBP) (Indonesia)
- Dani*, Rev. Eszter, fo, Reformed Church in  
Hungary (Hungary)
- Daniel*, Mr Elisama Wani, ml, Episcopal  
Church of the Sudan (Sudan)
- Daniel*, Rev. M.A., mo, Methodist Church  
in India (India)
- Daniel of Sydney*, H.G. Bishop, mo, Coptic  
Orthodox Church (Australia)
- Danylevch*, Archpriest Mykola, mo, Russian  
Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)  
(Ukraine)
- Dascalu*, Rev. Dr Daniel, mo, Romanian  
Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Daulay*, Rev. Dr Richard, mo, Gereja  
Methodist Indonesia (GMI) (Indonesia)
- Davis*, Ms Cindy, fl, Orthodox Church in  
America (United States of America)
- De Vries*, Rev. Thomas, mo, Reformed  
Church in America (United States of  
America)
- Demissie*, Ms Etsegenet Hailu, fl, Ethiopian  
Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus  
(Ethiopia)
- Der Matoian*, Ms Paula Marie, fl, Armenian  
Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy  
Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Dimas*, Rev. Fr George, mo, Greek  
Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All  
the East (Lebanon)
- do Nascimento Cunha*, Prof. Dr Magali, fl,  
Igreja Metodista no Brasil (Brazil)
- Dolzer*, Mag. Susanne, fl, Altkatholische  
Kirche Österreichs (Austria)
- Dominggas*, Ms Adelaida Pereira, yfl,  
Protestant Church in Timor Lorosa'e  
(Timor Lorosa'e)
- Dörr*, Rev. Dr Elfriede, fo, Evangelical  
Church of the Augsburg Confession in  
Romania (Romania)
- Dura*, Rev. Dr Nicolae, mo, Romanian  
Orthodox Church (Austria)
- Dyck*, Bishop Sally, fo, United Methodist  
Church (United States of America)
- Ebbesen*, Mrs Karen Frensdø, yfl, Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in Denmark (Denmark)
- Ekoule Maka*, Rev. Dr Jean-Paul, mo,  
Union des Eglises baptistes du Cameroun  
(Cameroon)
- Elpidophoros of Bursa*, H.E. Metropolitan  
Prof. Dr , mo, Ecumenical Patriarchate  
(Turkey)

- Enns*, Rev. Prof. Dr Fernando, mo,  
Mennonite Church in Germany  
(Germany)
- Espiuca dos Anjos Siqueira*, Rev. Rodrigo,  
mo, Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil  
(Brazil)
- Evans*, Ms Emily, yfl, Uniting Church in  
Australia (Australia)
- Faalevao*, Rev. Elder Leatulagi T., mo,  
Congregational Christian Church in  
American Samoa (American Samoa)
- Fajutagana*, Bishop Epraim, mo, Iglesia  
Filipina Independiente (Philippines)
- Falk*, Mrs Celina, yfl, Church of Sweden  
(Sweden)
- Faller*, Rev. Dr Jeaneth, fo, United Church  
of Christ in the Philippines (Philippines)
- Fanous*, The Rev. Canon Samuel, mo,  
Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the  
Middle East (Israel)
- Fares*, Ms Maha, fl, Greek Orthodox  
Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East  
(Syrian Arab Republic)
- Farouk Mabrous Sarofim*, Mr Ramy, yml,  
Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Fathy*, Rev. Refat, mo, Evangelical  
Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of  
the Nile (Egypt)
- Favaro*, Rev. Daniel Angel, mo, Iglesia  
Evangélica Metodista Argentina  
(Argentina)
- Ferreira*, Mrs María Celina, yfl, Iglesia  
Evangélica Metodista Argentina  
(Argentina)
- Fischer-Møller*, Bishop Peter, mo, Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in Denmark (Denmark)
- Florescu*, Rev. Marius-Alexandru, mo,  
Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Fokase*, Mr Fokase, yml, Uniting Reformed  
Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Fornerone*, Ms Valeria, yfl, Waldensian  
Church (Italy)
- Forster*, Rt Rev. Dr Peter, mo, Church of  
England (United Kingdom)
- Friedrich*, Rev. Dr Nestor Paulo, mo, Igreja  
Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no  
Brasil (Brazil)
- Friswell*, Mrs Sarah, fl, Methodist Church  
(United Kingdom)
- Fuite*, Rev. Steven, mo, Eglise Protestante  
Unie de Belgique (Belgium)
- Funck*, Mrs Lydia, yfl, Mennonite Church in  
Germany (Germany)
- Gabriel of Diavleia*, H.G. Bishop, mo,  
Church of Greece (Greece)
- Gadegaard*, Dean Anders, mo, Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in Denmark (Denmark)
- Galstanyan*, Bishop Bagrat, mo, Armenian  
Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy  
Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Gao*, Rev. Feng, mo, China Christian  
Council (China)
- Gao*, Rev. Dr Ying, fo, China Christian  
Council (China)
- Gardner*, Rev. Dr Paul, mo, Moravian  
Church in Jamaica (Jamaica)
- Gas*, Rev. Dr Piotr, mo, Evangelical Church  
of the Augsburg Confession in Poland  
(Poland)
- Gathanju*, Rt Rev. David Riitho, mo,  
Presbyterian Church of East Africa  
(Kenya)
- Gennadios of Sassima*, H.E. Metropolitan  
Prof. Dr , mo, Ecumenical Patriarchate  
(Turkey)
- George*, Rev. Dr Prof. Kondothra M., mo,  
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church  
(India)
- Ghalachyan*, Ms Gohar, yfl, Armenian  
Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy  
Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Ghaly*, Rev. Yacob Naim, mo, Coptic  
Orthodox Church (United States of  
America)
- Ghazaryan Drissi*, Ms Ani, fl, Armenian  
Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy  
Etchmiadzin) (Switzerland)
- Giyorgis*, Abba Haile, mo, Ethiopian  
Orthodox Tewahedo Church  
(Switzerland)
- Glynn-Mackoul*, Mrs Anne, fl, Greek  
Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All  
the East (United States of America)
- Goodliff*, Rev. Dr Paul W., mo, Baptist  
Union of Great Britain (United  
Kingdom)
- Goundiaev*, Archpriest Mikhail, mo, Russian  
Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)  
(Switzerland)
- Grace*, Eden, fl, Religious Society of Friends:  
Friends United Meeting (United States of  
America)

- Green*, Ms Melissa, yfl, Anglican Church of Canada (Canada)
- Gregorios*, Bishop Mor Joseph, mo, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (India)
- Griffin*, Ms Merab, yfl, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (Pakistan)
- Grossholz-Fahrni*, Mrs Pia Eva, fl, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund (Switzerland)
- Guerrier*, Rev. Anne-Sophie, fo, Union des Eglises Protestantes d'Alsace et de Lorraine (UEPAL) (France)
- Habib Zeiler*, Rev. Johannes, mo, Church of Sweden (Sweden)
- Haidousian-Kilagbbian*, Mrs Aster, fl, Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (Lebanon)
- Haile*, Mother Superior Fikirte Mariam Bekele, fo, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
- Hailegabrial*, H.G. Archbishop Gabriel Melaku, mo, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
- Hakh*, Rev. Samuel Benyamin, mo, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia (GPI) (Indonesia)
- Hamalis*, Dr Perry, ml, Ecumenical Patriarchate (United States of America)
- Hammond*, Rev. Dr Carolyn, fo, Church of England (United Kingdom)
- Handayani*, Rev. Retno Ratih Suryaning, fo, Gereja-Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) (Indonesia)
- Hanna*, Rev. Dr Basilius, mo, Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Hazou*, Mr George Jamil, ml, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Jordan)
- Hein*, Bishop Dr Martin Hermann, mo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Heitmann*, Rev. Anne, fo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Hendriks-Ririmasse*, Rev. Dr Margaretha M., fo, Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM) (Indonesia)
- Hennerdal*, Mrs Ida, yfl, Uniting Church of Sweden (Sweden)
- Henry*, Mrs Maureen R., fl, United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (Jamaica)
- Henslin*, Ms Anita, fl, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (United States of America)
- Heo*, Rev. Baekki, mo, Korean Christian Church in Japan (Republic of Korea)
- Heshe*, Mrs Zewdie Gebreegziabher, fl, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
- Higuira Arango*, Rev. Diego, mo, Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia (Colombia)
- Hilarion of Volokolamsk*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr , mo, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)
- Hinzpeter*, Rev. Dagmar, fo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Hirzel*, Rev. Dr Martin, mo, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund (Switzerland)
- Hosler*, Mr Nathan, ml, Church of the Brethren (United States of America)
- Hostetter*, Rev. Michael L., mo, Church of the Brethren (United States of America)
- Houenou Bonou*, Mrs Conforte, fl, Eglise protestante methodiste du Bénin (Benin)
- Howarth*, Rev. David Ronald, mo, British & European Continental Provinces of the Moravian Church (United Kingdom)
- Hutabarat-Lebang*, Rev. Dr Henriette, fo, Gereja Toraja (Indonesia)
- Hyka*, Bishop Nikolaos, mo, Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania (Albania)
- Ibrahim*, Rev. Redda, mo, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile (Egypt)
- Ibrahim Agban Shenoda*, Prof. Dr Ishak, mo, Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Ilunga*, Ms Rebeca Chimbuca Elombo, fl, United Methodist Church (Angola)
- Ingabire*, Mrs Asterie, fl, Association des Eglises baptistes au Rwanda (Rwanda)
- Ingraham*, Mr Jon, yml, African Methodist Episcopal Church (United States of America)
- Ioannis of Thermopylae*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr, mo, Church of Greece (Greece)
- Ionescu*, Rev. Dr Razvan, mo, Romanian Orthodox Church (France)
- Ireoba*, Venerable Dr Princewill Onyinyechukwu, mo, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) (Nigeria)

- Irinej of Australia and New Zealand*, H.G. Bishop, mo, Serbian Orthodox Church (Australia)
- Isingoma*, Most Rev. Henri Kahwa, mo, Église du Christ au Congo—Communauté anglicane au Congo (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Issa*, Dr Theodora, fl, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Australia)
- Issa*, Rev. Deacon Theodore Boutros Touma, mo, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Australia)
- Ito*, Rev. Mizuo, mo, United Church of Christ in Japan (Japan)
- Iuli*, Rev. Aisoli, mo, Methodist Church of Samoa (Samoa)
- Jackson*, Bishop Reginald T., mo, African Methodist Episcopal Church (United States of America)
- Jagessar*, Rev. Dr Michael Nathaniel, mo, United Reformed Church (United Kingdom)
- Janssen*, Bishop Jan, mo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Jarob*, Rev. Dominic Petrus, mo, Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis (GKE) (Indonesia)
- Jebanesan*, Rev. Dr Wilfred Albert, mo, Methodist Church, Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka)
- Jebelean*, Pfarrer Ioan Livius, mo, Polish Catholic Church in Poland (Switzerland)
- Jeftić*, Mr Andrej, yml, Serbian Orthodox Church (Serbia)
- John*, Mr Anish, yml, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (India)
- John*, Bishop Arshed Kaleem, mo, Church of Pakistan (Pakistan)
- John Gifford*, Mr Willie Teokotai, ml, Cook Islands Christian Church (Cook Islands)
- Johnsen*, Rev. Tore, mo, Church of Norway (Norway)
- Johnson*, Rev. Karl, mo, Jamaica Baptist Union (Jamaica)
- Johnson*, Most Rev. Dr S. Tilewa, mo, Church of the Province of West Africa (Gambia)
- Johnson*, Bishop Susan C., fo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (Canada)
- Joób*, Dr Máté Arpád, mo, Lutheran Church in Hungary (Hungary)
- Joseph*, Mrs Achamma, fl, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (Australia)
- Joseph*, Rev. Jacoba Marlene, fo, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia Bagian Barat (GPIB) (Indonesia)
- Joseph of Patara*, H.G. Bishop Dr , mo, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Argentina)
- Joy*, Mrs Elizabeth Thavamani, fl, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (United Kingdom)
- Joyosa*, Ms Marnelli, yfl, Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippines)
- Kabekabe*, Mrs Tagolyn, fl, Church of Melanesia (Solomon Islands)
- Kabigi*, Rev. Samwel Eloikisa, mo, Moravian Church in Tanzania (Tanzania)
- Kabuika*, Mr Tshibumbu Moise, yml, Eglise du Christ—Lumière du Saint Esprit (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Kamba Kasongo*, Rev. Dr Micheline, fo, Église du Christ au Congo—Communauté presbytérienne de Kinshasa (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Kan*, Rev. Baoping, mo, China Christian Council (China)
- Kandakarjian*, Ms Nazeli, yfl, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) (Lebanon)
- Kang*, Rev. Dr Charlene Youngsook, fo, United Methodist Church (United States of America)
- Kang*, Mr Thomas Hyeono, yml, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil (Brazil)
- Kang*, Rev. Yong Kyu, mo, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Kassis*, Mr Rifat Odeh, ml, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land (Palestine)
- Katoneene*, Bishop Yona Mwesigwa, mo, Church of Uganda (Uganda)
- Kayßer*, Ms Ruth Daniela, yfl, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Kayuwa*, Bishop Jean Baudouin Mikenyi Mike, mo, Eglise du Christ—Lumière du Saint Esprit (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Kayuwa*, Rev. Marie-Jeanne Kapinga, fo, Eglise du Christ—Lumière du Saint Esprit (Congo—Democratic Republic of)

- Kenanidis*, Rev. Dr Konstantinos, mo,  
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- Kent*, Ms Cynthia, fl, United Methodist  
Church (United States of America)
- Kesting*, Very Rev. Dr Sheilagh Margaret, fo,  
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- Khalil*, The V. Rev. Dr Jack, mo, Greek  
Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All  
the East (Lebanon)
- Kim*, Rev. En Young, fo, Reformed Church  
in America (United States of America)
- Kim*, Rev. Gwangjoon, mo, Anglican  
Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Kime*, Archdeacon Karen, fo, Anglican  
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- Kimyaci*, Mrs Ioli, fl, Ecumenical  
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- Kinda*, Rev. Leonard, mo, Association des  
églises évangéliques réformées du Burkina  
Faso (Burkina Faso)
- Kirkham*, Rev. Neil Graham, mo,  
Presbyterian Church of Wales (United  
Kingdom)
- Kiss*, Rev. Tibor, mo, Reformed Church in  
Romania (Romania)
- Kiteon*, Ms Naatia, yfl, Kiribati Protestant  
Church (Kiribati)
- Kitsinian*, Ms Vanna, fl, Armenian Apostolic  
Church (Holy See of Cilicia) (United  
States of America)
- Kkaras*, Rev. Avgoustinos, mo, Church of  
Cyprus (Cyprus)
- Klátik*, Bishop Dr Milos, mo, Evangelical  
Church of the Augsburg Confession in  
Slovakia (Slovak Republic)
- Knapp*, Ms Haley, yfl, United Church of  
Christ (United States of America)
- Kolawole*, Mrs Modupe, fl, Church of  
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- Kolovopoulou*, Prof. Dr Marina, fl, Church of  
Greece (Greece)
- Kominko*, Mrs Iuliia, fl, Russian Orthodox  
Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Ukraine)
- Komuesa Kalunga*, Rev. Adolphe, mo, Église  
du Christ au Congo—Communauté  
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- Königsdörfer*, Ms Judith, yfl, Evangelische  
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- Kopecká*, Ms Martina Viktorie, yfl,  
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- Kopeykin*, Hieromonk Ioann, ymo, Russian  
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- Kosykh*, Rev. Ilya, ymo, Russian Orthodox  
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- Koukoura*, Prof. Dr Dimitra, fl, Ecumenical  
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- Kounthapanya*, Rev. Phonesavanh, ymo, Lao  
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- Kovács-Tóth*, Rev. Márta, fo, Lutheran  
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- Krieger*, Rev. Christian, mo, Union des  
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Lorraine (UEPAL) (France)
- Kriener*, Ms Schulamit, yfl, Evangelische  
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- Kristi*, Rev., yfo, Gereja-Gereja Kristen Jawa  
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- Kurepitu*, Rev. Wilfred Tipu, mo, United  
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- Kyafa*, Mrs Pati Tumba, fl, Reformed  
Church of Christ in Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Kyelula*, Mr Timoth Jonathan, yml,  
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- Kykotis*, H.E. Metropolitan Serafim,  
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- Laferty*, Rev. Matthew A., ymo, United  
Methodist Church (Russian Federation)
- Lamositele Sio*, Rev. Brenda Lydia, fo,  
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Zealand and Polynesia (Samoa)
- Landrau*, Rev. Everdith, yfo, Presbyterian  
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- Larentzakis*, Mag. Emanuela, fl, Ecumenical  
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- Lawrence*, Mrs Elenor I., fl, Church in the  
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- Lawson-Late Zinsou*, Rev. Nadou-Madje  
Martine Grace, fo, Église méthodiste du  
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- Leath*, Rev. Dr Jennifer S., fo, African  
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States of America)

- Lee*, Ms Eun-Young, yfl, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)
- Lee*, Rev. Hannah, fo, United Church of Canada (Canada)
- Lee*, Rev. Dr Hong-Jung, mo, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Lemeni*, Dr Nicolae Adrian, ml, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Lemi*, Bishop Arkanjelo Wani, mo, Africa Inland Church—Sudan (South Sudan)
- Lidim*, Rev. Wardinan Simson, mo, Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis (GKE) (Indonesia)
- Lien*, Mr Chen-Hsiang, ymo, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan)
- Lin*, Rev. Dr Manhong, fo, China Christian Council (China)
- Lindsay*, Rev. Canon John, mo, Scottish Episcopal Church (United Kingdom)
- Lisherness*, Mrs Sara, fl, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Locher*, Rev. Dr Gottfried, mo, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund (Switzerland)
- Lolo*, Ms Thabile, fl, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
- López-Lozano*, Bishop Carlos, mo, Iglesia Española Reformada Episcopal (Spain)
- Lozinsky*, Mr Denys P., yml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Ukraine)
- Lukas*, Bishop Abune, mo, Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Eritrea)
- Lukembeladio Mele*, Ms Ritha, fl, Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la Terre par son Envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Lukudu*, Mrs Jesca Bireri Laki, fl, Episcopal Church of the Sudan (Sudan)
- Lusama*, Rev. Tafue M., mo, Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu E. (Tuvalu)
- Lusilawo-Bandoki*, Rev. Ida, fo, Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la Terre par son Envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Maben*, Rev. Dr Dexter Sudarsan, mo, Church of South India (India)
- Macharia*, Rev. Joseph Maina, mo, African Christian Church and Schools (Kenya)
- Mailoa*, Rev. Dr Elizabeth Christina, fo, Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM) (Indonesia)
- Mailoa*, Rev. Merry, fo, Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera (GMIH) (Indonesia)
- Majekodunmi*, Prof. Ajesola Adepeju, fl, Methodist Church Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Majiza*, Rev. Charity, fo, Uniting Church in Australia (Australia)
- Makarios of Kenya and Irinoupolis*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr , mo, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa (Kenya)
- Makgoba*, Mrs Lungi, fl, Anglican Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Makgoba*, Most Rev. Thabo Cecil, mo, Anglican Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Malasusa*, Bishop Dr Alex Gehaz, mo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (Tanzania)
- Malowa*, Rev. Rose Besnart, fo, Reformed Church in Zambia (Zambia)
- Mambo*, Ms Rosia Lunda, yfl, United Church of Zambia (Zambia)
- Manukyan*, Bishop Hovakim, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Maraea*, Rev. Taaroanui, mo, Eglise Protestante Maohi (French Polynesia)
- Marigza*, Bishop Reuel Norman, mo, United Church of Christ in the Philippines (Philippines)
- Markos*, Bishop Antonious, mo, Coptic Orthodox Church (South Africa)
- Marpaung*, Rev. Adolv Bastian, mo, Christian Protestant Angkola Church (GKPA) (Indonesia)
- Marrero Gutiérrez*, Rev. Francisco, mo, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (Cuba)
- Marrow*, Rev. Peter Gai Lual, mo, Presbyterian Church of the South Sudan (Sudan)
- Martzelos*, Prof. Dr Georgios, ml, Church of Greece (Greece)
- Masemene*, Rev. Tseliso Simeon, mo, Lesotho Evangelical Church (Lesotho)
- Masih Siraj*, Rev. Arif, mo, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (Pakistan)
- Massie*, Rev. Adrie O., mo, Gereja Protestan di Sulawesi Tenggara (GEPUSLTRA) (Indonesia)

- Mathew*, Ms Arlene Ann, fl, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (United States of America)
- Mathew*, Mr Noble John, ml, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (United Kingdom)
- Matiu*, Mr Bardia Robert, ml, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (New Zealand)
- Matondo Mbiyeyi*, Rev. Joseph, mo, Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la Terre par son Envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Mausesian*, Rev. Dr Sergey, mo, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Belarus)
- Maxim of Western America*, H.G. Bishop, mo, Serbian Orthodox Church (United States of America)
- Mbarga*, Mrs Bernadette Françoise, fl, Église presbytérienne camerounaise (Cameroon)
- Mbingasani Maluavanga*, Mrs Marceline, fl, Église du Christ au Congo—Communauté baptiste du Congo (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Mbise*, Mrs Lydia, fl, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (Tanzania)
- Mbua*, Ms Susannah Fende, yfl, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (Cameroon)
- McCullough*, Rev. John L., mo, United Methodist Church (United States of America)
- McGeoch*, Rev. Graham Gerald, mo, Church of Scotland (United Kingdom)
- McLarty*, Mr Iain, yml, Church of Scotland (United Kingdom)
- Medley*, Rev. Dr Roy, mo, American Baptist Churches in the USA (United States of America)
- Meimaris*, Very Rev. Dr Theodoros, mo, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Turkey)
- Mekel*, Ms Peggy Adeline, fl, Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) (Indonesia)
- Messelu*, Mr Yilikal Shiferaw, ml, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
- Metso*, Prof. Dr Pekka, ml, Orthodox Church of Finland (Finland)
- Meyendorff*, Prof. Dr Paul, ml, Orthodox Church in America (United States of America)
- Mikhail*, Mr Bishoy M., ml, Coptic Orthodox Church (United States of America)
- Milki Wehbe*, Mrs Maha, fl, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Lebanon)
- Mitchell*, Anne, fl, Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) (Canada)
- Mobbie*, Rev. Dr Titus Risimati, mo, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (South Africa)
- Mojuin*, Rev. Jensey, mo, Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) (Malaysia)
- Möller*, Dr Ulrich, mo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Moore*, Rev. Sarah, fo, United Reformed Church (United Kingdom)
- Mor Aphrem*, H.G. Mathews, mo, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (India)
- Moraes*, Bishop Stanley Da Silva, mo, Igreja Metodista no Brasil (Brazil)
- Moreno-Rivas*, Bishop Rafael, mo, Iglesia Metodista de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico)
- Morfi*, Dr Xanthi, fl, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Greece)
- Mourad*, Rev. Georges, mo, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (Lebanon)
- Mrdjenovic*, Very Rev. Fr Nemanja, ymo, Serbian Orthodox Church (Australia)
- Muangsak*, Rev. Sayam, mo, Church of Christ in Thailand (Thailand)
- Muchiri*, Mrs Veronica Njoki, fl, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (Kenya)
- Muhali*, Mr Muhali, ml, United Church of Zambia (Zambia)
- Mukamana*, Pasteure Jeannette, fo, Eglise presbytérienne au Rwanda (Rwanda)
- Mulari*, Ms Marjut, yfl, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)
- Müller*, Rev. Iára, fo, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil (Brazil)
- Munyamasoko Gato*, Rev. Corneil, mo, Association des Eglises baptistes au Rwanda (Rwanda)
- Musa*, Rev. Manasseh Adamu, mo, Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (Nigeria)

- Musemakweli*, Rev. Dr Elisée, mo, Eglise presbytérienne au Rwanda (Rwanda)
- Mwaine*, Bishop Joseph Ntombura, mo, Methodist Church in Kenya (Kenya)
- Mwololo*, Rev. Luke N., mo, Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (Kenya)
- Na*, Very Rev. Dr Daniel, mo, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Republic of Korea)
- Naflo*, Rev. Rui Garcia, mo, Igreja Evangélica Baptista em Angola (Angola)
- Najarian*, H.G. Bishop Haigazoun, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Australia)
- Nakaisulan*, Rev. Supina, fo, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan)
- Nalbandian*, H.G. Bishop Armash Hagop, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Syrian Arab Republic)
- Nassis*, Rev. Dr Chrysostom, mo, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Greece)
- Nathaniel*, Rev. Canon Dr Leslie, mo, Church of England (United Kingdom)
- Nazaryan*, Dr Karen, ml, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Ncube*, Mrs Sithembile, fl, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe)
- Ndblumbi*, Bishop Amos, mo, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe)
- Ndimubakunzi*, Rev. Jeanne Françoise, fo, Eglise anglicane du Burundi (Burundi)
- Negeri*, Rev. Dr Wakseyoum Idosa, mo, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Ethiopia)
- Nelyubova*, Mrs Margarita, fl, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)
- Ng*, Rev. Bettsy, fo, Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (Hong Kong, China)
- Ngaha*, Dr Arapera Bella, fl, Methodist Church of New Zealand (New Zealand)
- Ngutu Mangitukulu*, Pasteur Eloi-Paulin, mo, Église du Christ au Congo—Communauté baptiste du Congo (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Nicholovos*, H.G. Bishop Zachariah Mar, mo, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (United States of America)
- Nifon of Targoviste*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr , mo, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Niittyvuopio*, Ms Erva, fl, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)
- Nikol*, Ms Ina-Maria, fl, Katholisches Bistum der Alt-Katholiken in Deutschland (Germany)
- Nishihara*, Rev. Prof. Dr Renta, mo, Anglican Church in Japan (Japan)
- Nlandu Mwilu*, Ms Francine, fl, Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la Terre par son Envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Noffsinger*, Mr Stanley, ml, Church of the Brethren (United States of America)
- Novikau*, Mr Ihar, yml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Belarus)
- N'Souami*, Rev. Dr Patrice, mo, Eglise évangélique du Congo (Congo, Republic)
- Ntshoturi*, Archbishop Bernard, mo, Eglise anglicane du Burundi (Burundi)
- Ntombura*, Mrs Pauline Nkoroi, fl, Methodist Church in Kenya (Kenya)
- Nyaboho*, Bishop Martin Blaise, mo, Eglise anglicane du Burundi (Burundi)
- Nyikako*, Mrs Elizabeth Nyawok Ajak, fl, Presbyterian Church of the South Sudan (South Sudan)
- Nyiransengimana*, Rev. Immaculée, fo, Province de l'Eglise anglicane du Rwanda (Rwanda)
- Nzoh Asumu Alu*, Rev. Manuel, mo, Igreja Reformada Presbiteriana de Guinea Ecuatorial (Equatorial Guinea)
- Ocoleanu*, Rev. Professor Dr. Picu, mo, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Ódor*, Rev. Balázs, mo, Reformed Church in Hungary (Hungary)
- Ojanen*, Dr Hanna-Mari Kristiina, fl, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)
- Okoh*, Ms Ijeoma, yfl, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) (Nigeria)
- Okoh*, The Most Rev. Nicholas D., mo, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) (Nigeria)
- Ondji'i Toung*, Rev. Dr Richard, mo, Église presbytérienne camerounaise (Cameroon)
- Ondo Assoumou*, Rev. Edzang, mo, Eglise évangélique du Gabon (Gabon)

- Onyango*, Ms Linda Louise Awuor, yfl, Anglican Church of Kenya (Kenya)
- Opoko*, Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael, mo, Methodist Church Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Ositelu*, Mrs Mary Temitope, yfl, Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide (Nigeria)
- Ositelu*, Archbishop Dr Rufus Okikiola, mo, Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide (Nigeria)
- Osthatheos*, Bishop Issac Mor, mo, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (India)
- Owens*, Mr Nathan, ymo, United Free Church of Scotland (United Kingdom)
- Padele*, Rev. Dr Yuberlian, fo, Christian Church of Central Sulawesi (GKST) (Indonesia)
- Paik*, Sister Agathi, fo, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Republic of Korea)
- Pang*, Rev. Nicholas, ymo, Anglican Church of Canada (Canada)
- Papakosta*, Ms Eleni, fl, Church of Cyprus (Greece)
- Parker*, Dr Evelyn L., fl, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (United States of America)
- Parrish Lucas*, Rev. Kelli, fo, United Church of Christ (United States of America)
- Parsamyan*, Rev. Aram Mesrop, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (France)
- Parsons*, Rev. Gradye, mo, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Pastukhova*, Mrs Katsiaryna, fl, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Belarus)
- Pau*, Rev. Yam Kho, mo, Myanmar Baptist Convention (Myanmar)
- Pausz*, Mag. Elisabeth, yfl, Evangelische Kirche A. und H.B. in Österreich (Austria)
- Pawis*, Ms Lorna, fl, United Church of Canada (Canada)
- Peña*, Mr Carlos, ml, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (United States of America)
- Peregudin*, Mr Konstantin, yml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)
- Pereira do Lago*, Bishop Adonias, mo, Igreja Metodista no Brasil (Brazil)
- Petersen*, Bishop Sofie, fo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (Greenland)
- Petrecca*, Rev. Hector Osvaldo, mo, Iglesia Cristiana Biblica (Argentina)
- Petrovsky*, Mr Dmitry, ml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)
- Peura*, Bishop Simo, mo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)
- Phaswana*, Bishop Ndanganeni, mo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Philaret*, Very Rev. Archimandrite, mo, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)
- Philip*, Mr Modayil Mani, ml, Church of South India (India)
- Philoxenos*, Bishop Dr Isaac Mar, mo, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (India)
- Piga*, Rev. Anton, mo, Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera (GMIH) (Indonesia)
- Pihigia*, Rev. Arthur, mo, Ekalesia Niue (Niue)
- Pillay*, Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry, mo, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Pina-Cabral*, Bishop José Jorge, mo, Lusitanian Church of Portugal (Portugal)
- Pindo*, Rev. Jan Calvin, mo, Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) (Indonesia)
- Pirri-Simonian*, Ms Teny, fl, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) (Switzerland)
- Pitts*, Dr Tyrone S., mo, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. (United States of America)
- Plaatjies Van Huffel*, Dr Mary-Anne, fo, Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Podaru*, Mr Adrian, ml, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Popescu*, Rev. Cristian, fo, Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia (Czech Republic)
- Powell*, Rev. Dr Staccato, mo, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (United States of America)
- Powell*, Ms Susan, yfl, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (United States of America)

- Pozdnyaev*, Rev. Denis (Dionisy), mo,  
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- Preston*, Ms Alison Jane, fl, Anglican Church  
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- Prodhan*, Ms Roma Ann Nisha, fl, Church  
of North India (India)
- Purba*, Mrs Jonarita Elvi, fl, Gereja  
Kristen Protestan Simalungun (GKPS)  
(Indonesia)
- Qamar*, Rev. Reuben, mo, Presbyterian  
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- Quawas*, Dr Audeh B., ml, Greek Orthodox  
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- Quinones*, Rev. Dr Ivelisse, fo, United  
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- Rafaramalala Trimozafy*, Rev. Dyna, fo,  
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(Madagascar)
- Rajohns*, Rev. Dina, fo, Eglise protestante  
unie de France (France)
- Raju*, Ms Lijin, yfl, Malankara Orthodox  
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- Rakoto*, Dr Endor Modeste, mo, Eglise  
luthérienne malgache (Madagascar)
- Ramisarivelo Rasendrabasina*, Mrs Zoé,  
fl, Eglise de Jésus-Christ à Madagascar  
(Madagascar)
- Ranarivelo*, Archbishop Samoela Jaona, mo,  
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Ocean (Mauritius)
- Ranojo*, Rev. Dindo D., mo, Iglesia Filipina  
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- Rasendrabasina*, Rev. Lala Haja, mo,  
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(Madagascar)
- Razañimamonjy*, Ms Sylvia, yfl, Eglise  
luthérienne malgache (Madagascar)
- Reis Oliveira*, Rev. Sandra Cristina, fo,  
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- Reyes, Jr.*, Rev. Fr Rex R. B., mo, Episcopal  
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- Rhee*, Ms Hanbeet, yfl, Presbyterian Church  
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- Rieth*, Rev. Klaus, mo, Evangelische Kirche  
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Friends General Conference (United  
States of America)
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- Senara*, Rev. Elder Tautiaga, mo,  
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Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)
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Lutheran Church in Liberia (Liberia)
- Shmaliy*, Very Rev. Vladimir, mo, Russian  
Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)  
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- Siai*, Rev. Bernard, mo, United Church in  
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- Siloi*, Rev. Kinim, mo, Evangelical Lutheran  
Church of Papua New Guinea (Papua  
New Guinea)
- Simane*, Rev. Mosweu, mo, United  
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- Sitorus*, Rev. Dr Bishop Langsung Maruli,  
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- Siwa*, Bishop Ziphozihle, mo, Methodist  
Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Sizonenko*, Archpriest Dmitry, mo, Russian  
Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)  
(Russian Federation)
- Smith*, Mr Ian, mo, Churches of Christ in  
Australia (Australia)
- Smith*, Ms Laura, fl, Presbyterian Church in  
Canada (Canada)
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of the Church of Christ in China (Hong  
Kong, China)
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- Speranskaya*, Ms Elena, fl, Russian Orthodox  
Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian  
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- Spies*, Ms Miriam, yfl, United Church of  
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- Spyrou*, Mr Michael, yml, Church of Cyprus  
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- Stanease*, Mr Andrei, ml, Romanian  
Orthodox Church (France)
- Starcova*, Ms Iveta, fl, Orthodox Church in  
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Anglican Church of Canada (Canada)
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Orthodox Church (Romania)
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- Sudiarjo*, Rev. Supriatno, mo, Gereja Kristen  
Pasundan (GKP) (Indonesia)

- Sub*, Rev. Ho-Suhk, mo, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)
- Sule-Saa*, Rev. Dr Solomon Sumani, mo, Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Ghana)
- Sumampouw*, Rev. Dr Liesje Augustina, fo, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia (GPI) (Indonesia)
- Sumbayak*, Rev. El Imanson, mo, Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun (GKPS) (Indonesia)
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- Takei*, Deacon Toru Iliya, mo, Orthodox Church in Japan (Japan)
- Tamer*, Prof. Dr Georges, ml, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Germany)
- Tampi*, Rev. Piet Marthen, mo, Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) (Indonesia)
- Tampubolon*, Rev. Welman P., mo, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) (Indonesia)
- Tana*, Rev. Diana, fo, Methodist Church of New Zealand (New Zealand)
- Tanaka*, Rev. Jinichi Dimitrios, mo, Orthodox Church in Japan (Japan)
- Tanielian*, H.G. Bishop Anoushavan, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) (United States of America)
- Tarigan*, Rev. Simon, mo, Gereja Batak Karo Protestan (GBKP) (Indonesia)
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- Tawfik*, Prof. Dr Wedad, fl, Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Tche*, Rev. Seung Un, mo, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States of America (United States of America)
- Tchoche Mel*, Rev. Prof. Félix, mo, Église Harriste (Ivory Coast)
- Teklu*, Mr Stalin Gebreselassie, ml, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
- Telaumbanua*, Rev. Dr Tuhoni, mo, Banua Niha Keriso Protestan Kantor Sinode (BNKP) (Indonesia)
- Temple*, Rt Rev. Arnold C., mo, Methodist Church Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone)
- Ter Grigoryan*, Mr Suren, ml, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Terfassa*, Mr Charra Tesfaye, yml, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Ethiopia)
- Thalathayil*, Rev. Sam Koshy, mo, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (India)
- Thar Kyi*, Mr Win Htut, yml, Myanmar Baptist Convention (Myanmar)
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- Theophilose*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr Kuriakose, mo, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (India)
- Thomas*, Rev. John, mo, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (India)
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- Tima*, Mr Lasalo, yml, Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu E. (Tuvalu)
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- Tjindra*, Ms Linayati, fl, Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) (Indonesia)
- Toma*, H.G. Dr George, mo, Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East (United States of America)
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- Tziouvanni*, Mrs Sonia, yfl, Church of Cyprus (United Kingdom)
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- Udofia*, H.G. The Most Rev. Emmanuel Josiah, mo, The African Church (Nigeria)
- Uka*, Rt Rev. Prof Emele Mba, mo, Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Uka*, Mrs Mgbechi Ogbonne, fl, Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (Nigeria)

- Ukoha*, Rev. Ukoha Ngwobia, mo,  
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Ulanday*, Rev. Jonathan R., mo, United  
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- van der Kamp*, Rev. Klaas, mo, Protestant  
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- Van Kampen*, Mrs Kristin, yfl, Reformed  
Church in America (United States of  
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- Varghese*, Ms Mariam Ceena, yfl, Malankara  
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Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)  
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- Vasyutin*, Rev. Alexander, mo, Russian  
Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)  
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- Velilla De Medio*, Mrs Ana María, fl, Iglesia  
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- Vidisson*, Rev. Thorvaldur, mo, Evangelical  
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- Viihma*, Rev. Urmas, mo, Estonian  
Evangelical Lutheran Church (Estonia)
- Voulgari*, Mrs Aikaterini, yfl, Church of  
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- Waclawek*, Bishop Jan, mo, Silesian  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg  
Confession  
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- Wairimu*, Mr Samuel Nderi, yml,  
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National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.  
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- Waqairatu*, Mrs Ioana Banivetau, fl,  
Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma  
(Fiji)
- Waqairatu*, Rev. Dr Tuikilakila Kolilevu, mo,  
Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma  
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- Waspada*, Bishop I. Ketut Siaga, mo,  
Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali (GKPB)  
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Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland  
(Germany)
- Waszuk Sas*, Mr Pablo S., ml, Iglesia  
Metodista en el Uruguay (Uruguay)
- Watkins*, Rev. Dr Sharon, fo, Christian  
Church (Disciples of Christ) in the  
United States of America (United States  
of America)
- Waworuntu*, Mr Tony, ml, Gereja Protestan  
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(Indonesia)
- Weibye*, Ms Miriam Jane, yfl, Church of  
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- Wenge*, Rt Rev. Hon. Giegere, mo,  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua  
New Guinea (Papua New Guinea)
- White*, Bishop John F., mo, African  
Methodist Episcopal Church (United  
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- Wibowo*, Rev. Dr Djoko Prasetyo Adi,  
mo, Gereja-Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ)  
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(Disciples of Christ) in the United States  
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- Williams*, Rev. Thomas Jeffrey, mo, Union of  
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- Willms Labes*, Ms Katilene, yfl, Igreja  
Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no  
Brasil (Brazil)
- Woldkidane*, Sister Tsige Mariam Taddese, fo,  
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church  
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- Wolfe*, Bishop Dean, mo, The Episcopal  
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- Wong*, Rev. Dr Kee Sing, mo, Methodist Church in Malaysia (Malaysia)
- Wood*, Rev. Carol, fo, Presbyterian Church in Canada (Canada)
- Wright Torres*, Mrs Anita Sue, fl, Igreja Presbiteriana Unida do Brasil (Brazil)
- Wu*, Rev. Wei, mo, China Christian Council (China)
- Yang*, Ms Ya-Chi, yfl, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan)
- Yofstabe*, Ambassador Dimetros-Gebremariam, ml, Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Eritrea)
- Yoku*, Rev. Albert, mo, Gereja Kristen Injili Di Tanah Papua (GKITP) (Indonesia)
- Yoteni*, Dr Fransina, fl, Gereja Kristen Injili Di Tanah Papua (GKITP) (Indonesia)
- Youannes*, H.G. Bishop, mo, Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Zacharie*, Rev. Kalsakau Urtalo, mo, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (Vanuatu)
- Zeyi Ndingambote*, Rev. Simon, mo, Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la Terre par son Envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Zulu*, Dr Edwin, ml, Reformed Church in Zambia (Zambia)
- Advisors to the Delegations**
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- Ajaji*, Rev. Prof. Olukonyinsola, mo, Methodist Church Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Akamisoko*, Rt Rev. Duke Timothy, mo, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) (Nigeria)
- Allan*, Dr Gail, ml, United Church of Canada (Canada)
- Bambedi Mukishi*, Mr Augustin, ml, Église du Christ au Congo—Communauté mennonite au Congo (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Beugre*, Mr Mobio Romain, mo, Église Harriste (Ivory Coast)
- Bosien*, Rev. Heike, fo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Byun*, Rev. Chang-Bae, mo, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Cheon*, Rev. Dr Min Heui, fo, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
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- Devakadasham*, Rt Rev. Gnanasigamony, mo, Church of South India (India)
- Devanandan*, Rev. Prince, mo, Methodist Church of New Zealand (New Zealand)
- Driver*, Rev. Dr Jeffrey, mo, Anglican Church of Australia (Australia)
- Dutney*, Rev. Prof Andrew, mo, Uniting Church in Australia (Australia)
- Formerod*, Rev. Serge, mo, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund (Switzerland)
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- Gu*, Mr Mengfei, ml, China Christian Council (China)
- Gul*, Rev. Sabir, mo, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (Pakistan)
- Gwilym*, Rev. Gwynn ap, mo, Church in Wales (United Kingdom)
- Han*, Rev. Eui Jong, mo, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Republic of Korea)
- Ice*, Rev. Demianus, mo, Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera (GMIH) (Indonesia)
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- Kato*, Rev. Makoto, mo, United Church of Christ in Japan (Japan)
- Lago Pereira*, Mr Lucas, yml, Igreja Metodista no Brasil (Brazil)
- Lavergne*, Rev. André, mo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (Canada)
- Leon Pacheco*, Pastora Sandra Lisbeth, fo, Iglesia Pentecostal de Chile (Chile)
- Lin Cheng*, Mrs Ming-Min, fl, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan)
- Molander*, Rev. Kristin, fo, Church of Sweden (Sweden)

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*Noya*, Rev. Jacob, mo, Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM) (Indonesia)  
*Nyobole*, Rev. Vuyani Gladstone, mo, Methodist Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)  
*Paxson*, Thomas, ml, Religious Society of Friends: Friends General Conference (United States of America)  
*Ramulondi*, Rev. Mukondeleli, mo, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)  
*Rodrigo*, Rev. Dushantha Lakshman, mo, Church of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)  
*Ruengsan-ajin*, Rev. Dr Rung, mo, Church of Christ in Thailand (Thailand)  
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*Shaw*, Rev. William J., mo, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. (United States of America)  
*Shin*, Rev. Bog Hyun, mo, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)  
*Sidorak, Jr.*, Rev. Dr Stephen J., mo, United Methodist Church (United States of America)  
*Sixt-Gateuille*, Rev. Claire, fo, Eglise protestante unie de France (France)  
*Skov Sorensen*, Dr Jørgen, ml, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (Denmark)  
*Song*, Dr Cyprian, mo, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)  
*Sotiriadis*, Rev. Archimandrite Ignatios, mo, Church of Greece (Greece)  
*Suama*, Rev. I. Nengah, mo, Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali (GKPB) (Indonesia)  
*Sumadikarya*, Rev. Emeritus Kuntadi, mo, Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) (Indonesia)  
*Tamaeol*, Rev. Roy Dekky, mo, Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) (Indonesia)  
*Tannous*, Rev. Ashraf, ymo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land (Palestine)  
*Tarr*, Rev. Zoltán, mo, Reformed Church in Hungary (Hungary)  
*Tatem*, Rev. David, mo, United Reformed Church (United Kingdom)

*Thompson*, Rev. Karen Georgia Antoinette, fo, United Church of Christ (United States of America)  
*Tuioti*, Rev. Dr Eteuati, mo, Methodist Church of Samoa (Samoa)  
*Waweru*, Rev. Lucy Wambui, fo, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (Kenya)  
*Welsh*, Rev. Dr Robert, mo, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States of America (United States of America)  
*Zacharias*, H.E. Dr. Suffragan Metropolitan Mar Theophilus, mo, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (India)

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*(present at the assembly and not attending as delegates)*

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*Ortega Suárez*, Rev. Dr Ofelia, fo, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (Cuba)  
*Tanner*, Dame Mary, fl, Church of England (United Kingdom)

### **Members of the retiring central committee of the WCC**

*(present at the assembly and not attending as delegates)*

*Biere*, Ms Christina, fl, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)  
*Jung*, Ms HaeSun, fl, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)  
*Karagdag*, Ms Carmencita, fl, Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippines)  
*Kathindi*, Rev. Canon Nangula, fo, Anglican Church of Southern Africa (Namibia)  
*Lavatai*, Rev. Sanele Faasua, mo, Methodist Church of Samoa (Germany)  
*Michau*, Dr Marie-Christine, fl, Eglise protestante unie de France (France)  
*Park*, Rev. Prof. Dr Seong-Won, mo, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)

*Pickens*, Rev. Dr Larry, mo, United Methodist Church (United States of America)  
*Rytönen*, Rev. Aaro, mo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)  
*Schoon-Tanis*, Rev. Gretchen, fo, Reformed Church in America (United States of America)  
*Schürer-Behrmann*, Rev. Frank, mo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)  
*Wejryd*, Archbishop Dr Anders, mo, Church of Sweden (Sweden)

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*Achtelstetter*, Rev. Karin, fo, World Association for Christian Communication—WACC (Canada)  
*Adolf-Schulteis*, Rev. Felipe, mo, Latin American Council of Churches (Ecuador)  
*Agarwal*, Dr Sushant, ml, ACT Alliance (India)  
*Ahn*, Dr Jae Woong, mo, World Alliance of YMCAs (Republic of Korea)  
*Åkesson*, Mr Johan, ml, Church of Sweden (Sweden)  
*Aminaka*, Rev. Shoko, fo, National Christian Council in Japan (Japan)  
*Anders*, Rev. Christoph, mo, Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW) (Germany)  
*Anderson*, Rev. Dr Lesley, mo, Caribbean Conference of Churches (Trinidad and Tobago)  
*Arce Valentin*, Rev. Dora Ester, fo, World Communion of Reformed Churches (Switzerland)  
*Barnett-Cowan*, Rev. Canon Dr Alyson, fo, Anglican Communion (United Kingdom)  
*Barraza Díaz*, Mr Helis Hernan, ml, World Communion of Reformed Churches (Colombia)  
*Bencke*, Rev. Romi Márcia, fo, National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil (Brazil)

*Biehl*, Rev. Dr Michael, mo, Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW) (Germany)  
*Boyce*, Rev. Sandy, fo, World Federation of Diaconal Associations (Australia)  
*Brown*, Dr Stephen Glencross, ml, Globethics.net (Switzerland)  
*Bruning*, Mr Hans, ml, Stichting Rotterdam (Netherlands)  
*Buck*, Rev. Dr Charles, mo, United Church of Christ—Wider Church Ministries (United States of America)  
*Callam*, Rev. Dr Neville, mo, Baptist World Alliance (United States of America)  
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*Champ*, Major Jim, mo, Salvation Army (Canada)  
*Chang Kokai*, Rev. Hikari, fo, United Methodist Women (Japan)  
*Chhantge*, Rev. Rothangliani, fo, Baptist World Alliance (United States of America)  
*Christie*, Rev. Dr James, mo, Canadian Council of Churches (Canada)  
*Christoffersen*, Rev. Mads, mo, National Council of Churches in Denmark (Denmark)  
*Clavairolly*, Rev. François, mo, Protestant Federation of France (France)  
*Cochrane*, Commissioner William, mo, Salvation Army (United Kingdom)  
*Cortez*, Ms Shiela Marie B., yfl, National Council of Churches in the Philippines (Philippines)  
*Cowan*, Rev. Dr Collin Isaiah, mo, Council for World Mission—CWM (Singapore)  
*Curlewis*, Rev. Tara, fo, National Council of Churches in Australia (Australia)  
*da Silva*, Bishop Francisco de Assis, mo, ACT Alliance (Brazil)  
*Denecke*, Rev. Norbert, mo, Lutheran World Federation German National Committee of the LWF (Germany)  
*Densky*, Mr Bernd Reiner, mo, Council of Christian Churches in Germany (Germany)  
*Dietschy*, Rev. Dr Beat, mo, Bread for All (Switzerland)  
*Diop*, Rev. Dr Ganoune, mo, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (United States of America)

- Dolly*, Dr Abu Samson, ml, Christian Council of Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Duraisamy*, Dr Daniel Ezhilarasu, ml, All India Association for Christian Higher Education (India)
- Edwards*, Rev. Aled, mo, CYTUN: Churches Together in Wales (United Kingdom)
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- Elliott*, Ms Christine, fl, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (United Kingdom)
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- García*, Rev. César, mo, Mennonite World Conference (Colombia)
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- Good*, Rev. Jonathan, mo, Habitat for Humanity International (United States of America)
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*Ob*, Dr Michael, mo, The Lausanne Movement (Japan)  
*Omiya*, Rev. Hiroshi, mo, Japan Bible Society (Japan)  
*Oyewole*, Mr Adejare Azeez Oladele, mo, Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (United Kingdom)  
*Palapathwala*, Rev. Dr Ruwan, mo, Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East (United Arab Emirates)  
*Panggalo*, Rev. Indu' Yohanis, mo, Gereja Toraja (Indonesia)  
*Philip*, Mrs Anila, fl, Church of South India (India)  
*Raut*, Rev. Roderick, mo, United Church of Christ in the Philippines (Philippines)  
*Rolfsen*, Rev. Dr Raag, mo, Areopagos (Norway)  
*Sanmiguel Cardona*, Rev. Luis Fernando, mo, Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia (Colombia)  
*Schneider*, Frère Richard, mo, Taizé Community (France)  
*Senara*, Mrs Olita Fa'asifo, fl, Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (Samoa)  
*Sevastyanov*, Mr Leonid, ml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)  
*Shin*, Frère Han Yol, mo, Taizé Community (France)  
*Siwu*, Elder Herlina, fl, Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) (Indonesia)  
*Thompson*, Rev. Jan, mo, Church of the Brethren (United States of America)  
*Tuioti*, Mrs Maselina, fl, Methodist Church of Samoa (Samoa)  
*Udal*, Rev. Canon Joanna, fo, Lambeth Palace (United Kingdom)  
*Ueberschär*, Dr Ellen, fl, Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag (Germany)  
*van Beek*, Mr Huibert, ml, Global Christian Forum (France)  
*Van Doorn*, Father Hendrik Thomas Maria, mo, Katholieke Vereniging voor Oecumene (Netherlands)

*Walker*, Rev. Dr Christopher Channon, mo, Uniting Church in Australia (Australia)  
*Wen*, Rev. Ge, mo, China Christian Council (China)  
*Worku*, Mr Tamiru Abera, ml, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)  
*Yim*, Rev. Dr Sung Bihn, mo, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)  
*Zimmermann*, Rev. Magdalena, fo, Mission 21 (Switzerland)

### Guests

*Atesyan*, H.E. Aram, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)  
*Bavicchi*, Ms Mariangela, fl, UNAIDS (Switzerland)  
*De Chickera*, Bishop Duleep, mo, Church of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)  
*Ernjakyan*, Rev. Fr Aghan, ymo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)  
*Gbowee*, Ms Leymah, fl, Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa (United States of America)  
*Ghenberji*, Mr Kabriel, ml, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)  
*He*, Dr Qi, ml, (United States of America)  
*Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan*, Most Rev. Dr, mo, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (India)  
*Karekin II*, H.H. Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, mo, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)  
*Kim*, Dr Myung Hyuk, ml, Korean Evangelical Fellowship (Republic of Korea)  
*Kim*, Rev. Seung Wook, mo, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)  
*Kobia*, Rev. Dr Samuel, mo, Methodist Church in Kenya (Kenya)  
*Langerak*, Rev. Ana, fo, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (United States of America)  
*Lapsley*, Rev. Michael, mo, Institute for Healing of Memories (South Africa)  
*Loeser*, Frère Prieur Alois, ml, Taizé Community (France)

*Ma*, Dr JungJa, fl, Korean Assemblies of God (United Kingdom)  
*Manda*, Mr Charles, ml, Institute for Healing of Memories (South Africa)  
*Martin*, Ms Jennifer, fl, Council for World Mission—CWM (Jamaica)  
*Matthey*, Rev. Jacques, mo, Swiss Protestant Church Federation (Switzerland)  
*Mella*, Ms Connie Semy P, fl, National Council of Churches in the Philippines (Philippines)  
*Pang*, Rev. Chi Yil, mo, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)  
*Raiser*, Dr Elisabeth, fl, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)  
*Raiser*, Rev. Dr Konrad, mo, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)  
*Rantakari*, Ambassador Markus Ilari, ml, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)  
*Rashed*, Ms Hafeeza Elaine, fl, Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa (United States of America)  
*Sidibé*, Mr Michel, ml, UNAIDS (Switzerland)  
*Smith*, Ms Sally, fl, UNAIDS (Switzerland)  
*Tveit*, Mrs Anna Bjorvatten, fl, Church of Norway (Switzerland)  
*Williams*, Rev. Dr Andrew, mo, Uniting Church in Australia (Australia)  
*Yu*, Mrs Hua, fl, (United States of America)

#### **Guest of other faiths**

*Akagawa*, Rev. Keiichi, Risho Kosei-kai, (Japan)  
*Helmi*, Dr Ali Mohammad, Islamic Culture and Relations Organization Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, (Iran)  
*Macdonald-Radcliff*, Revd. Canon Alistair John, The King Abdullah Centre for Interreligious Dialogue (KAICIID Vienna), (United Kingdom)  
*Makhlouf*, Ms Sanaa, The American University of Cairo, (Egypt)  
*Motawy*, Ms Yasmine, The American University in Cairo, (Egypt)  
*Murayama*, Ms Hiroyo, Risho Kosei-kai, (Japan)  
*Pellach*, Ms Peta Jones, The Elijah Interfaith Institute, (Israel)

*Puniyani*, Prof. Ram, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, (India)  
*Raffel*, Ms Janet, International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), (United States of America)  
*Rosen*, Ms Amirit, Judaism, (Israel)  
*Sandmel*, Rabbi David Fox, International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), (United States of America)  
*Suwanbubba*, Dr Parichart, Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University Bangkok, Thailand, (Thailand)  
*Syamsuddin*, Prof. Dr M. Din, Muhammadiyah, (Indonesia)  
*Tawfiq*, Mr Idris, Islam, (Egypt)  
*Watanabe*, Rev. Yasutaka, Risho Kosei-Kai, (Japan)  
*Weissman*, Dr Deborah, International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), (Israel)

#### **Korean Host Committee**

*Kim*, Sam-Whan, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Moderator  
*Bang*, Ji-Il, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Lim*, In-Sik, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Kim*, Sun-Do, Korean Methodist Church, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Cho*, Yong-Gi, Korean Assemblies of God, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Kim*, Jang-Hwan, KBC, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Park*, Chong-Soon, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Park*, Hyung-Kyu, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Kim*, Sung-Soo, Anglican Church of Korea, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Choi*, Kun-Ho, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Park*, Sang-Jeung, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Shin*, Kyung-Ha, Korean Methodist Church, mo, Senior Advisor  
*Cho*, Sung-Gi, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Director General

- Kim*, Young-Ju, Korean Methodist Church, mo, Secretary General
- Hur*, Won-Koo, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Local Host Committee
- Min*, Young-Ran, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Local Host Committee
- Song*, Young-Woong, Evangelical, mo, Local Host Committee
- Ham*, Sung-Ho, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo, Local Host Committee
- Ahn*, Young-Ro, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo
- Bak*, Do-Woong, mo
- Cha*, Kyoung-Ae, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fl
- Chae*, Eun-Ha, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fo
- Chae*, Soo-Il, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo
- Chang*, Hwi-Yul, Korean Assemblies of God, mo
- Chang*, Jong-Hyun, PGAK, mo
- Chang*, Sang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo
- Chang*, Young-Il, mo
- Cho*, Il-Rae, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo
- Cho*, Kyoung-Yual, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Choi*, Ei-Woo, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Choi*, Gap-Jong, mo
- Choi*, Hee-Boum, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo
- Choi*, Jae-Boon, ml
- Choi*, Moo-Yeol, mo
- Choi*, Nak-Jung, PGAK, mo
- Choi*, Sung-Kwang, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo
- Choi*, Sung-Kyu, Korean Assemblies of God, mo
- Chun*, Byung-Geum, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo
- Han*, Eui-Jong, Korean Orthodox Church, mo
- Han*, Hun-Soo, ml
- Han*, Kook-Yum, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fo
- Han*, Tae-Soo, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo
- Hong*, Ki-Sook, Presbyterian Church in Korea, fl
- Hwang*, Seung-Ryong, mo
- Im*, Myung Kyu, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo
- In*, Myung-Jin, Presbyterian Church in Korea, Mo
- Jang*, Dong-Joo, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Jeon*, Yong-Jae, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Jeon*, Yong-Tae, ml
- Ji*, Hyung-Eun, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo
- Ji*, Yong-Soo, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo
- Jung*, Ji-Kang, mo
- Jung*, Kap-Young, mo
- Jung*, Yang-Hee, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Jung*, Sung-Jin, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo
- Kam*, Paul, ml
- Kang*, Moon-Kyu, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo
- Kang*, Yong-Kyu, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo
- Keum*, Sung-Dae, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Kim*, Dong-Yup, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo
- Kim*, Hyun-Bae, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo
- Kim*, Hyung-O, ml
- Kim*, In-Hwan, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Kim*, Jin-Pyo, ml
- Kim*, Jong-Hoon, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Kim*, Jung-Seo, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo
- Kim*, Keun-Sang, Anglican Church of Korea, mo
- Kim*, Ki-Hyun, ml
- Kim*, Ki-Man, PGAK, mo
- Kim*, Kwang-Suk, ml
- Kim*, Kwan-Lyun, Korean Methodist Church, mo
- Kim*, Myung-Hyuk, mo
- Kim*, Myung-Kyu, ml
- Kim*, Myung-Yong, mo

- Kim*, Pil-Soo, Salvation Army, mo  
*Kim*, Seung-Kyu, ml  
*Kim*, Soon-Kwon, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Kim*, Soon-Young, Korean Methodist Church, fo  
*Kim*, Sung-Ki, ml  
*Kim*, Sung-Kwang, Korean Assemblies of God, mo  
*Kim*, Sun-Wook, ml  
*Kim*, Tae-Young, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Kim*, Won-Bae, mo  
*Kim*, Yong-Bok, mo  
*Kim*, Yong-Woo, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Kim*, Yoo-Su, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Kim*, Young-Hun, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Kim*, Young-Jin, ml  
*Ko*, Se-Jin, mo  
*Koh*, Hoon, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Koo*, Dong-Tae, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Kwon*, Eui-Hyun, ml  
*Kwon*, Oh-Suh, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Kwon*, O-Sung, mo  
*Kwon*, Tae-Jin, ml  
*Lee*, Bong-Kwan, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Lee*, Chul-Shin, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Lee*, Dong-Choon, Evangelical, mo  
*Lee*, Eun-Young, Korean Methodist Church, fl  
*Lee*, Han-Bit, fl  
*Lee*, Jae-Chang, Korean Assemblies of God, mo  
*Lee*, Jae-Cheon, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hapshin), ml  
*Lee*, Jong-Bok, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Lee*, Jong-Seung, PGAK, mo  
*Lee*, Jong-Soon, ml  
*Lee*, Jong-Yoon, mo  
*Lee*, Joon, ml  
*Lee*, Jung-Gu, mo  
*Lee*, Jung-Ik, KHC Korean Holiness Church, mo  
*Lee*, Kwang-Sung, mo  
*Lee*, Kyu-Hak, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Lee*, Pil-Sup, ml  
*Lee*, Sam-Yeol, ml  
*Lee*, Seung-Jung, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo  
*Lee*, Sung-Hee, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Lee*, Young-Hoon, Korean Assemblies of God, mo  
*Lim*, Dong-Jin, ml  
*Lim*, Jun-Teak, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Lim*, Myung-Kyu, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo  
*Lim*, Sung-Ii, Korean Methodist Church, fl  
*Min*, Kyung-Bae, mo  
*Min*, Kyung-Ja, Presbyterian Church of Korea, fl  
*Park*, Dong-Shin, Anglican Church of Korea, mo  
*Park*, Jong-Cheon, mo  
*Park*, Jong-Duk, Salvation Army, mo  
*Park*, Jong-Wha, mo  
*Park*, Joon-Seo, mo  
*Park*, Kyung-Jin, ml  
*Park*, Kyung-Jo, Anglican Church of Korea, mo  
*Park*, Kyung-Seo, mo  
*Park*, Rae-Chang, ml  
*Park*, Sang-Jeung, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo  
*Park*, Sung-Bae, Korean Assemblies of God, mo  
*Park*, Sung-Chul, Holiness Church, mo  
*Park*, Wi-Keun, Presbyterian Church in Korea, ml  
*Ra*, Hong-Kyoun, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo  
*Ryu*, Hong-Joo, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Seo*, Jae-Il, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo  
*Sohn*, In-Woong, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Son*, Dal-Ig, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo

*Suk*, Joon-Bok, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Um*, Hyun-Sup, Lutheran, mo  
*Um*, Ki-Ho, Korean Assemblies of God, mo  
*Won*, Pal-Yeon, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo  
*Woo*, Young-Soo, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Yang*, Byung-Hee, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Baekseok), mo  
*Yang*, In-Pyung, ml  
*Yang*, Tae-Yoon, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo  
*Yoo*, Jae-Pil, Korean Assemblies of God, mo  
*Yoo*, Jung-Sung, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo  
*Yoo*, Man-Seok, PGAK, mo  
*Yoo*, Seok-Sung, mo  
*Yoon*, Jong-Nam, Korean Assemblies of God, mo  
*Yu*, Eui-Woong, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Zographos*, Ambrose-Aristotle, Korean Orthodox Church, mo

**Korean host committee staff**

*Chang*, Gil, Presbyterian Church in Korea, ml  
*Cheon*, Young-Cheol, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Han*, Man-O, PGAK, mo  
*Jung*, Hae-Sun, Korean Methodist Church, fl  
*Kim*, Byung-Woo, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Kim*, Eun-Ha, Presbyterian Church in Korea, fl  
*Kim*, Jong-Seng, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Kim*, Sang-Man, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Ko*, Se-Jin, mo  
*Lee*, Bum-Seok, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Lee*, Christine, Presbyterian Church in Korea, fo  
*Lee*, Eun-Kyung, Korean Assemblies of God, fl  
*Lee*, Kwang-Sup, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Lee*, Saeleum, Korean Methodist Church, fl

*Lee*, Sarah, Presbyterian Church in Korea, fl  
*Lee*, Sung-Cheol, Presbyterian Church in Korea, ml  
*Lee*, Young-Eun, Presbyterian Church in Korea, fo  
*Lim*, Soo-Hyun, Korean Methodist Church, fl  
*Na*, Ji-Sung, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, ml  
*Oh*, Jung-A, Korean Assemblies of God, fl  
*Park*, Do-Woong, Korean Methodist Church, mo  
*Park*, Jung-Yoon, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fly  
*Park*, Soo-In, Korean Methodist Church, ml  
*Park*, Sung-Kook, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, mo  
*Park*, Sun-Kyo, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, ml  
*Park*, Young-Kyu, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Shin*, Kwang-Sup, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, mo  
*Song*, Joo-Mi, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fl  
*Song*, Young-Woo, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Yang*, Myong-Deuk, Presbyterian Church in Korea, mo  
*Yoon*, Sin-Il, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, ml

**Stewards**

*Abrahamian Khoygany*, Ms Agata, yfl, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) (Iran)  
*Aiyama*, Mr Kenta, yml, United Church of Christ in Japan (Japan)  
*Al Hamdieh*, Ms Hala, yfl, Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East (Syrian Arab Republic)  
*Alkhoury*, Ms Christine, yfl, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Syrian Arab Republic)  
*Andreescu*, Mr Mihail, yml, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)  
*Asgar*, Ms Sarah, yfl, Church of Pakistan (Pakistan)  
*Bae*, Mr Shin Chul, yml, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)

- Bandixen*, Ms Nora, yfl, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund (Switzerland)
- Banhardt*, Ms Sarah, yfl, EKD-Evangelische Landeskirche in Baden (Germany)
- Beharry*, Ms Sanya Sita, yfl, Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Bence*, Mr Áron, yml, Lutheran Church in Hungary (Hungary)
- Bigford*, Ms Da Rosa, yfl, African Methodist Episcopal (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Capo' Lima*, Ms Liz Eleyne, yfl, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (Cuba)
- Cha*, Mr Yohan, yml, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Charles*, Ms Adrienne, yfl, Reformed Church in America (United States of America)
- Cherkasov*, Mr Sergei, yml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Russian Federation)
- Cho*, Mr YoungHo, yml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Choi*, Ms Eun So, yfl, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Cirlan*, Mr Lucian Petru, yml, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Dundas*, Ms Barbara Kathleen, yfl, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname (Suriname)
- Equigure Somoza*, Ms Diana Liliana, yfl, Reformed Church in Honduras (Honduras)
- Ei Hnin Phyu*, Ms Nant Elizabeth, yfl, Church of the Province of Myanmar (Myanmar)
- El Ojeil*, Mr Elie, yml, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Lebanon)
- Farrell*, Mr William, yml, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Foleni*, Ms Brenda, yfl, Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa (American Samoa)
- Froese*, Ms Rebecca Elena Maria, yfl, Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden (Germany)
- Fufu*, Mr Moti, yml, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Ethiopia)
- Gadallah*, Mr Marco, yml, Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt)
- Gill*, Mr Shayan, yml, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (Pakistan)
- Guyer*, Ms Kay, yfl, Church of the Brethren (United States of America)
- Haile*, Ms Bezawit Alemu, yfl, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
- Hakobyan*, Ms Tatevik, yfl, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Han*, Ms Ahreum, yfl, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)
- Harbeck*, Mr Thomas, yml, Roman Catholic Church (Canada)
- Haukinima*, Mr Stanley Diploma I, yml, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga) (New Zealand)
- Hedge*, Ms Nastassia, yfl, Moravian Church in Jamaica (Jamaica)
- Hjelde*, Mr Jon Olav, yml, Church of Norway (Norway)
- Israel Ferreira*, Ms Thais Suelen, yfl, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil (Brazil)
- Jang*, Ms Minae, yfl, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Jang*, Mr Sangwon, yml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Jee*, Mr Yohan, yml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Jeffrey*, Mr Brian Richard, yml, (Guyana)
- Jolly*, Rev. Kelli Deniqua, yfl, Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (Jamaica)
- Kabonde*, Ms Kabonde, yfl, United Church of Zambia (Zambia)
- Kalokhe*, Ms Gloria Avinash, yfl, Church of North India (India)
- Kamunaga*, Mr Takape Baleiwai, yml, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (Fiji)
- Kang*, Mr Hyung Joon, yml, Anglican Church in Japan (Japan)
- Kankolongo Muela*, Mr Johnson, yml, United Methodist Church—Central Congo Episcopal Area (Congo—Democratic Republic of)
- Kerimu*, Ms Chloe, yfl, Church of Uganda (Uganda)

- Khoury*, Ms Tamara, yfl, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Lebanon)
- Kihara*, Ms Teresiah Njoki, yfl, Lavington United Church (Kenya)
- Kim*, Ms Bomi, yfl, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)
- Kim*, Ms Eunhye, yfl, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)
- Kim*, Ms Yunji, yfl, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)
- Kim*, Mr Dabin, yml, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Kim*, Ms Saes-byeol, yfl, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Kim*, Ms Seo Young, yfl, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Kristiansen*, Ms Anne Engelund, yfl, Danish Lutheran Church (Denmark)
- Krochak*, Mr Andrij, yml, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Canada)
- Lampe*, Ms Judith Anette, yfl, Katholisches Bistum der Alt-Katholiken in Deutschland (Germany)
- Lee*, Ms Dokyoung, yfl, Korean Methodist Church (Republic of Korea)
- Lee*, Mr Dong Hwan, yml, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Lee*, Mr Joong Ho, yml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Lee*, Ms Soohee, yfl, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Lee*, Mr Soomin, yml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Lim*, Mr Alvin Chen Hup, yml, Roman Catholic Church (Malaysia)
- Loubassou Massaka*, Mr Launique Matondo, yml, Eglise évangélique du Congo (Congo, Republic)
- Lozada Montanari*, Ms Malena Sol, yfl, Iglesia Evangélica Metodista Argentina (Argentina)
- Mangare*, Ms Caroline Eunice, yfl, Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (Kenya)
- Markoullis*, Mr Marios, yml, Church of Cyprus (Cyprus)
- Mastilovic*, Mr Stefan, yml, Serbian Orthodox Church (Australia)
- Matejkova*, Ms Veronika, yfl, Czechoslovak Hussite Church (Czech Republic)
- Mauke*, Ms Tutai, yfl, Cook Islands Christian Church (Cook Islands)
- Mayang*, Ms Molly, yfl, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (Papua New Guinea)
- McNaughton*, Ms Tiffany Lee, yfl, United Church of Canada (Canada)
- Mcubuse*, Ms Ziphokazi Phindile, yfl, Moravian Church in South Africa (South Africa)
- Melkonyan*, Mr Sargis, yml, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) (Armenia)
- Mendez Quiñonez*, Mr Edyn Rolando, yml, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Mexico)
- Mountraki*, Ms Maria, yfl, Orthodox Church of Finland (Finland)
- Mwaura Wafula*, Mr James, yml, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa (Kenya)
- Nazarkiewicz*, Mr Aleksander, yml, Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Poland)
- Odouaro*, Mr Chegoun G. Venance, yml, Eglise protestante méthodiste du Bénin (Benin)
- Ohanian*, Ms Grace, yfl, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) (Lebanon)
- Oskarsdottir*, Ms Nina Kristin, yfl, Church of Norway (Norway)
- Palmer*, Ms Derri-Ann Loraine, yfl, Jamaica Baptist Union (Jamaica)
- Park*, Ms Eunna, yfl, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Patty*, Ms Eirene Yulian Adelin, yfl, Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) (Indonesia)
- Portillo Yanez*, Ms Maria Teresa, yfl, Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia (Colombia)
- Quintino*, Mr Alexandre Pupo, yml, Igreja Metodista no Brasil (Brazil)
- Randrianavelo*, Mr Tsiry Nantenaina Rakotondratovo, yml, Eglise de Jésus-Christ à Madagascar (Madagascar)
- Ritz*, Ms Emily Elizabeth, yfl, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (Canada)

- Schauf*, Ms Emma Lee, yfl, The Episcopal Church (United States of America)
- Schultbeis La Motte*, Ms Aylén Libertad, yfl, Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata (Argentina)
- Siegien*, Ms Ewa, yfl, Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Poland)
- Silitonga*, Mr Berthon Wendyven, yml, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) (Indonesia)
- Somosfalvi*, Ms Orsolya, yfl, Reformed Church in Hungary (Hungary)
- Steeber*, Ms Greta, yfl, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Germany)
- Tauaketia*, Mr Teomeri, yml, Kiribati Protestant Church (Kiribati)
- Tetty*, Mr Emmanuel Kwame, yml, Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Ghana)
- Thambi*, Ms Simi, yfl, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (India)
- Timson*, Mr Phillip David, yml, United Reformed Church (Netherlands)
- Tipayan*, Mr Jay Roy, yml, Episcopal Church in the Philippines (Philippines)
- Tolaj*, Ms Klaudia, yfl, Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania (Albania)
- Torres Durán*, Mr Bastián Antonio, yml, World Student Christian Federation (Chile)
- Tumaai*, Ms Toai Metanoia, yfl, Methodist Church of Samoa (Samoa)
- Tyvi*, Ms Sini Sarianne, yfl, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)
- Utufua*, Ms Santoria, yfl, Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (Samoa)
- Vakadewavosa*, Mr Rusiate, yml, Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma (Fiji)
- Wetewea*, Mr Billy, yml, Eglise évangélique en Nouvelle-Calédonie et aux Iles Loyauté (New Caledonia)
- Wittawat*, Mr Thamma, yml, Church of Christ in Thailand (Thailand)
- Wlemus*, Mr J. Pentee, yml, United Methodist Church (Liberia)
- Xhaferi*, Ms Nevila, yfl, Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania (Albania)
- Yambasu*, Mr John, yml, United Methodist Church (Sierra Leone)
- Yoseph*, Mr Temesegen Yohannes, yml, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Ethiopia)
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*Brandner*, Prof. Dr Tobias, mo, Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong/Swiss Reformed Church (Hong Kong, China)

*Breen*, Ms Margaret, fl, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)

*Brett*, Mr Adam, yml, American Baptist Churches in the USA (United States of America)

*Bryhadzir*, Mr Yahor, yml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Belarus)

*Cancino*, Mr Victor, yml, Roman Catholic/Boston Theological Institute (United States of America)

*Carnall*, Ms Melissa, yfl, Roman Catholic/McCormick Theological Seminary (United States of America)

*Chai*, Mr Hae Ung, ml, Hanshin Graduate School of Theology (Republic of Korea)

*Chen*, Rev. Shu-Chen, fo, Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Taiwan)

*Chia*, Dr Kee-Fook, Edmund, ml, Roman Catholic Church (Australia)

*Chinna Jamla Nayaka*, Mr Babu, ml, Beulah Evangelical Church of India (India)

*Choi*, Mr Sae Hyun, ml, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)

*Colwell*, Ms Kelly, yfl, United Church of Canada/World Student Christian Federation (Canada)

*Cosca*, Ms Rachel, yfl, Pacific School of Religion (United States of America)

*Daian*, Mr Ioan Alexandru, yml, Romanian Orthodox Church (Germany)

*Dailey*, Mr Derick, yml, African Methodist Episcopal Church (United States of America)

*Dareeju*, Rev. Biyanwilage Leslie, mo, Methodist Church, Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka)

*Dawani*, Rev. Saleem, mo, Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East (Palestine)

*De Jong*, Ms Maaikje, fl, Mennonite Church in the Netherlands (Netherlands)

- Diaz-Littauer*, Mrs Carrie, yfl, The Episcopal Church (Switzerland)
- Duong*, Mr Tu Hien, yml, Evangelical Church of Vietnam (Vietnam)
- Eisenberg*, Ms Charlotte, fl, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- El Chlouk*, Father Jad, ymo, World Christian Student Federation (Lebanon)
- El-Obeid*, Dr Dany, ml, World Christian Student Federation (Lebanon)
- Ezekiel*, Rev. Lesmore Gibson, mo, Lutheran Church of Nigeria (Nigeria)
- Fan*, Mr Lap Hin, ml, Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (China)
- Felter*, Ms Karen Donskov, yfl, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (Denmark)
- Fennell*, Mr Dirrectrick Darnell, yml, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States (United States of America)
- Field*, Dr David, ml, United Methodist Church (Switzerland)
- Gardan*, Very Rev Dr Gabriel-Viorel, mo, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Gatwa*, Rev. Dr Tharcisse, ml, Eglise presbytérienne au Rwanda (United Kingdom)
- Gechera*, Mr Tessema Forsido, ml, Ethiopian Kale Heywot Church (Ethiopia)
- Gehlin*, Mrs Sara, fl, Church of Sweden (Sweden)
- Goelz*, Ms Susanne, yfl, EKD-Evangelische Landeskirche in Baden (Germany)
- Graff-Kallevag*, Mrs Kristin, fl, Church of Norway (Norway)
- Gyan*, Mr Saw Shwe, ml, Myanmar Baptist Convention (Hong Kong, China)
- Ha*, Mr Hank, ml, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Habermann*, Ms Anna, yfl, Evangelische Landeskirche Baden (Germany)
- Ham*, Mr Kimhoun, yml, World Student Christian Federation (Cambodia)
- Han*, Mr Chung Eun, ml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Han*, Mr Wan Wook, ml, Honam Theological University and Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Harmakaputra*, Mr Hans Abdiel, yml, Hartford Seminary (Indonesia)
- Henderson*, Ms Amanda, fo, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States (United States of America)
- Herefoss*, Ms Vija, fl, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (Norway)
- Hessler*, Rev. Soren, yfo, United Methodist Church (United States of America)
- Hestermann*, Ms Johanna, yfl, EKD-Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck (Germany)
- Hillman*, Ms Anne, yfl, Boston Theological Institute (United States of America)
- Hipp*, Ms Joanna, yfl, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (United States of America)
- Hole*, Rev. Cornelia, fo, EKD- Evangelische Landeskirche Württemberg(United Kingdom)
- Hong*, Mr Chan Joo, ml, Daejoen Theological University (Republic of Korea)
- Hu*, Ms Qingxin, yfl, Hong Kong S.K.H. St. Andrew's Church(Hong Kong, China)
- Huang*, Prof. Dr Po Ho, ml, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan)
- Hwang*, Mr Se Yun, ml, Methodist Theological University (Republic of Korea)
- Isaac*, Mr Munther, ml, Presbyterian Church, Palestine (Palestine)
- James*, Mr Vonnice Elisha Lucas, ml, United Theological College of the West Indies (Grenada)
- Jamir*, Ms Ajungla, yfl, Nagaland Baptist Church Council (India)
- Johnson*, Ms Sheryl, yfl, World Student Christian Federation (Canada)
- Kaizer de Oliveira*, Mr Willian, yml, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil (Brazil)
- Kalay*, Mr Nelson Semol, yml, Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM) (Indonesia)
- Keller*, Mr Markus Johannes, yml, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany)
- Keshavjee*, Mr Olivier, yml, Eglise Evangélique Réformée du Canton de Vaud (Switzerland)
- Kgalemang*, Ms Malebogo, fl, Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (Botswana)

- Khai*, Rev. Ciin Sian, mo, Myanmar Baptist Convention (Germany)
- Kim*, Ms Min Ji, fl, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Kim*, Mr Nam Joon, ml, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Kim*, Ms Young Su, fl, Hanshin Presbyterian Church (Republic of Korea)
- Kim Han*, Ms Jieun, fl, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (United States of America)
- Kitani*, Rev. Dr Kanan, mo, United Church of Christ in Japan (Japan)
- Kirkpatrick*, Rev. Dr Clifton, mo, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Kobo*, Rev. Fundiswa, fo, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Koczian*, Ms Viktoria, fo, Reformed Church in Hungary (Hungary)
- Koelmann*, Ms Katrin Anne, yfl, Protestant Reformed (Calvinist) (Germany)
- Kohl*, Rev. Dr Manfred, mo, Overseas Council for Theological Education Europe (Canada)
- Koslowski*, Dr Jutta, fl, Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nasau (Germany)
- Kwakye*, Rev. Abraham Nana Opere, mo, Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Ghana)
- Lam*, Mr Chi Kin, ml, Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (Hong Kong, China)
- Lam*, Rev. Phuc Huu, mo, Gospel Theological Institute in Vietnam (Vietnam)
- Lee*, Ms Gi Eun, fl, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Lee*, Ms Hyo Won, fl, Honam Theological University and Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Lee*, Mr Sai Hyung, ml, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Lewis*, Rev. Marjorie, fo, United Theological College of the West Indies (Jamaica)
- Li*, Ms So Han, yfl, Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (Hong Kong, China)
- Longkumer*, Dr Atola, fl, Leonard Theological College Jabalpur (India)
- Lukumay*, Mr Laretoni Loishiye, mo, Tumaini University Makumira (Tanzania)
- Lüthi*, Mr Nicolas, yml, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund (Switzerland)
- Mahabir*, Rev. Olive, fo, Interdenominational Theological Center Atlanta, USA (United States of America)
- Majaman*, Rev. Noria, fo, Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) (Malaysia)
- Malmström*, Mr Nils, ml, Church of Sweden (Sweden)
- Medrano Garay*, Mr Moises, fl, Convención Bautista de Nicaragua (Nicaragua)
- Mon*, Ms Naw Myatt Hsu, fl, Association for Theological Education in Myanmar (Myanmar)
- Montealegre Cuenca*, Mr Deivit Andrés, ml, Iglesia Evangélica Metodista Argentina (Argentina)
- Montoya Ortega*, Mrs Greta, fl, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (Cuba)
- Moon*, Mr Eui Bae, ml, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Mpofu*, Mr Buhle, mo, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (South Africa)
- Munoz*, Ms Madison, yfl, GETI Programme Facilitator for North America (United States of America)
- Murase*, Rev. Yoshifumi, ml, United Church of Christ in Japan (Japan)
- Mushira*, Rev. Catherine, fl, Quaker Peace and Social Witness (Kenya)
- Nam*, Mr Jin Hee, ml, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Nant*, Ms Ai Shu, fl, Pwo Kayin Baptist Church (Myanmar)
- Nicák*, Mr Maros, yml, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia (Germany)
- Nu*, Ms Hkawn, fl, Myanmar Baptist Church (Myanmar)
- Nyegenye*, Rev. Dr Rebecca, fo, Anglican Church of Uganda (Uganda)
- Oh*, Dr Hyunsun, mo, Presbyterian Church in Korea (Republic of Korea)

- Ortiz*, Ms Leila, fl, Lutheran World Federation (United States of America)
- Park*, Mr Chun Kyu, ml, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Parks II*, Mr Gerald, ml, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Paulau*, Mr Stanislau, yml, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (Germany)
- Pearson*, Rev. Brennan, ymo, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Pekridou*, Ms Aikaterini, fl, Volos Academy for Theological Studies (Ireland)
- Penninger*, Ms Alina, yfl, EKD-Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland (Germany)
- Peter Dass*, Mr Rakesh, ml, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (United States of America)
- Petersen*, Dr Rodney, mo, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Phiri*, Rev. Lilly, yfo, United Church of Zambia (Zambia)
- Pizzey*, Ms Antonia, yfl, Australian Catholic University (Australia)
- Prevett*, Mr Matthew, ml, United Reformed Church, UK (Germany)
- Promsuttipong*, Mr Boonyarid, ml, Church of Christ in Thailand (Thailand)
- Rosser*, Ms Eve, fo, Serenity Church (United States of America)
- Ryu*, Mr Kwang Hyun, ml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Czech Republic)
- Saarinen*, Mr Tapani, ml, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)
- Sakupapa*, Rev. Teddy Chalwe, ymo, United Church of Zambia (Zambia)
- Sama Hernandez*, Rev. Izett, fo, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (Cuba)
- Senger*, Ms Daniela, fl, Faculdades Est, Brazil (Brazil)
- Shen*, Rev. Zhanqing, fo, China Christian Council (China)
- Shin*, Ms Eun Jin, fl, Honam Theological University and Seminary (Republic of Korea)
- Simangunsong*, Rev. Amran, mo, Huria Kristen Indonesia (HKI) (Philippines)
- Simarmata*, Rev. Mery, yfo, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (Indonesia)
- Simon*, Rev. Dr Benjamin, mo, EKD-Evangelische Landeskirche in Baden (Germany)
- Sin*, Mr Myoung Ho, ml, Presbyterian Church of Korea (Republic of Korea)
- Snipes*, Mr Benjamin, yml, McCormick Theological Seminary (United States of America)
- Snulligan Haney*, Rev. Dr Marsha, fo, Presbyterian Church (USA) (United States of America)
- Sremac*, Mr Srdjan, ml, Reformed Christian Church in Serbia and Montenegro (Netherlands)
- Tandirerung*, Rev. Lidya Kambo, fo, Gereja Toraja (Indonesia)
- Tayviab*, Ms Margaret Makafui, yfl, Methodist Church Ghana (Ghana)
- Terfassa*, Mr Dawit Olika, ml, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Sweden)
- Thiani*, Rev. Evangelos Evanson Mwaura, mo, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa (Kenya)
- Thompson*, Ms Sarah, yfl, Christian Peacemaker Teams (United States of America)
- Toiviainen*, Rev. Marjaana Minna, yfo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)
- Tudorie*, Dr Ionut, ml, Romanian Orthodox Church (Romania)
- Tupaia*, Ms Katia, fl, Maohi Protestant Church (Fiji)
- Visser*, Ms Jantje Fenna, yfl, Protestant Church in the Netherlands (Netherlands)
- Walker*, Prof. Randi, mo, United Church of Christ (United States of America)
- Walter*, Ms Pearly Usha, fl, Church of South India, Madras Diocese (Germany)
- Wang*, Ms Yi-Ting, yfl, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan)
- Warren*, Mr Robert Kyle, ml, United Methodist Church (United States of America)
- Widmer*, Mr Jonas, yml, Mennonite Church in Germany (Switzerland)
- Wilson*, Rev. Dr Henry S., ml, Presbyterian Church (USA)/Church of South India (United States of America)

*Woo*, Rev. Dr Jin Seong, mo, Hanshin  
University (Republic of Korea)

*Woodhead*, Ms Hanna, yfl, Eglise  
Protestante Unie de France (France)

*Yoo*, Mr Hyo-Min, ml, Busan Presbyterian  
University (Republic of Korea)

*Yum*, Mr Eui Sub, ml, Presbyterian College  
and Theological Seminary (Republic of  
Korea)

## APPENDIX 3: ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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*Key to abbreviations: f=female, m=male,  
o=ordained, l=layperson, y=youth*

### **Business Committee**

- Altmann*, Rev. Dr Walter, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, Moderator, mo
- Gennadios of Sassima*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Vice Moderator, mo
- Hendriks-Ririmasse*, Rev. Dr Margaretha M., Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM), Vice Moderator, fo
- Tveit*, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse, World Council of Churches, General Secretary, mo
- Abuom*, Dr Agnes, Anglican Church of Kenya, Member, fo
- Chang*, Rev. Dr Sang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, Member, fo
- Irinej of Australia and New Zealand*, H.G. Bishop, Serbian Orthodox Church, Member, mo
- Schindehütte*, Bishop Martin, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, Member, mo
- Van der Kamp*, Rev. Klaas, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, Member, mo
- Watkins*, Rev. Dr Sharon, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA, Member, fo
- Alemezian*, H.G. Archbishop Nareg, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), Member, mo
- Aspinall*, Most Rev. Dr Phillip, Anglican Church of Australia, Member, mo
- Bae*, Rev. Dr Hyun Ju, Presbyterian Church of Korea, Member, fo
- Clapsis*, Rev. Prof. Dr, Emmanuel, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Member, mo
- Coster*, Rev. Ray, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, Member, mo
- Dyck*, Bishop Sally, United Methodist Church, Member, fo
- Gao*, Rev. Dr Ying, China Christian Council, Member, fo
- George*, Rev. Dr Prof. Kondothra M., Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Member, mo
- Issa*, Dr Theodora, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, Member, fo
- Johnsen*, Rev. Tore, Church of Norway, Member, mo
- Kassis*, Mr Rifat Odeh, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land, Member, ml
- Kesting*, Very Rev. Dr Sheilagh Margaret, Church of Scotland, Member, fo
- Koukoura*, Prof. Dr Dimitra, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Member, fl
- Marigza*, Bishop Reuel Norman, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Member, mo
- Nishihara*, Rev. Prof Dr Renta, Anglican Church in Japan, Member, mo
- Schwindt Michel*, Rev. Juan Abelardo, Iglesia Evangélica del Rio de la Plata, Member, mo
- Silishebo*, Rev. Silishebo, United Church of Zambia, Member, mo
- Snorton*, Bishop Teresa, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Member, fo
- van den Broeke*, Rev. Karin, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, Member, fo
- Vercammen*, Archbishop Dr Joris, Old-Catholic Church in the Netherlands, Member, mo
- Winbush*, Rev. Robina, Presbyterian Church (USA), Member, fo
- Doom*, Mr John Taroanui, Eglise Protestante Maohi, Member, ml
- Dossou*, Rev. Dr Simon Kossi, Eglise protestante méthodiste du Bénin, Member, mo
- Nababan*, Dr Soritua, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), Member, mo

*Ntabhoturi*, Archbishop Bernard, Eglise anglicane du Burundi, Member, mo  
*Ortega Suárez*, Rev. Dr Ofelia, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba, Member, fo  
*Tanner*, Dame Mary, Church of England, Member, fl  
*Acquab*, Ms Joyce N.E., Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Member, fl  
*Falk*, Mrs Celina, Church of Sweden, Member, fl  
*Farouk Mahrous Sarofim*, Mr Ramy, Coptic Orthodox Church, Member, ml  
*Funck*, Mrs Lydia, Mennonite Church in Germany, Member, fl  
*John*, Mr Anish, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Member, ml  
*Kandakarjian*, Ms Nazeli, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), Member, fl  
*Kolovopoulou*, Prof. Dr Marina, Church of Greece, Member, fl  
*Pang*, Rev. Nicholas, Anglican Church of Canada, Member, mo  
*Wagoner*, Ms Laney, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, Member, fl  
*Yang*, Ms Ya-Chi, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, Member, fl  
*Gardner*, Rev. Dr Paul, Moravian Church in Jamaica, Advisor, mo  
*Jung*, Ms HaeSun, Korean Methodist Church, Advisor, fl  
*Kathindi*, Rev. Canon, Nangula, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Advisor, fo  
*Nelyubova*, Mrs Margarita, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), Advisor, fl  
*Thomsen*, Rev. Jørgen, DanChurchAid, Advisor, mo  
*Welsh*, Rev. Dr Robert, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA, Advisor, mo

### **Finance Committee**

*Van der Kamp*, Rev. Klaas, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, mo, Moderator  
*Canagasabey*, Rt Rev. Dhiloraj Ranjit, Church of Ceylon, mo, Rapporteur  
*Eden*, Grace, Religious Society of Friends: Friends United Meeting, fl, Member  
*Ositelu*, Mrs Mary Temitope, Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide, fly, Member  
*Mekel*, Ms Peggy Adeline, Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM), fl, Member  
*So*, Rev. Eric S.Y., Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, mo, Member  
*Bullock*, Rt Rev. Brenda, Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, fo, Member  
*Gadegaard*, Dean Anders, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, mo, Member  
*Nathaniel*, Rev. Canon Dr Leslie, Church of England, mo, Member  
*Papakosta*, Ms Eleni, Church of Cyprus, fl, Member  
*Rieth*, Rev. Klaus, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, mo, Member  
*Dimas*, Rev. Fr George, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, mo, Member  
*Nicholovos*, H.G. Bishop Zachariah Mar, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, mo, Member  
*Parsons*, Rev. Gradye, Presbyterian Church (USA), mo, Member  
*Akaroa*, Ms Anna, Cook Islands Christian Church, fly, Member  
*Kollander*, Ms Kerstin, Church of Sweden, fl, Advisor  
*Nauta*, Mrs Rommie, Kerk in Actie, fl, Advisor  
*Thompson*, Rev. Prof. David, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, mo, Advisor  
*Kemper*, Mr Thomas, United Methodist Church-General Board of Global Ministries, ml, Advisor  
*Olson*, Ms Harriett Jane, United Methodist Women, fl, Advisor

**Message Committee**

*Chang*, Rev. Dr Sang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fo, Moderator  
*Kang*, Mr Thomas Hyeono, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, mly, Rapporteur  
*Weibye*, Ms Miriam Jane, Church of Scotland, fly, Rapporteur  
*Siwa*, Bishop Ziphozihle, Methodist Church of Southern Africa, mo, Member  
*Udofia*, Mrs Ene Emmanuel, The African Church, fl, Member  
*Woldkidane*, Sister Tsige Mariam Taddese, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, fo, Member  
*Simarmata*, Rev. Willem T.P., Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), mo, Member  
*Thomas*, Rev. John, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, mo, Member  
*Gabriel of Diavleia*, H.G. Bishop, Church of Greece, mo, Member  
*Janssen*, Bishop Jan, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, mo, Member  
*Shmaliy*, Rev. Vladimir, Russian Orthodox Church, mo, Member  
*do Nascimento Cunha*, Prof. Dr Magali, Igreja Metodista no Brasil, fl, Member  
*Spyrou*, Mr Michael, Church of Cyprus, ml, Member  
*Kent*, Ms Cynthia, United Methodist Church, fl, Member  
*Spies*, Ms Miriam, United Church of Canada, fly, Member  
*Faalevao*, Rev. Elder Leatulagi T., Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa, mo, Member  
*Puglisi*, Rev. James, Roman Catholic Church, mo, Advisor

**Nominations Committee**

*Schindehütte*, Bishop Martin, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, mo, Moderator  
*Johnson*, Bishop Susan C., Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, fo, Rapporteur  
*Demissie*, Ms Etsegenet Hailu, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, fl, Member  
*Lolo*, Ms Thabile, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, fl, Member

*Ntaboturi*, Archbishop Bernard, Eglise anglicane du Burundi, mo, Member  
*Gao*, Rev. Dr Ying, China Christian Council, fo, Member  
*Joseph*, Mrs Achamma, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, fl, Member  
*Nakaisulan*, Rev. Supina, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, fo, Member  
*Prodban*, Ms Roma Ann Nisha, Church of North India, fl, Member  
*Ranojo*, Rev. Dindo D., Iglesia Filipina Independiente, mo, Member  
*Theophilose*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr Kuriakose, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, mo, Member  
*Waspada*, Bishop I. Ketut Siaga, Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali (GKPB), mo, Member  
*Brodner*, Ms Raluca, Romanian Orthodox Church, fly, Member  
*Dani*, Rev. Eszter, Reformed Church in Hungary, fo, Member  
*Hammond*, Rev. Dr Carolyn, Church of England, fo, Member  
*Kenanidis*, Rev. Dr Konstantinos, Ecumenical Patriarchate, mo, Member  
*Ojanen*, Dr Hanna-Mari Kristiina, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, fl, Member  
*Speranskaya*, Ms Elena, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), fl, Member  
*Tsompanidis*, Prof. Dr Stylianos, Church of Greece, ml, Member  
*Wright Torres*, Mrs Anita Sue, Igreja Presbiteriana Unida do Brasil, fl, Member  
*Milki Wehbe*, Mrs Maha, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, fl, Member  
*Mourad*, Rev. Georges, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, mo, Member  
*Sarkissian*, H.E. Archbishop Sebouh, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), mo, Member  
*Medley*, Rev. Dr Roy, American Baptist Churches in the USA, mo, Member  
*Kiteon*, Ms Naatia, Kiribati Protestant Church, fly, Member

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*Glynn-Mackoul*, Mrs Anne, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, fl, Rapporteur  
*Fende*, Ms Susannah Mbua, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, fly, Member  
*Nyikako*, Mrs Elizabeth Nyawok Ajak, Presbyterian Church of the Sudan, fo, Member  
*Sule-Saa*, Rev. Dr Solomon Sumani, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, mo, Member  
*Anburaj*, Ms Reeta Sweetlin, Church of South India, fl, Member  
*Aritonang*, Mrs Tetty Bonawaty, Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI), fl, Member  
*Sumampouw*, Rev. Dr Liesje Augustina, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia (GPI), fo, Member  
*Tana*, Rev. Diana, Methodist Church of New Zealand, fo, Member  
*Henry*, Mrs Mauleen R., United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, fl, Member  
*Aydim*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr Mor Polycarpus, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, mo, Member  
*Bedford-Strohm*, Bischof Dr. Heinrich, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, mo, Member  
*Brekken*, Ms Marianne, Church of Norway, fly, Member  
*Elpidophoros of Bursa*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, Ecumenical Patriarchate, mo, Member  
*Joób*, Dr Máté Arpád, Lutheran Church in Hungary, mo, Member  
*Kominko*, Mrs Iuliia, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), fl, Member  
*Kriener*, Ms Schulamit, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, fly, Member  
*Lemeni*, Dr Nicolae Adrian, Romanian Orthodox Church, ml, Member  
*Manukyan*, Bishop Hovakim, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin), mo, Member

*Ódor*, Rev. Balázs, Reformed Church in Hungary, mo, Member  
*Pausz*, Mag. Elisabeth, Evangelische Kirche A. und H.B. in Österreich, fly, Member  
*Pirri-Simonian*, Ms Teny, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), fl, Member  
*Müller*, Rev. Iára, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, fo, Member  
*Bishop of Damietta*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, Coptic Orthodox Church, mo, Member  
*Fathy*, Rev. Refat, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile, mo, Member  
*Quawas*, Dr Audeh B., Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, ml, Member  
*Parker*, Dr Evelyn L., Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, fl, Member  
*Swenson*, Bishop Mary Ann, United Methodist Church, fo, Member  
*White*, Bishop John F., African Methodist Episcopal Church, mo, Member  
*Siai*, Rev. Bernard, United Church in Papua New Guinea, mo, Member  
*Gerber*, Dr Kobus, Dutch Reformed Church, mo, Advisor  
*Makiika*, Rev. Nicta Lubaale, Organization of African Instituted Churches, mo, Advisor  
*Barnett-Cowan*, Rev. Canon Dr Alyson, Anglican Communion, fo, Advisor  
*Iwuamadi*, Rev. Fr Dr Lawrence, Roman Catholic Church, mo, Advisor  
*Liagre*, Rev. Dr Guy, Conference of European Churches, mo, Advisor  
*Tanner*, Dame Mary, Church of England, fl, Advisor

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*Watkins*, Rev. Dr Sharon, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) USA, fo, Moderator  
*McLarty*, Mr Iain, Church of Scotland, moy, Rapporteur  
*Akpama*, Rev. Dr Mercy Mbang, Institute for Women in Religion and Culture, Ghana, fo, Member  
*Negeri*, Rev. Dr Wakseyoum Idosa, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, mo, Member  
*Pillay*, Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, mo, Member  
*Plaatjies Van Huffel*, Dr Mary-Anne, Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, fo, Member  
*Zulu*, Dr Edwin, Reformed Church in Zambia, ml, Member  
*Borlado*, Mr Jec Dan S., Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, mly, Member  
*Evans*, Ms Emily, Uniting Church in Australia, fly, Member  
*Lin*, Rev. Manhong, China Christian Council, fo, Member  
*Rhee*, Ms Hanbeet, Presbyterian Church of Korea, fl, Member  
*Cowans*, Rev. Dr Gordon, United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, fo, Member  
*Angaelos*, H.G. Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Church, mo, Member  
*Brunne*, Bishop Eva, Church of Sweden, fo, Member  
*Bulekov*, Hegoumen Philaret, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), mo, Member  
*Byfuglien*, Rt Rev. Helga Haugland, Church of Norway, fo, Member  
*Hirzel*, Rev. Dr Martin, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, mo, Member  
*Larentzakis*, Mag. Emanuela, Ecumenical Patriarchate, fl, Member  
*Pastukhova*, Mrs Katsiaryna, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), fl, Member  
*Speckmann*, Rev. Iris, Mennonite Church in the Netherlands, fo, Member  
*Tita*, Rev. Dr Michael, Romanian Orthodox Church, mo, Member

*Voulgari*, Mrs Aikaterini, Church of Greece, fl, Member  
*Willms Labes*, Ms Katilene, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, fly, Member  
*Nalbandian*, H.G. Bishop Armash Hagop, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin), mo, Member  
*Cheifetz*, Rev. Laura Mariko, Presbyterian Church (USA), fo, Member  
*Ingraham*, Mr Jon, African Methodist Episcopal Church, mly, Member  
*Steele*, Rev. Canon John Alfred, Anglican Church of Canada, mo, Member  
*Lamositele Sio*, Rev. Brenda Lydia, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, fo, Member  
*Ortega Dopico*, Rev. Joel, Council of Churches of Cuba, mo, Advisor  
*Anders*, Rev. Christoph, Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW), mo, Advisor  
*Usma Gomez*, Msgr Juan, Roman Catholic Church, mo, Advisor  
*Margossian-Hadeshian*, Ms Seta, Middle East Council of Churches, fl, Advisor  
*Kang*, Dr Namsoon, World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), fl, Advisor  
*Pihaataa*, Rev. François, Pacific Conference of Churches, mo, Advisor

**Public Issues Committee**

*Irinej of Australia and New Zealand*, H.G. Bishop, Serbian Orthodox Church, mo, Moderator  
*Rogers*, Rev. Dr Sarah, Church in Wales, mo, Rapporteur  
*Acquah*, Ms Joyce N.E., Presbyterian Church of Ghana, fly, Member  
*Bello*, Rt Rev. David, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), mo, Member  
*Johnson*, The Most Rev Dr S. Tilewa, Church of the Province of West Africa, mo, Member  
*Ncube*, Mrs Sithembile, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, fl, Member  
*Onyango*, Ms Linda Louise Awuor, Anglican Church of Kenya, fly, Member

*Simane*, Rev. Mosweu, United  
Congregational Church of Southern  
Africa, mo, Member

*Temple*, Rev. Arnold C., Methodist Church  
Sierra Leone, M, Yes, No, Member

*Bedona*, Mr Von Lovel, Convention of  
Philippine Baptist Churches, ml, Member

*Choudbrie*, Dr Deepa Anna, United  
Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India,  
fl, Member

*Lee*, Rev. Dr Hong-Jung, Presbyterian  
Church of Korea, mo, Member

*Berkley*, Bishop Claude, Church in the  
Province of the West Indies, mo, Member

*Calpińska*, Ms Marta, Polish Autocephalous  
Orthodox Church, fly, Member

*Forster*, Rt Rev. Dr Peter, Church of  
England, mo, Member

*Hennerdal*, Mrs Ida, Uniting Church of  
Sweden, fly, Member

*Kimyaci*, Mrs Ioli, Ecumenical Patriarchate,  
fl, Member

*Vasyutin*, Alexander, Russian Orthodox  
Church, mo, Member

*Mathew*, Mr Noble John, Mar Thoma Syrian  
Church of Malabar, ml, Member

*Morf*, Dr Xanthi, Ecumenical Patriarchate,  
fl, Member

*Al Laham*, Mr Samer, Greek Orthodox  
Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East,  
ml, Member

*Bayrakdarian-Kabakian*, Dr Nora, Armenian  
Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia),  
fl, Member

*Youannes*, H.G. Bishop, Coptic Orthodox  
Church, mo, Member

*Cantwell*, Rev. Jordan, United Church of  
Canada, fo, Member

*Green*, Ms Melissa, Anglican Church of  
Canada, fly, Member

*Hosler*, Mr Nathan, Church of the Brethren,  
ml, Member

*Knapp*, Ms Haley, United Church of Christ,  
fly, Member

*McCullough*, Rev. John L., United Methodist  
Church, mo, Member

*Varghese*, Ms Mariam Ceena, Malankara  
Orthodox Syrian Church, fly, Member

*Maraea*, Rev. Taaroanui, Eglise Protestante  
Maohi, mo, Member

*Kim*, Rev. Kyung In, Council for World  
Mission - CWM, fo, Advisor

*Bondevik*, Rev. Kjell Magne, Church of  
Norway, mo, Advisor

*Brown*, Dr Stephen Glencross, Globethics.  
net, ml, Advisor

*Schirmacher*, Prof. Dr Thomas, World  
Evangelical Alliance, mo, Advisor

*Diop*, Rev. Dr Ganoune, General  
Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,  
mo, Advisor

**Assembly Worship Planning Committee**

*Kathindi*, Rev. Canon Nangula, Anglican  
Church of Southern Africa, Namibia, fo,  
Moderator

*Badie Abd El Malek Ghattas*, Dr Michael,  
Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, ml,  
Member

*Junker*, Rev. Dr Tércio, Methodist Church in  
Brazil, mo, Member

*Shepherd*, Rev. Dr Loraine MacKenzie,  
United Church of Canada, fo, Member

*Lee*, Prof. Dr Geonyong, Anglican Church  
of Korea, ml, Member

*Lim*, Rev. Dr. Swee Hong, United Methodist  
Church, Singapore, ml, Member

*Park*, Prof. em. Dr Keun-Won, Presbyterian  
Church in the Republic of Korea, mo,  
Member

*Preston*, Ms Alison, Anglican Church of  
Australia, fl, Member

*Sotejeff-Wilson*, Ms Jooa, Orthodox Church  
of Finland, fl, Member

*Veiteberg*, Rev. Dr Kari, Church of Norway,  
fo, Member

*Vlantis*, Mr Georgios, Ecumenical  
Patriarchate, Turkey, ml, Member

*Widiasih*, Rev. Dr Ester Pudjo, Javanese  
Christian Churches, Indonesia, fo,  
Consultant

## APPENDIX 4: WCC CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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*The following is a list of WCC presidents, officers and central committee members elected in Busan.  
Members of the WCC executive committee are denoted by asterisks.*

### **Presidents**

*Chang*, Rev. Dr Sang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fo  
*John X*, H.B. Patriarch, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, mo  
*Karekin II*, H.H. Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, Armenian Apostolic  
Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin), mo  
*MacDonald*, The Rt. Rev. Mark, Anglican Church of Canada, mo  
*Plaatjies Van Huffel*, Dr Mary-Anne, Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, fo  
*Puloka*, Rev. Dr Mele'ana, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga), fo  
*Ulloa Alvarado*, Rev. Gloria, Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia, fo  
*Wejryd*, Archbishop Dr Anders, Church of Sweden, mo

### **Leadership**

*Abuom*, Dr Agnes, Anglican Church of Kenya, fl, Moderator  
*Gennadios of Sassima*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, Ecumenical Patriarchate, mo, Vice  
Moderator  
*Svenson*, Bishop Mary Ann, United Methodist Church, fo, Vice Moderator  
*Tveit*, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse, Church of Norway, mo, General Secretary

### **Central Committee**

*Abernethy*, Bishop Alan Francis, Church of Ireland, mo  
*Adhikari*, Mr Joyanta, Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha, ml  
*Adinugroho*, Rev. Abednego, Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW), mo  
*Aleksiejuk*, Rev. Dr Artur, Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, mo  
*\*Alemezian*, H.G. Archbishop Nareg, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), mo  
*Alexander of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese*, H.G. Bishop, Orthodox Church in America,  
mo  
*Antonio Matamoros*, Rev. Cora Luisa, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua, fo  
*Asana*, Rt Rev. Dr Festus Ambe, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, mo  
*Aspinall*, Most Rev. Dr Phillip, Anglican Church of Australia, mo  
*Auken*, Ms Kirsten, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, fl  
*\*Ayenew*, Dr Abba Haile Mariam Melese, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, mo  
*Aykazian*, H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy  
Etchmiadzin), mo  
*Ayokunle*, Rev. Dr Samson Olasupo Adeniyi, Nigerian Baptist Convention, mo  
*\*Azariah*, Bishop Samuel Robert, Church of Pakistan, mo  
*\*Bae*, Rev. Dr Hyun Ju, Presbyterian Church of Korea, fo  
*Baltimore*, Rev. Dr Carroll A., Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., mo  
*Bishop of Damietta*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, Coptic Orthodox Church, mo  
*Black*, Rev. Geoffrey A., United Church of Christ, mo  
*Bölskei*, Bishop Dr Gustáv, Reformed Church in Hungary, mo  
*\*Bosse-Huber*, Bishop Petra, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, fo

- Brekken*, Ms Marianne, Church of Norway, fly  
*Brunne*, Bishop Eva, Church of Sweden, fo  
*\*Burley III*, Dr Ulysses, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ml  
*Camnerin*, Rev. Dr Sofia, Uniting Church in Sweden, fo  
*Canagasabey*, Rt Rev. Dhiloraj Ranjit, Church of Ceylon, mo  
*Cende*, Mrs Klaudija, Serbian Orthodox Church, fly  
*Cheng*, Rev. Prof. Dr Yang-En, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, mo  
*Chipesse*, Rev. Augusto, Igreja Evangélica Congregacional em Angola, mo  
*Coster*, Rev. Ray, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, mo  
*De Vries*, Rev. Thomas, Reformed Church in America, mo  
*Der Matoian*, Ms Paula Marie, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin), fl  
*Dyck*, Bishop Sally, United Methodist Church, fo  
*Elpidophoros of Bursa*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, Ecumenical Patriarchate, mo  
*Enns*, Rev. Prof. Dr Fernando, Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden, mo  
*Evans*, Ms Emily, Uniting Church in Australia, fly  
*Faalevao*, Rev. Elder Leatulagi T., Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa, mo  
*Falk*, Mrs Celina, Church of Sweden, fly  
*Favaro*, Rev. Daniel Angel, Iglesia Evangélica Metodista Argentina, mo  
*Fornerone*, Ms Valeria, Waldensian Church, fly  
*Forster*, Rt Rev. Dr Peter, Church of England, mo  
*Gabriel of Diavleia*, H.G. Bishop, Church of Greece, mo  
*\*Gardner*, Rev. Dr Paul, Moravian Church in Jamaica, mo  
*Glynn-Mackoul*, Mrs Anne, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, fl  
*Gondokusuman*, Rev. Kristi, Gereja-Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ), foy  
*\*Goundiaev*, Archpriest Mikhail, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), mo  
*Hein*, Bishop Dr Martin Hermann, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, mo  
*Heitmann*, Rev. Anne, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, fo  
*Hirzel*, Rev. Dr Martin, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, mo  
*Houenou Bonou*, Mrs Conforte, Eglise protestante méthodiste du Bénin, fl  
*\*Hutabarat-Lebang*, Rev. Dr Henriette, Gereja Toraja, fo  
*Hyka*, Bishop Nikolaos, Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania, mo  
*Igunmov*, Rev. Fr Stefan, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), mo  
*Irinej of Australia and New Zealand*, H.G. Bishop, Serbian Orthodox Church, mo  
*Issa*, Dr Theodora, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, fl  
*Jeftić*, Mr Andrej, Serbian Orthodox Church, mly  
*Johnson*, Rev. Karl, Jamaica Baptist Union, mo  
*Kabekabe*, Mrs Tagolyn, Church of Melanesia, fl  
*\*Kamba Kasongo*, Rev. Dr Micheline, Église du Christ au Congo - Communauté presbytérienne de Kinshasa, fo  
*\*Kan*, Rev. Baoping, China Christian Council, mo  
*Kang*, Mr Thomas Hyeono, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, mly  
*Katoneene*, Bishop Yona Mwesigwa, Church of Uganda, mo  
*Kayuwa*, Bishop Jean Baudouin Mikenyi Mike, Eglise du Christ - Lumière du Saint Esprit, mo  
*Kent*, Ms Cynthia, United Methodist Church, fl  
*Khalil*, The V. Rev. Dr Jack, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, mo  
*\*Kolovopoulou*, Prof. Dr Marina, Church of Greece, fl  
*Königsdörfer*, Ms Judith, EKD-Evangelische Kirche in Mitteldeutschland, fl  
*\*Kopecká*, Ms Martina Viktorie, Czechoslovak Hussite Church, fly  
*Koukoura*, Prof. Dr Dimitra, Ecumenical Patriarchate, fl

- Kriener*, Ms Schulamit, EKD-Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, fly  
*Kykotis*, H.E. Metropolitan Serafim, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, mo  
*Landrau*, Rev. Everdith, Presbyterian Church (USA), foy  
*Lawrence*, Mrs Elenor I., Church in the Province of the West Indies, fl  
*Lawson-Late Zinsou*, Rév. Nadou-Madjé Martine Grace, Eglise méthodiste du Togo, fo  
*Lin*, Rev. Dr Manhong, China Christian Council, fo  
*Lukudu*, Mrs Jesca Bireri Laki, Episcopal Church of the Sudan, fl  
*Lusama*, Rev. Tafue M., Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu, mo  
*Malasusa*, Bishop Dr Alex Gehaz, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, mo  
*Maraea*, Rev. Taaroanui, Eglise Protestante Maohi, mo  
*Mbingasani Maluavanga*, Mrs Marceline, Église du Christ au Congo - Communauté baptiste du Congo, fl  
*Messelu*, Mr Yilikal Shiferaw, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, ml  
*Merso*, Prof. Dr Pekka, Orthodox Church of Finland, ml  
*Mitchell*, Anne, Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), fl  
*Moore*, Rev. Sarah, United Reformed Church, fo  
*Mourad*, Rev. Georges, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, mo  
*Muangsak*, Rev. Sayam, Church of Christ in Thailand, mo  
*Nathaniel*, Rev. Canon Dr Leslie, Church of England, mo  
*Ndimubakunzi*, Rev. Jeanne Françoise, Eglise anglicane du Burundi, fo  
*Negeri*, Rev. Dr Wakseyoum Idosa, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, mo  
*Nelyubova*, Mrs Margarita, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), fl  
*Nicholovos*, H.G. Bishop Zachariah Mar, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, mo  
*\*Nifon of Targoviste*, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr, Romanian Orthodox Church, mo  
*Nishihara*, Rev. Prof. Dr Renta, Anglican Church in Japan, mo  
*Noffsinger*, Mr Stanley, Church of the Brethren, ml  
*\*Opoko*, Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael, Methodist Church Nigeria, mo  
*Parsons*, Rev. Gradye, Presbyterian Church (USA), mo  
*Pau*, Rev. Yam Kho, Myanmar Baptist Convention, mo  
*Pausz*, Mag. Elisabeth, Evangelische Kirche A. und H.B. in Österreich, fly  
*Peña*, Mr Carlos, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ml  
*Petersen*, Bishop Sofie, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, fo  
*\*Peura*, Bishop Simo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, mo  
*Philaret*, Very Rev. Archimandrite, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), mo  
*Philip*, Mr Modayil Mani, Church of South India, ml  
*Philoxenos*, Bishop Dr Isaac Mar, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, mo  
*Pillay*, Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, mo  
*Pirri-Simonian*, Ms Teny, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), fl  
*Powell*, Rev. Dr Staccato, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, mo  
*Prodhan*, Ms Roma Ann Nisha, Church of North India, fl  
*\*Quawas*, Dr Audeh B., Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, ml  
*Rakoto*, Dr Endor Modeste, Eglise luthérienne malgache, mo  
*Reyes, Jr.*, Rev. Fr Rex R. B., Episcopal Church in the Philippines, mo  
*Riggs*, Dr Ann K., Religious Society of Friends: Friends General Conference, fl  
*Rogers*, Rev. Dr Sarah, Church in Wales, fo  
*Roham*, H.E. Metropolitan Eustathius Matta, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, mo  
*Rutoro*, Rev. Dr Rangarirai, Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, mo  
*Rwaje*, Archbishop Onesphore, Province de l'Eglise anglicane du Rwanda, mo  
*Sagar*, Bishop Taranath Sugnanam, Methodist Church in India, mo

*Sanchez-Navarro*, Rev. Aida Consuelo, The Episcopal Church, fo  
*Schlumberger*, Rev. Laurent, Eglise protestante unie de France, mo  
*Sepah*, Rev. Emma Essie Dzoe, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, fo  
*Seyenkulo*, Bishop Dr Daniel Jensen, Lutheran Church in Liberia, mo  
*Silishebo*, Rev. Silishebo, United Church of Zambia, mo  
*Smarmata*, Rev. Willem T.P., Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), mo  
*Sizonenko*, Archpriest Dmitry, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), mo  
*Spies*, Ms Miriam, United Church of Canada, fly  
*Starcova*, Ms Iveta, Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia, fl  
*Tamer*, Prof. Dr Georges, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, ml  
*Temple*, Rt Rev. Arnold C., Methodist Church Sierra Leone, mo  
*Tita*, Rev. Dr Michael, Romanian Orthodox Church, mo  
*Totten*, Rev. Dr June, American Baptist Churches in the USA, fo  
*Tziovanni*, Mrs Sonia, Church of Cyprus, fly  
*Udofa*, H.G. The Most Rev. Emmanuel Josiah, The African Church, mo  
*van den Broeke*, Rev. Karin, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, fo  
*Vasilios of Constantia - Ammochostos*, H.E. Metropolitan Dr, Church of Cyprus, mo  
*Vasyutin*, Rev. Alexander, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), mo  
*Velilla De Medio*, Mrs Ana María, Iglesia Evangélica de los Discipulos de Cristo, fl  
*Vercammen*, Archbishop Dr Joris, Old-Catholic Church in the Netherlands, mo  
*Viilma*, Rev. Urmas, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, mo  
*Wairimu*, Mr Samuel Nderi, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, mly  
*Walker-Smith*, Rev. Dr Angelique, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., fo  
*Watkins*, Rev. Dr Sharon, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States, fo  
*Waworuntu*, Mr Tony, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia Bagian Barat (GPIB), ml  
*Weibye*, Ms Miriam Jane, Church of Scotland, fly  
*\*White*, Bishop John F, African Methodist Episcopal Church, mo  
*Wong*, Rev. Dr Kee Sing, Methodist Church in Malaysia, mo  
*Yoteni*, Dr Fransina, Gereja Kristen Injili Di Tanah Papua (GKITP), fl  
*Youannes*, H.G. Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Church, mo

## APPENDIX 5: WCC MEMBER CHURCHES

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### Africa

Africa Inland Church - Sudan  
African Christian Church and Schools [Kenya]  
African Church of the Holy Spirit [Kenya]  
African Israel Nineveh Church [Kenya]  
African Protestant Church [Cameroon]  
Anglican Church of Burundi  
Anglican Church of Kenya  
Anglican Church of Southern Africa [South Africa]  
Anglican Church of Tanzania [Tanzania]  
Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda [Rwanda]  
Association of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Burkina Faso  
Church of Christ - Harrist Mission (Harrist Church) [Ivory Coast]  
Church of Christ in Congo - Anglican  
Community of Congo [DRC]  
Church of Christ in Congo - Baptist  
Community of Congo [DRC]  
Church of Christ in Congo - Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo [DRC]  
Church of Christ in Congo – Evangelical Community of Congo [Republic of Congo]  
Church of Christ in Congo – Mennonite Community in Congo [DRC]  
Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Congo [DRC]  
Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa [DRC]  
Church of Christ in Congo - Protestant Baptist Church in Africa/Episcopal Baptist  
Community in Africa [DRC]  
Church of Christ Light of the Holy Spirit [DRC]  
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar  
Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu [DRC]  
Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)  
Church of the Brethren in Nigeria  
Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide [Nigeria]  
Church of the Province of Central Africa [Zambia]  
Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean [Madagascar]  
Church of Uganda  
Church of the Province of West Africa [Ghana]  
Council of African Instituted Churches [South Africa]  
Episcopal Church of the Sudan  
Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church  
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus  
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church  
Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola  
Evangelical Church of Cameroon  
Evangelical Church of Congo [Republic of Congo]  
Evangelical Church of Gabon  
Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo [DRC]  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa [South Africa]  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana  
Evangelical Pentecostal Mission of Angola  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana  
Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola  
Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Lesotho Evangelical Church  
Lutheran Church in Liberia  
Malagasy Lutheran Church [Madagascar]  
Methodist Church Ghana  
Methodist Church in Kenya  
Methodist Church in Zimbabwe  
Methodist Church Nigeria  
Methodist Church of Southern Africa [South Africa]  
Methodist Church of Togo  
Methodist Church Sierra Leone  
Moravian Church in South Africa  
Moravian Church in Tanzania  
Native Baptist Church of Cameroon  
Nigerian Baptist Convention  
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon  
Presbyterian Church in Rwanda  
Presbyterian Church of Africa [South Africa]  
Presbyterian Church of Cameroon  
Presbyterian Church of East Africa [Kenya]  
Presbyterian Church of Ghana  
Presbyterian Church of Liberia  
Presbyterian Church of Mozambique  
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria  
Presbyterian Church of South Sudan  
Protestant Church of Algeria  
Protestant Methodist Church of Benin  
Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda  
Reformed Church in Zambia  
Reformed Church in Zimbabwe  
Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria  
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea  
The African Church [Nigeria]  
Union of Baptist Churches in Cameroon  
United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe  
United Church of Zambia  
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa [South Africa]  
United Methodist Church of Ivory Coast  
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa [South Africa]  
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa [South Africa]

## **Asia**

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia  
Anglican Church in Japan  
Anglican Church of Australia  
Anglican Church of Korea  
Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha  
Baptist Union of New Zealand  
Batak Christian Community Church (GPKB) [Indonesia]  
Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention [India]  
China Christian Council  
Christian Church of Central Sulawesi (GKST) [Indonesia]  
Christian Church of Sumba (GKS) [Indonesia]  
Christian Churches New Zealand  
Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) [Indonesia]  
Christian Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud (GMIST) [Indonesia]  
Christian Protestant Angkola Church (GKPA) [Indonesia]  
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI)  
Church of Bangladesh Church of Ceylon [Sri Lanka]  
Church of Christ in Thailand  
Church of North India  
Church of Pakistan  
Church of South India  
Church of the Province of Myanmar  
Churches of Christ in Australia  
Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches  
East Java Christian Church (GKJW) [Indonesia]  
Episcopal Church in the Philippines  
Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH) [Indonesia]  
Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (GKITP) [Indonesia]  
Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines  
Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China  
Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)  
Indonesian Christian Church (HKI)  
Javanese Christian Churches (GKJ) [Indonesia]  
Kalimantan Evangelical Church (GKE) [Indonesia]  
Karo Batak Protestant Church (GBKP) [Indonesia]  
Korean Christian Church in Japan  
Korean Methodist Church  
Lao Evangelical Church  
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church [India]  
Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar [India]  
Mara Evangelical Church [Myanmar]  
Methodist Church in India  
Methodist Church in Indonesia (GMI)  
Methodist Church in Malaysia  
Methodist Church in Singapore  
Methodist Church of New Zealand  
Methodist Church, Sri Lanka  
Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar  
Myanmar Baptist Convention

Nias Christian Protestant Church (Banua Niha Keriso) [Indonesia]  
Orthodox Church in Japan  
Pasundan Christian Church (GKP) [Indonesia]  
Philippine Independent Church  
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan  
Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea  
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand  
Presbyterian Church of Korea  
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan  
Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP) [Indonesia]  
Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) [Indonesia]  
Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI) [Indonesia]  
Protestant Church in the Moluccas (GPM) [Indonesia]  
Protestant Church in Sabah [Malaysia]  
Protestant Church in South-East  
Sulawesi (GEPSULTRA) [Indonesia]  
Protestant Church in Timor Lorosa'e [East Timor]  
Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB)  
Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT) [Indonesia]  
Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches [India]  
Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS) [Indonesia]  
Toraja Church (GT) [Indonesia]  
United Church of Christ in Japan  
United Church of Christ in the Philippines  
United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India  
Uniting Church in Australia

## **Caribbean**

Baptist Convention of Haïti  
Church in the Province of the West Indies [Bahamas]  
Jamaica Baptist Union  
Methodist Church in Cuba  
Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas [Antigua and Barbuda]  
Methodist Church of Puerto Rico  
Moravian Church in Jamaica  
Moravian Church in Suriname  
Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province [Antigua and Barbuda]  
Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago  
Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba  
United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands  
United Protestant Church [Netherlands Antilles]

## **Europe**

Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)  
Baptist Union of Denmark  
Baptist Union of Great Britain  
Baptist Union of Hungary  
Catholic Diocese of the Old-Catholics in Germany  
Church in Wales  
Church of England

Church of Greece  
Church of Ireland  
Church of Norway  
Church of Scotland  
Church of Sweden  
Czechoslovak Hussite Church [Czech Republic]  
Ecumenical Patriarchate  
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy  
Evangelical Church in Germany  
Evangelical Church in Central Germany  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe  
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren [Czech Republic]  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia  
Evangelical Methodist Church in Italy  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal  
Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania  
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches  
Greek Evangelical Church  
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad [Germany]  
Lusitanian Church of Portugal  
Lutheran Church in Hungary  
Mennonite Church in Germany  
Mennonite Church in the Netherlands  
Methodist Church [United Kingdom]  
Methodist Church in Ireland  
Moravian Church in Western Europe [Germany]  
Old-Catholic Church in Austria  
Old-Catholic Church in the Netherlands  
Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland  
Old-Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland  
Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania  
Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia  
Orthodox Church of Finland  
Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland  
Polish Catholic Church in Poland  
Presbyterian Church of Wales  
Protestant Church in the Netherlands  
Reformed Christian Church in Serbia and Montenegro

Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia  
Reformed Church in Hungary Reformed Church in Romania  
Remonstrant Brotherhood [Netherlands]  
Romanian Orthodox Church  
Russian Orthodox Church  
Scottish Episcopal Church  
Serbian Orthodox Church  
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic  
Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia & Montenegro  
Spanish Evangelical Church  
Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church  
Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine  
Union of Welsh Independents  
United Free Church of Scotland  
United Protestant Church of Belgium  
United Protestant Church of France  
United Reformed Church [United Kingdom]  
Uniting Church of Sweden  
Waldensian Church [Italy]

### **Latin America**

Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America [Argentina]  
Association The Church of God [Argentina]  
Baptist Association of El Salvador  
Baptist Convention of Nicaragua  
Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Christian Biblical Church [Argentina]  
Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil  
Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ in Argentina  
Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil  
Evangelical Church of the River Plate [Argentina]  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile  
Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia  
Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina  
Free Pentecostal Missions Church of Chile  
Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil  
Methodist Church in Brazil  
Methodist Church in Uruguay  
Methodist Church of Chile  
Methodist Church of Mexico  
Methodist Church of Peru  
Moravian Church in Nicaragua  
Pentecostal Church of Chile  
Pentecostal Mission Church [Chile]  
Presbyterian Church of Colombia  
Salvadorean Lutheran Synod El Salvador]  
United Evangelical Lutheran Church [Argentina]  
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil

## **Middle East**

Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) [Lebanon]  
Church of Cyprus  
Coptic Orthodox Church [Egypt]  
Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East [Israel/Palestine]  
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile  
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa [Egypt]  
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East [Syrian Arab Republic]  
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem [Israel/Palestine]  
National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon  
Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East  
Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East [Lebanon]

## **North America**

African Methodist Episcopal Church [USA]  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church [USA]  
American Baptist Churches in the USA  
Anglican Church of Canada  
Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States of America  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church [USA]  
Church of the Brethren [USA]  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East [USA]  
Hungarian Reformed Church in America  
International Council of Community Churches [USA]  
International Evangelical Church [USA]  
Moravian Church in America  
National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.  
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.  
Orthodox Church in America  
Polish National Catholic Church [USA]  
Presbyterian Church [USA]  
Presbyterian Church in Canada  
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. [USA]  
Reformed Church in America  
Religious Society of Friends: Friends General Conference [USA]  
Religious Society of Friends: Friends United Meeting [USA]  
The Episcopal Church [USA]  
United Church of Canada  
United Church of Christ [USA]  
United Methodist Church [USA]

**Pacific**

Church of Melanesia [Solomon Islands]  
Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa  
Congregational Christian Church in Samoa  
Congregational Christian Church of Niue  
Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu  
Cook Islands Christian Church  
Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea  
Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga)  
Kiribati Protestant Church  
Maòhi Protestant Church [French Polynesia]  
Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma  
Methodist Church of Samoa  
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu  
United Church in Papua New Guinea  
United Church in the Solomon Islands  
United Church of Christ -Congregational in the Marshall Islands

# CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (as amended by the 10th Assembly of the WCC in Busan, Republic of Korea, 2013)

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## 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 toward 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. 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.
  - 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 rejoin 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. 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.

## **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 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 have no right to participate in formal decision-making, whether by consensus or by vote;
2. can be invited to participate in the work of the commissions, advisory groups and other consultative bodies 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 85 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 15 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 officer to the member church of which such officer 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 differently-abled people.
- 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 vote, 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*

The central committee may invite to attend the meetings of the assembly without the right to speak or to participate in decision-making:

i. *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.

ii. *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 under 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;
  - iii. fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
  - iv. fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council.

- 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 or voting procedures. If decided according to voting procedures, then any proposed change must receive a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present to be adopted;
    - 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. 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. 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.
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. 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.
  - 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. 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.
    - 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. 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.

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. 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;
- 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. 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;
- 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. Provide for the organizational structure to fulfil the responsibilities of the central committee, including committees, sub-committees 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. 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.
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. 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.
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. 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.
  - e. Participants in the central committee (rule VI.2) may be assigned to one committee.
8. Guiding policies on representation
- a. The formation of all committees, commissions, working groups and joint consultative bodies 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. fair and adequate representation of lay persons, indigenous peoples, and differently-abled people, 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 among the members of the central committee for moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee; and;
  - b. Nominate persons from those elected as members of the central committee to membership of the executive 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) or to the executive committee.
4. In making nominations, the nominations committee shall have regard to principles set out in rule IV.4 and/or VI.8 and shall consider the specific skills and profiles necessary to undertake the responsibilities of moderator of the central committee, vice moderator 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) and of the executive committee the nominating 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 programs 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. 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 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 agrees – 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.
3. 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.
4. 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. 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.
5. 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 shall advise 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 auditor;
  - b) recommending for approval the annual budget for the following financial year, and the capital expenditure budget;
  - c) recommending for approval the framework budget for the year after the following financial year;
  - d) monitoring the implementation of the income and fund-raising strategy;
  - e) monitoring adherence to the approved budget, and recommending corrective actions if necessary;
  - f) making proposals for long-term financial goals and strategy for consideration by the finance policy committee;
  - g) considering and recommending accounting policies for adoption;
  - h) monitoring adherence to policies issued by central committee, including those governing general reserves and investments;
  - i) ensuring the proposed loans, guarantees, pledges and any other unusual transactions are presented for approval by executive committee;
  - j) ensuring compliance with laws and regulations concerning financial transactions, including the requirement to maintain a documented system of internal controls; and
  - k) receive the report of the statutory auditor and recommend approval of the financial statements.

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. 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.

- 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.
  - 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 and consultative bodies;
  - 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 program 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 program 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, 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 analyze 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. Proposing public statements and/ or minutes for action by the central committee;
  - d. Receiving and analysing proposals from members of the central committee for public statements and/or minutes;
  - e. Preparing public statements and/ or minutes for action by the central committee (according to established procedures).
8. The Communications Committee will have responsibility for:
  - a. Making recommendations toward the long term strategic goals of communicating the World Council of Churches, giving direction on what themes and storylines best serve the Council and its member churches and what should be the thematic focus of communications;
  - b. Exploring how programmes, the general secretariat, central committee and executive committee all contribute to the work of communicating the Council and what goals and plans should be set;
  - c. Exploring how member churches contribute to communicating the Council;
  - d. Ensuring that the Council is developing strategic collaboration with other communications agencies, such as the World Association for Christian Communication, and regional networks, particularly in communications for justice and peace throughout the worldwide ecumenical movement in society.
  - e. Assisting the central committee to consider, approve, and evaluate the general direction of the Council's communication strategic plan.

## **XI. Staff**

1. A general secretary shall be elected by the central committee in accordance with rule XIX.10.a.ii and the procedures adopted by the central committee for the search for and election of the general secretary. When the position of general secretary becomes vacant, the executive committee shall appoint an acting general secretary and 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. 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.ii.
4. The general secretary shall provide for the appointment of or appoint staff to conduct the continuing operations of the Council.
  - a. For staff 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). 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.
  - b. The general secretary shall appoint other programme executive staff, and report those staff appointments to the executive committee.
  - c. The general secretary shall appoint specialized, administrative and house staff.
5. The normal terms of appointment for the general secretary and for the deputy general secretary or secretaries shall be five years, unless some other period is stated in the resolution making the 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:
  - 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. Commitment to the aims and spirit of the World Council of Churches.
  - 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.

## **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. may, at the discretion of the central committee, 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 enterprise.
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 or bequests.
6. The Council shall not pursue commercial functions but it shall have the right to act as an agency of interchurch aid and to publish literature in connection with its aims. 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. Electronic communications—including e-mail, teleconference, video-conference and similar technologies— may be used for purposes of consultation and decision making by the general secretary, moderator and vice-moderator(s) of the central committee, leadership of committees and commissions, and committees of the World Council of Churches. The meeting shall be considered valid when all participants in the meeting have access to the designated form of communication and notice of the meeting and it's process have been duly provided. Decisions by these methods can be taken when at least two-thirds of those who have a right to participate in decision making have participated in the meeting.
9. Decisions that can be taken by vote according to rule XIX can also be taken by postal or electronic vote provided that (1) information upon which the decision could be taken has been provided, (2) a notice period has been provided of at least forty-five days between the date of the notice of the vote and due date for the response, and (3) the thresholds for approval indicated in rule XIX are reached by votes cast as against the possible number of votes that could be cast in response to the postal request. The election of a general secretary shall not take place by postal vote. A copy of the communication shall be sent by post and electronically.

## **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.
  - 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.

### **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.







