



World Council of Churches

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General Secretariat

Message to the Funeral Service of Rev. Dr Dong Sung Kim from the WCC General Secretary – Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit

It is my sad privilege to greet you on behalf of the World Council of Churches and its many communities of faith around the world and to convey both our grief at the loss of our brother Dong Sung Kim and our gratitude to God for allowing us to know and work with him in his life and ministry.

I wish also to convey to Dong Sung's family—to Kahee Kim, Yein Kim, and Yewon Kim—our deepest sympathy. You have accompanied Dong Sung through this long battle for health and healing, and I know that nothing could mean more to him than that. May you find that your grief is assuaged a bit by the memories and love you have shared with him.

But I wish also to convey my personal sadness and grief over Dong Sung's passing. He has been a wonderful colleague and effective presence in the ecumenical community, a person of high skill, unwavering yet quiet dedication, and real effectiveness in the important work of creating fellowship among the churches of Asia and reconciliation in Korea.

God gave Dong Sung many talents, and he was eager to use them for the kingdom of God and to the glory of God. He fulfilled his calling to work for the ecumenical movement through the World Council of Churches with great commitment and with remarkable contributions. He was able to work on almost any subject or in any programme with knowledge and strategic thinking.

Indeed, one of the many palpable losses at his death is of his intellectual acumen: Dong Sung's theological ideas evinced a genuine openness to creatively rethinking the theological and doctrinal tradition, in light of his ecumenical work, and we will miss that creative theological spark in our life as a fellowship.

Dong Sung also had a significant role in preparations for the 10th Assembly in Busan. He could give me and colleagues very good information and wise advice on many occasions, particularly in our visits to our member churches. His attitude of serving the church, as a true deacon of the unity of the church and its witness for justice and peace, was an example and inspiration for all of us.

Dong Sung's faith was mature, and it matured even more in the time of struggle against his illness. He shared a lot of his costly spiritual wisdom as we met during that difficult period, showing the faith and love for Jesus Christ in a living hope.

As we approach Easter, we recognize that that hope lives on, despite suffering and loss and even death. God's yes to Jesus, seen in his Resurrection, is also a yes to Dong Sung and to each of us. It grounds Jesus' continued presence among us and our lives together.

So in death, as in life, we are with God. Nothing can change that. Yet it would betray the depth of that hope if we simply dismiss the suffering and grief that lead to Resurrection. They too are part of the painful promise that somehow in death we will also discover new life.

Dong Sung's death is a great loss for his family, for his church, for his friends, but also for the World Council of Churches and for me personally. He became an entrusted colleague who could have done so much more. Now we mourn the loss of Dong Sung, our dear brother and friend, giving thanks for his life as a precious gift to us. I will always remember his smile – a sign of his love for the God of life. May it accompany us into our future with God and each other.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olav Fykse Tveit". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Olav" being the most prominent.

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary

Geneva, March 26, 2018