

Sharing faith,
nurturing hope



World Council
of Churches

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a global expression of the modern ecumenical movement. As a fellowship of 348 churches present in more than 110 countries, the WCC engages in a quest for common witness to the good news of Christ, service to all the world's people, inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, theological formation, and spiritual renewal.

Within the membership are most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed churches, as well as many charismatic, independent, united, and uniting churches.

While the preponderance of the founding churches in the mid-20th century were from Europe and North America, the majority today are found in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific. Well over 500 million people belong to WCC member churches.

The WCC's programmes share responsibility for strengthening the fellowship, spiritual life, youth engagement, inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, and building a just community of women and men.

At its 10th Assembly at Busan, Korea, in 2013, the WCC invited Christians and all people of good will to join a "pilgrimage of justice and peace" as a coordinated embodiment of the vision and spirit of Just Peace, working together to heal a world filled with conflict, injustice, and pain.

This annual review of the activity of the World Council of Churches records many of the initiatives undertaken by the Council during 2017 and continuing into 2018.

It tells the story of a unique organization that provides a workspace in which all are invited to reflect, speak, act, pray, and labour together in hope, to challenge and support one another, to share and debate the most pressing concerns of our day.



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Foreword by the general secretary

Over the last year, I believe that we in the fellowship of churches and the ecumenical movement have experienced stronger ties with each other and deeper engagement with the world. This experience, occasioned by the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, now leads us to new vistas on the fellowship itself and the classic quest for visible unity.

In these pages, I hope you'll be able not only to sample the recent work of the WCC and its member churches. I hope you will also see your own deepest commitments brought to life in concrete—and hope-filled—ways through the ecumenical work of the WCC, its member churches and ecumenical partners.

Africa, the regional focus of WCC work in 2017, is in many ways the frontline for seeing the reality of God at work engendering justice and supporting life. Our work involved the WCC in joint peacemaking activities with churches and ecumenical partners in Zimbabwe, the DRC, Burundi, South Sudan, and Nigeria. Further, health and healing and the ongoing challenges of HIV continue to engage the churches in the immense pastoral challenges in the continent. Enhancing the WCC's strategy for the whole area of health and healing has helped to clarify our related efforts in ensuring food security, protecting children, addressing gender violence, and supporting climate justice.

As you will also see, we have remained heavily involved in peacemaking in the Middle East, especially in

"Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you." —1 Peter 3:15

Israel and Palestine, where ecumenical companions for 15 years have witnessed to the practical aspects of ensuring human rights and human dignity for all, even as we observe the fiftieth anniversary of the Occupation there. The synergies with the local churches were symbolized and renewed by the worldwide day of prayer for peace in the Middle East that was hosted in Jerusalem in June.

In these areas, under the banner of the pilgrimage, this last year has seen renewed attention to and more intentional reframing of and recommitment to ecumenical *diakonia*: As churches and as a fellowship, we are here to serve. In many ways, *diakonia* is how our unity is incarnated and how the unity of the churches contributes to the unity of humanity.

In fact, the most recent ecumenical theological insights about the church, mission, and discipleship all converge in the new thinking about *diakonia* and in such a way as to facilitate our deepening work with the United Nations and on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The ongoing practice of reflection and discernment can be seen in the work and new initiatives of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission and the interreligious dialogue and cooperation team. This deep-flowing current of the movement was most visible in celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the

European Reformation, a process that clarified how far we have come and the ongoing imperative of renewing the churches for the future. Staying true to the historical Reformation dictates contemporary renewal.

The year 2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the World Council of Churches. Whether you think of the ecumenical endeavour as reframing a more dynamic notion of unity, seeding spirituality and building community, convening the faithful to act and advocate, or joining in solidarity for service, I am sure that you will agree: our work has never been more vital. An imperiled world desperately needs the strong faith, realistic hope, and steadfast commitment of Christians united in the one Spirit.

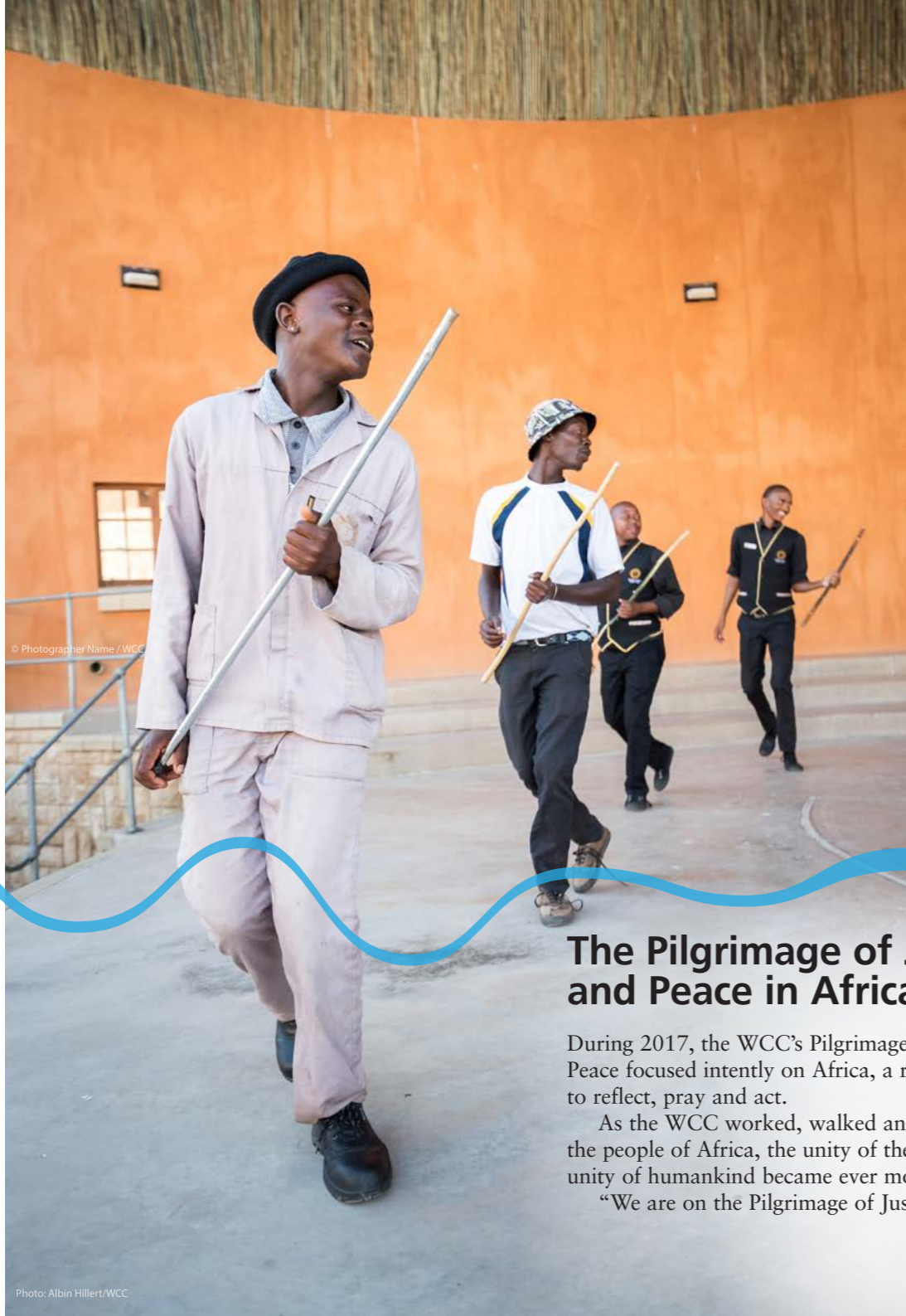
Indeed, our hope is more than sunny optimism. Grounded in the ongoing presence of the Resurrected Lord, Christian hope envisions and strives for the reign of God on earth as in heaven, with justice and life abundant for all. Let us work and walk there together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Olav Fykse Tveit".

Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary, World Council of Churches



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in Africa

During 2017, the WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace focused intently on Africa, a rich context in which to reflect, pray and act.

As the WCC worked, walked and worshipped with the people of Africa, the unity of the church and the unity of humankind became ever more interconnected.

“We are on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace



together,” said Dr Agnes Abuom, WCC central committee moderator, as she spoke during a solidarity visit to her home country of Kenya. “The ecumenical endeavors cannot be successful without a deep understanding of what it means to live together in the body of Christ, in the love of Christ.”

Throughout the year, many WCC groups and programmes held meetings, workshops and special services in Africa. There were many facets to the yearlong African-focused pilgrimage, including water justice, preventing gender-based and sexual violence, promoting an economy of life, and striving for peacemaking in conflict zones.

As members of the pilgrimage reference group convened in Nigeria in February 2017, they monitored how the pilgrimage continued to unfold and developed suggestions for even more initiatives and activities. The group pursued a busy schedule of visits and meetings, amid reflections in the cities of Abuja and Kaduna and learning of processes and specific activities of the churches, as well as of ecumenical and other partners that contributed to the efforts and aspirations for justice and peace in the African continent.

The group also visited the International Centre for Inter-Faith Peace and Harmony (ICIPH), which, amid a growing number of ecumenical initiatives in Nigeria, has a

unique goal of systematically documenting interfaith relations to inform national and international policy-making.

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs held its 54th meeting in February 2017 as part of the WCC's regional focus on Africa. In Burundi, African women embarked on a pilgrimage that yielded insights into both wounds and healing.

In South Sudan, the WCC stood in solidarity with church leaders as they offered hope during difficult times, while church leaders in Kenya proposed a national dialogue conference to help find ways of resolving the current political and social crises facing the East African nation.

In Kenya, WCC leaders participated in the “Thursdays in Black” global campaign to combat violence against women.

“We believe that women, men, boys and girls have a special role in any society to work together to contribute to a constructive, inclusive society where justice is for all, irrespective of race, color, genera and tribe,” said Abuom.

“Therefore we come against the demons of violence that dehumanize and deny dignity of any human being in any given society anywhere in the world.” ■



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ACT



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Dinesh Suna/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Day of Prayer to End Famine

On 21 May 2017 — observed as the Global Day of Prayer to End Famine — millions of people from faith communities, organizations and neighborhoods across the world prayed, tweeted, posted and talked face-to-face about the urgent action needed to aid 20 million people facing famine in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Nigeria.

Led by the WCC and the All Africa Conference of Churches, the day brought an emotional outpouring of love and hope.

The WCC also continued to promote the global campaign “Food for Life,” developing such tools as the “Ten Commandments of Food” for communities to address the right to food and sustainable agriculture through the lens of their faith and beliefs, so that key messages were brought close to people’s hearts. ■

African youth take a stand at first-ever WCC Eco-School

The inaugural “Eco-School on Water, Food, Health and Climate Justice,” a ten-day capacity-building workshop, was held in July and August 2017, hosted by the Blantyre Synod of the Central Africa Presbyterian Church in Malawi, and co-organized by the Ecumenical Water Network, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, and the WCC Health and Healing programme.

“It is imperative for churches to invest in the youth of Africa so they can take leadership in addressing these issues in the timeframe of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals,” said Prof. Dr Isabel Phiri, WCC deputy general secretary.

Vulnerable communities in Africa are some of the most affected by climate change, often suffering disproportionately from lack of food and water as well as from illness.

Though vital for everyone to see these challenges through the lenses of justice and human dignity, it is perhaps especially so for the youth of Africa to lead the way toward a future in which all people can lead full lives. ■



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Churches' Commitments to Children

In 2017 the WCC expanded the ongoing — and deepening — collaboration between the WCC and the United Nations Children's Fund.

Aiming to pull together the work of member churches and others, over 15 months the WCC led a broad consultative process among member churches and partners about how churches can use their influence to improve children's lives. The process was initiated by the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs and included theologians, child rights experts and children themselves. It led to publication in 2017 of the "Churches' Commitments to Children," an open invitation and living resource for the ecumenical commitment to children's wellbeing: their care, safety and human rights.

WCC also developed a digital platform to facilitate networking and collaboration among churches and partners in the implementation of the Churches' Commitments to Children. The innovative digital map portrays and links the efforts of churches and partners. ■

WCC Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance focuses on children

During 2017, the World Council of Churches – Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA) sharpened its focus on access to education, testing and treatment, particularly by means of education, for children and adolescents living with HIV.

The WCC-EAA also successfully completed its campaign "Leading by Example: Religious Leaders and HIV Testing," through which more than 1,000 religious leaders around the world have spoken up publicly to encourage HIV testing.

In the next few years, the WCC-EAA will be "fast-tracking" its efforts toward the rights and lives of children and adolescents living with HIV. Challenges include a lack of access to testing for children as well as a lack of appropriate, child-friendly medicines to treat HIV. ■



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Young pilgrims at the heart of WCC

Through many gatherings, educational endeavours and determined advocacy, young people remained at the heart of the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace during 2017.

The WCC youth commission ECHOS met in Sibiu, Romania, in August 2017 for days of discernment on the position and role of youth in the ecumenical movement today.

Romania was also the site of the annual meeting of the WCC Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation, held in Cluj-Napoca in October 2017. The meeting took place at the Orthodox Faculty of Theology of the Archdiocese of Cluj/University of Cluj.

The WCC Youth in Asia Training in Religious Amity programme was held in July in West Java, Indonesia, where young people gained more experience, knowledge and exposure to the theological and practical aspects of interreligious cooperation.

The WCC in June 2017 organized a pilgrimage in the Holy Land for eight young Christians from all over the world. Participants described it as a unique experience of discovering biblical and spiritual places. ■



Reformation observances abound

The WCC observed the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by participating and organizing many Reformation services, prayers and discussions around the world. Often the WCC collaborated with organizations such as the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and others.

WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit described the various commemorations as a milestone, not just historically but ecumenically for the church and for humanity.

“For the first time in five centuries, we have been

able to commemorate the Reformation ecumenically,” Tveit said.

“We have together offered repentance for the divisions of the past and affirmed what we have in common in Jesus Christ.

“This is a powerful symbol of our mutual accountability and one that has enormous potential for strengthening hope as we demonstrate a real willingness to repent, to change, to see what is wrong, and to contribute to changes and transformation toward just peace.” ■



Photo: Sean Hawkey/WCC

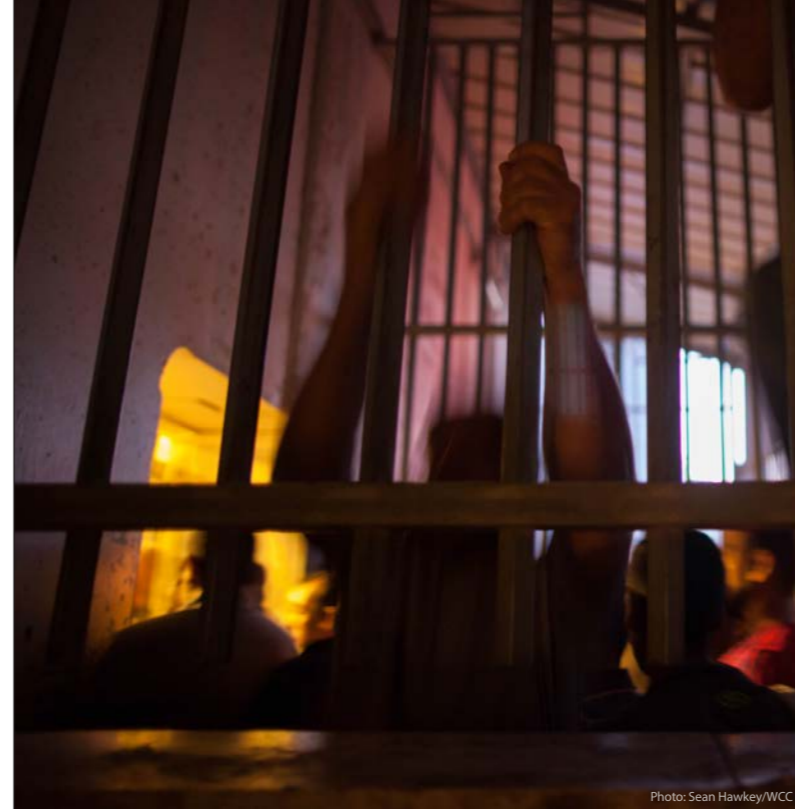


Photo: Sean Hawkey/WCC

WCC's voice in the Middle East

WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit preached at a prayer service in Jerusalem in June 2017. The service, held at the Dormition Abbey during Pentecost celebrations, emphasized justice and peace. In conjunction, a worldwide day of prayer, initiated by church leaders in Jerusalem, was held, marking 50 years since Israel began its occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights after a six-day war in 1967 involving Israel and the neighbouring states of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

In September 2017, the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs delivered a statement to the 36th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva expressing deep concern at the lack of action by the international community against Israel's illegal policies in occupied Palestine.

To further communicate the stories of injustice — and of hope — in the Middle East, the WCC also developed

the worldwide “12 Faces” exhibit, a strong and touching expression of hope for justice and peace by 12 Palestinians and Israelis who all work for just peace in the Holy Land. ■

Ecumenical accompaniers strengthen role in Holy Land

During 2017, the WCC Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) took its first concrete steps toward implementing recommendations from a wide-ranging evaluation.

EAPPI is redefining its original purpose and profile while keeping its identity as an ecumenical initiative under the WCC, called for by local churches and pursued in close cooperation with member churches and other ecumenical partners. EAPPI represents work not just of accompaniment but also of debunking myths, ideologies, and theological misunderstandings that fuel animosities in the region.

EAPPI observed its 15th anniversary in 2017 and, to date, more than 1,800 ecumenical accompaniers have worked to create conditions for a just peace. ■



Photo: Sean Hawkey/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Marcelo Schneider/WCC



Photo: Benjamin Simon/WCC

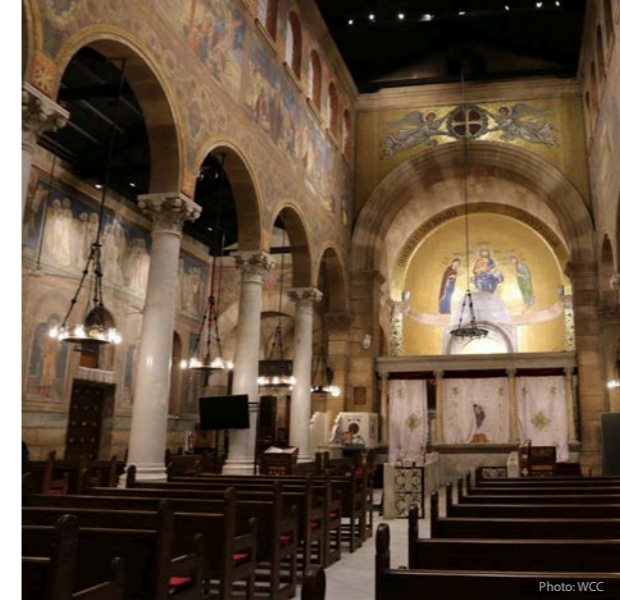


Photo: WCC



Photo: WCC

Agreement between Pope Francis and Coptic Pope Tawadros II “a sign of hope”

Pope Francis and Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt took a key ecumenical step in April 2017 by signing a common declaration that Roman Catholics and Copts “will seek sincerely not to repeat the baptism that has been administered in either of our churches for any person who wishes to join the other.”

The Coptic Orthodox Church is a WCC member church.

WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, who traveled to Cairo with a WCC delegation to meet with member churches and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, participated in the ecumenical prayer as the agreement was signed.

Tveit said: “The agreement is a sign of hope. We are as churches called to be one so that the world may believe. The text shows the strong intention to give a common witness to the shared Christian faith.” ■

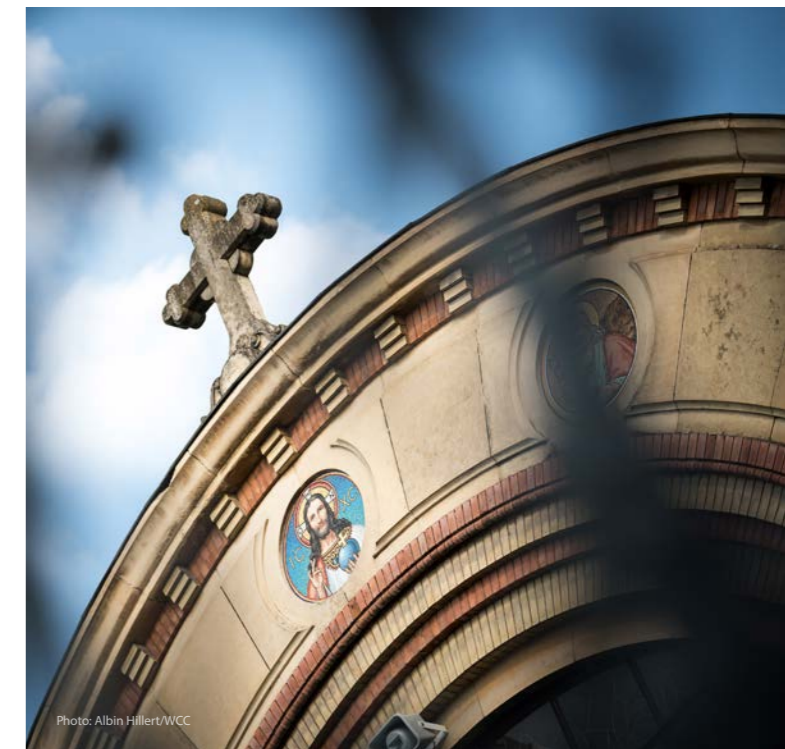


Photo: Albin Hiller/WCC

Many thriving interreligious dialogues ...

In November 2017, His Eminence Dr Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, general secretary of the Muslim World League, visited the WCC in the Ecumenical Centre, where he discussed with WCC leaders both the meaning and importance of “just peace.”

In October 2017, WCC organized the first formal dialogue between Christians and Confucians in WCC history. The dialogue, held in Seoul, was organized in collaboration with the Council for World Mission and the Korea Forum for Science and Life, with the support of the National Council of Churches in Korea, Sungkyunkwan University, the City of Andong and Korea Foundation for Culture and Ethics.

In December 2017, an “Interfaith Symposium on Statelessness” in Rome focused, for the first time in history, on joint actions by Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Jewish groups to address statelessness. The symposium was co-sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Council for World Mission, and the WCC.

In July 2017, a new group of young people of Jewish, Christian and Muslim background completed the Interreligious Summer School at the Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey. The topic of the year was peacebuilding. ■



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/WCC

Evangelism: “the hope within us”

In November 2017, a group of 25 evangelists, scholars and church leaders from Orthodox, Pentecostal and Protestant traditions gathered in Bangkok, Thailand, to reflect on evangelism at a time when religious faith is often accused of — and guilty of — stirring up intolerance, suspicion and even violence.

The meeting, with the theme “Giving an account of the hope within us: Evangelism and discipleship when hope is challenged,” was organized by the Council for World Mission and the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

In a keynote speech in Yangon, Myanmar, at the Asia Mission Conference in October 2017, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit reflected that

unity and mission belong together. He also commended the Christian Conference of Asia for its longstanding commitment to ecumenism and mission, and its efforts to unite Christian churches on the continent.

The link between mission and unity resounded through many WCC events during 2017, including planning for the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism scheduled for March 2018. ■

Faith and Order holds historic meeting in South Africa



Photo: Peter Kenny/WCC

The Faith and Order Commission of the WCC held an historic meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, in June 2017, a meeting that held special significance because it was hosted by the Dutch Reformed Church, which left the WCC in 1961 due to criticism for its role in supporting South Africa’s apartheid policy.

The DRC rejoined the WCC at Trondheim in 2016.

After the meeting in Pretoria, the Commission has published the text “Come and See: A Theological Invitation to a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.”

The Commission has also pursued the analysis of almost 70 responses to the convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, advanced the study on how moral discernment takes place in different traditions and contexts, and completed the first phase of the project “Faith and Order Papers – Digital Edition.”

■



Photo: Peter Kenny/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Ecumenical and Ethiopian patriarchs visit WCC

The Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, delivered a public address at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva in April 2017 as part of his official visit to Switzerland on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his enthronement as Ecumenical Patriarch and the 50th anniversary of the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy.

A visit in February 2017 to the WCC by the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, H.H. Abune Matthias, occasioned reflection on the distinctive history and traditions of that ancient church, as well as its role in Ethiopian society and in the larger ecumenical landscape. ■



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Peter Williams/WCC



Photo: Rev. James Bhagwan/Methodist Church In Fiji and Rotuma

WCC general secretary visits Pacific region

WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit visited the Pacific region in July and August 2017 for an ecumenical excursion.

Many discussions centered around climate change, which threatens creation and human survival directly in the Pacific.

While visiting Maohi Nui (the French Polynesia), he addressed the Synod for the Maohi Protestant Church.

Tonga was next on the itinerary with a stopover in Auckland, New Zealand, to meet with Pacific church leaders on the way to Tonga, then to Fiji with a stopover in Wellington, New Zealand.

In Fiji, Tveit participated in an ecumenical roundtable and met with church leaders, as well as with the president of Fiji and other government leaders. Fiji held the presidency for the climate change talks (COP23) held in Bonn in November 2017. ■



Photo: Rev. James Bhagwan/Methodist Church In Fiji and Rotuma



Photo: Sean Hawkey/WCC

Strengthening *diakonia* engages WCC and partners

Among steps to enhance and highlight the diaconal side of ecumenism, the WCC released a new document, “Ecumenical *Diakonia*,” developed in 2017 by a working group drawn from the WCC, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and ACT Alliance. The text was accepted in 2017 by the WCC executive committee, the ACT board, and the LWF council, then introduced to WCC staff and others during the Ecumenical Strategic Forum.

The document seeks to understand *diakonia* as integral to the nature and mission of the church, and it describes how churches are engaged in diaconal action across confessional and geographical boundaries.

The text has already served as a tool to strengthen the relationship between the WCC and the ACT Alliance, with the WCC and ACT planning two strategic governance meetings in Uppsala, Sweden, in the fall of 2018. At a consultation in Seoul in December 2017,

participants from churches throughout northeast Asia used the new text as a tool to share insights on *diakonia* and how vital it is to the nature and mission of the church.

In a lecture at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, in October 2017, WCC deputy general secretary Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri highlighted in particular the value of *diakonia* as an understanding not only of what churches do but also of who they are, particularly as they continue on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

“Christians should visit together the wounds of inequality and poverty, of the rise in internally displaced people, shortages of food and medicine, and gender-based violence,” Phiri remarked.

She added that, as the reception process continues for the text, churches and ecumenical partners are invited to review it and to offer feedback. ■



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Thursdays in Black draws new energy

The WCC expanded its promotion and participation in the longstanding global campaign “Thursdays in Black” to combat violence against women. The WCC fellowship wears black each Thursday, often sharing their solidarity through social media.

Participants at the Africa Pre-Conference of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism arrived in black clothing in September 2017 to act in solidarity with “Thursdays in Black.” In 2018, watch for an even wider campaign connected more closely with the WCC New York (USA) office as well as the wider fellowship. Within the USA, the #MeToo movement has also heightened awareness of the prevalence and seriousness of sexual harassment and assault. ■



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Ecumenical health strategy revives commitment to wellness and healing

Convening a range of international representatives and partners in Geneva in May 2017, the WCC reiterated its commitment to the ministry of health and healing for all people, taking new steps toward a new Global Ecumenical Health Strategy.

Stressing the uniting power of the ecumenical community, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit reflected that “while we acknowledge changing landscapes, we see that many health challenges still remain today.”

“As the World Council of Churches, we commit ourselves to continue to play our role as convenor, facilitator and catalyst,” said Tveit, and added, “We need to agree now on how to gather data, to analyze them, to



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

use our advocacy in the relevant contexts and toward key institutions, and to remain steadfast. Our calling to health and healing is as strong as ever.” ■



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

EHAIA addresses “faith healing” in the context of HIV

As part of a two-year initiative coordinated by the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the UNAIDS Faith Initiative, the World Council of Churches Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiatives and Advocacy (WCC-EHAIA) has been focusing on developing strategies for how faith communities can offer healing while still advocating for HIV treatment adherence.

The WCC and UNAIDS convened two separate con-



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

sultations in September in Kampala, Uganda, and Kigali, Rwanda, which drew religious leaders from a variety of faith communities in French-speaking Africa to explore the issue of “faith-healing only” practices, where some faith communities encourage people living with HIV to stop taking their anti-retroviral medication, claiming they can be healed by faith alone – a rationale devastating for work to overcome HIV and AIDS. ■

EDAN works with churches in East Africa on Disability Inclusive Development

In 2017, the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (WCC-EDAN) continued working with the Church of Uganda, Methodist Church in Kenya, Anglican Development Services in Kenya and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to empower persons with disabilities to be agents of development toward sustainable livelihoods. This work involved awareness-raising on disability inclusion in church development, identification and needs assessment for church members with disabilities to be included in

development, training and actual inclusion of persons with disabilities in development.

Following this work, 270 persons with disabilities were equipped with farming, tailoring, welding, radio mechanics and carpentry skills and are now actively participating in development initiatives of these churches. Further, 250 development planners and implementers as well as community members were sensitized on disability inclusion in development. ■

WCC promotes peacemaking, dialogue in troubled communities

The WCC continued to work for peace and justice through dialogue in nations troubled by unrest, lack of security and conflict.

South Sudan

As ongoing war creates a growing humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, the WCC stands in solidarity with the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), which has worked since 2014 to try to bring about peace in the country.

SSCC general secretary Father James Oyet-Latansio was able to attend an Ecumenical Strategic Forum on *Diakonia* and Sustainable Development convened by the WCC in Geneva. There, he admitted that in his country the churches are serving “in a difficult time, but we serve wherever we are needed.”

Kenya

In October 2017, WCC leaders conducted a solidarity visit in Kenya, meeting with Kenyan church representatives and expressing their support for Kenyan churches working toward peace and justice, even as the nation faces unrest over troubled elections.

Church leaders in Kenya are proposing a national dialogue conference to help find ways of resolving the current political and social crises facing the East African nation.

Nigeria

The International Centre for Inter-Faith Peace and Harmony, in Kaduna, celebrated its first full year of operation.

Nigeria was also the site of a series of workshops on



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/WCC

human rights held in November 2017. “It is a country of strong contrasts — a deep belief in God and his love for us, a kindness and compassion for those around, coupled with vast inequalities of wealth and access to resources, and the division and conflict which this brings,” described Jennifer Philpot-Nissen, WCC programme executive for human rights.

Zimbabwe

This nation faced the resignation of President Robert Mugabe after 37 years in power. The WCC executive committee, together with ACT Alliance, in November 2017, welcomed and affirmed a joint statement of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, issued on 15 November, as reflecting the clear common mind and witness of the churches of the country.

“We affirm and endorse the call of the churches of Zimbabwe for prayer for the nation, for calm and peace, for respect for human dignity and rule of law, for a transitional government of national unity to oversee the transition towards free, fair and credible elections, and for an inclusive process of national dialogue to capture the aspirations of all sectors of Zimbabwean society and for building a democratic state under the rule of law,” the minute read. ■

“Light of Peace” for Korean Peninsula

Amid continuing tension and conflict on the Korean Peninsula that threatens peace and the security of the Korean people, the WCC called on its member churches to participate in “A Light of Peace” campaign during Advent in 2017.

In response to this call, on the first Sunday in Advent, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) held a candlelight vigil at Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul, Republic of Korea, the same location as the Candlelight Revolution in which more than 17 million people gathered to demand the resignation of President Park Geun-hye and full democracy in 2016-17.

The NCCCK vigil began in the evening with lighting candles for “renouncing war and building peace.”

Prior to the “Light of Peace” campaign, in October 2017, the WCC led a videoconference, attended by several dozen people from all over the world, on the Korea crisis. ■



Historic steps toward nuclear disarmament

WCC's long-time partner, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, and an important step toward a safer world was taken. It represented not only recognition of global efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, but also an affirmation of the role Christian churches have played at local and grassroots levels to raise awareness and mobilize people against nuclear proliferation.

The WCC has for decades been calling for a world free from nuclear weapons. In July 2017, adoption by the United Nations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which bans the possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, represented a long-held dream for the WCC and the ecumenical movement.

The WCC has been an active participant in ICAN since 2010. ■



A look to the future

As 2017 drew to a close, preparations were underway to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the WCC, which was inaugurated in 1948 at its first assembly, in Amsterdam. A variety of events, activities, and exchanges are already underway.

The executive committee approved a year-long focus on the Latin American and Caribbean region for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace during 2018. The Pilgrimage Reference Group met in Bogota, Colombia in February 2018, where a WCC delegation visited the headquarters of the Conference of Latin American Bishops. The executive committee also approved a joint meeting with the ACT Alliance in Uppsala on ecumenical *diakonia* in 2018.

The WCC central committee will meet in Geneva, 15-21 June 2018. The programme includes a visit of Pope Francis, who will join the celebrations of the 70th anniversary. The landmark visit, to take place on 21 June, is the third by a pope, and the first time that such an occasion was dedicated to visiting the WCC. ■

Green Village project in development

The Area Development Plan for the Green Village project was adopted by the Geneva State Council in November 2017, and came into effect in January 2018. At the same time, the main building of the Ecumenical Centre was classified, with particular reference to the architectural quality of the ecumenical chapel.

The Green Village real estate project sets six new buildings in a park, around a restored and renovated Ecumenical Centre building. Next steps in the development of the WCC property include the granting of definitive building permits. Applications for the first two building permits were filed with Geneva authorities in early April 2018.

Construction is planned to begin on the first two buildings in 2019, with delivery of the buildings in 2022. ■

Stay in touch with key ecumenical themes

The Ecumenical Review
www.oikoumene.org/erev

International Review of Mission
www.oikoumene.org/irom

WCC Publications
www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications ■



WCC financial results 2017

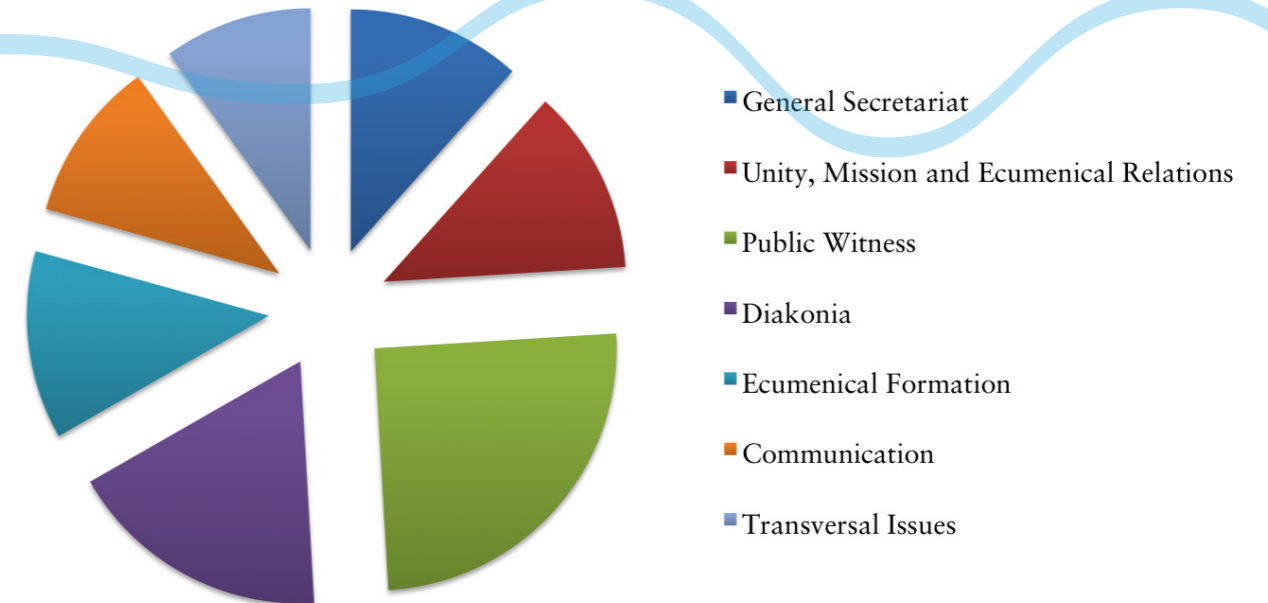
Financial results 2017 (Swiss francs 000's)*	Unrestricted and designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
*Unaudited	2017	2017	2017	2016
Income				
Membership and other unrestricted contributions	3 916	-	3 916	3 928
Programme contributions	-	13 440	13 440	13 597
Investment and currency gains	160	656	816	323
Rental income, sales and other income	6 835	423	7 258	7 160
Unrestricted income distribution	(3 912)	3 912	-	-
Total income	6 999	18 431	25 430	25 008
Expenditure				
Direct programme costs: grants	-	417	417	409
Operating and other programme costs	6 172	7 087	13 259	13 259
Salaries	4 350	8 123	12 473	12 653
Redistribution of costs; internal (sales)/charges	(2 887)	2 887	-	-
Total costs	7 635	18 514	26 149	26 321
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Transfers to funds	10	(45)	(35)	63
Net decrease in funds for the year	(626)	(128)	(754)	(1 250)

Total income increased by CHF 0.4 million as a result of favourable investment and currency gains. Contributions income and rental, sales and other income were stable compared to 2016. Two significant contracts for special project work were concluded with new partners while certain contracted funding was renewed at lower levels compared to 2016.

The preliminary result is a drawdown in funds of CHF 0.8 million, equal to forecast. General reserves increased slightly from CHF 7 million to CHF 7.1 million, and are above the target of CHF 6.2 million set by central committee. ■

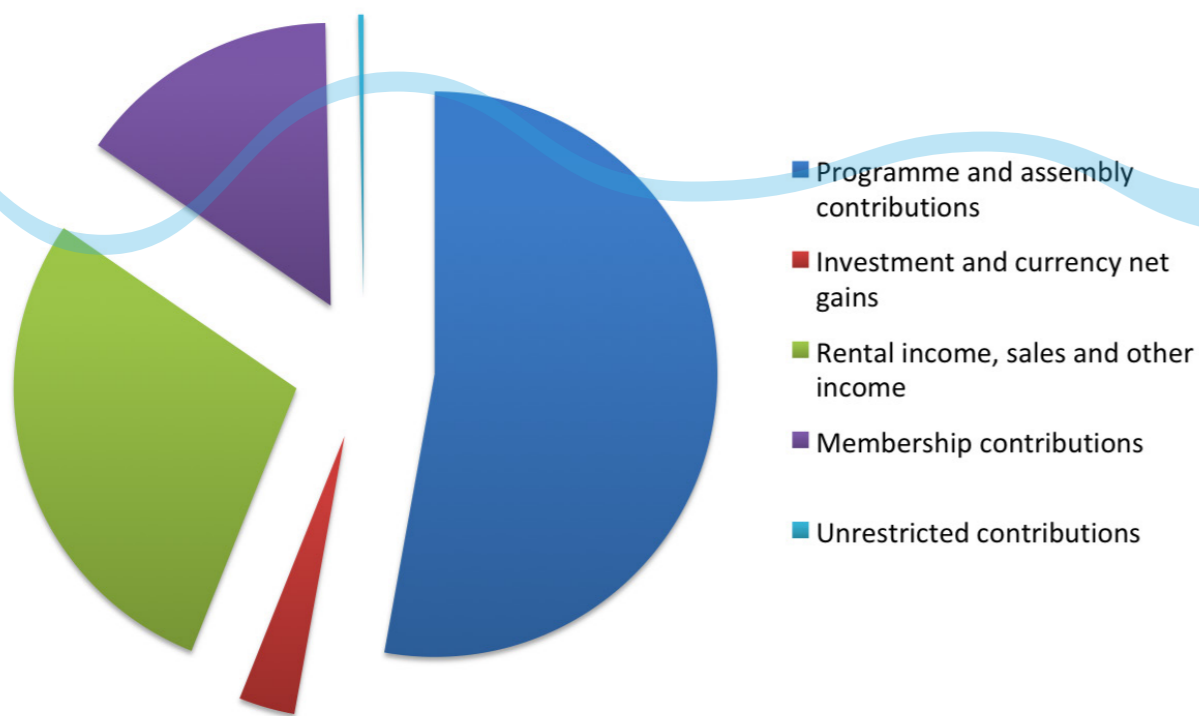


Financial report



WCC expenditure by programme 2017	CHF 000s	%
General Secretariat	2 150	12%
Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Relations	2 289	12%
Public Witness	4 633	25%
Diakonia	3 260	18%
Ecumenical Formation	2 324	13%
Communication	1 994	11%
Transversal Issues	1 832	10%
	18 482	100%

Transversal Issues in 2017 included Church and ecumenical relations, Youth engagement in the ecumenical movement, Just community of women and men, Inter-religious dialogue and co-operation, and Spiritual life. ■



WCC sources of income 2017	CHF 000s	%
Programme and assembly contributions	13 440	52,9%
Investment and currency net gains	816	3,2%
Rental income, sales and other income	7 258	28,5%
Membership contributions	3 838	15,1%
Unrestricted contributions	78	0,3%
	25 430	100,0%

Income trends 2017 (Swiss francs 000's)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Membership and other unrestricted contributions	5 250	4 605	4 388	4 120	4 206	3 877	3 928	3 916
Programme contributions	20 742	16 802	17 214	16 871	16 020	14 651	13 542	13 372
International Ecumenical Peace Convocation	351	492	-	-	-	-	-	-
Global Christian Forum	166	174	17	-	-	-	-	-
Assembly	76	145	1 021	2 112	138	115	55	68
Other income	5 882	6 447	7 409	8 179	8 998	6 948	7 483	8 074
Total	32 468	28 665	30 049	31 282	29 362	25 591	25 008	25 430

Main contributors

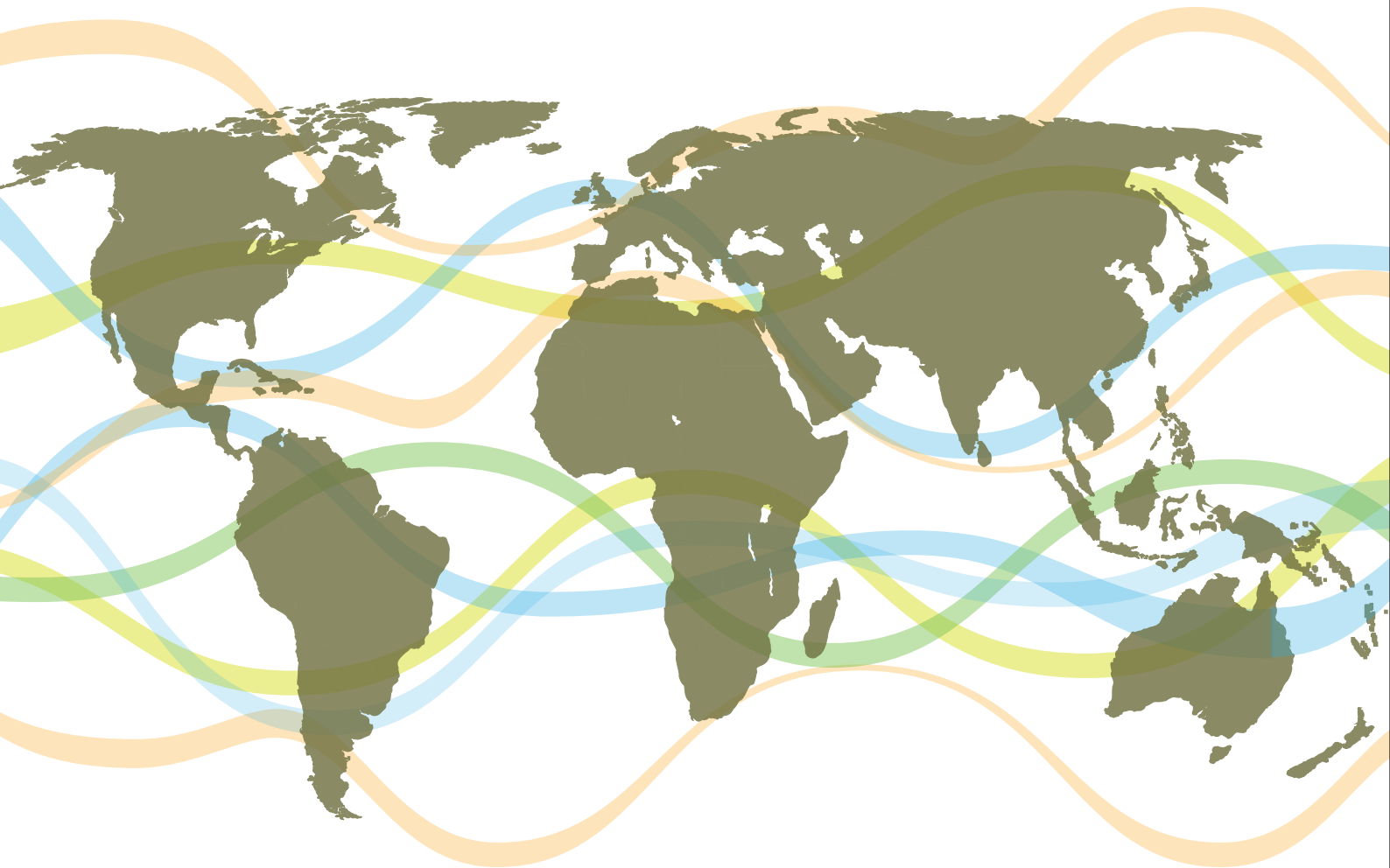
Note: The list includes member churches, ecumenical partners and other organizations that contributed more than CHF 20,000 to the WCC in 2017.

African Methodist Episcopal Church, American Baptist Churches in the USA, Anglican Church of Canada, Bread for the World, Brot für Alle, Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Christian Aid, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States, Christian Council of Sweden, Church of England, Church of Norway, Church of Scotland, Church of Sweden, Council for World Mission, DanChurchAid, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Eglise protestante unie de France, EKD-Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, EKD-Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, EKD-Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland, Finn Church Aid, FELM, Fondation pour

l'aide au protestantisme réformé, Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia, Hassib Sabbagh Foundation, Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz, ICCO - Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation, Kerk in Actie, Lunds Mission Society, Methodist Church, NCC Australia - Act for Peace, Norwegian Church Aid, Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbyterian Church in Canada, Presbyterian Church of Korea, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, Reformed Church in America, Reformierte Landeskirche Aargau, Religious Society of Friends, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, Stichting Rotterdam, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), The Episcopal Church in the USA, UNAIDS, UNICEF, United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Uniting Church in Australia, Uniting Church in Sweden, Vereinte Evangelische Mission ■

Other contributors (less than CHF 20,000)

Member churches, ecumenical partners, other organizations, congregations and individuals ■



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