



World Council of Churches

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Bishop Dr Munib Younan, President
Rev. Martin Junge, General Secretary
Lutheran World Federation

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On behalf of the 345 member churches of the World Council Churches (WCC), it is my privilege to offer these words of encouragement as you gather in Medan, Indonesia for the Council meeting of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The WCC is a fellowship of Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and United churches, representing over 560,000 million Christians around the world. The Lutheran member churches of the WCC continue to offer founding-member leadership and commitment to the fellowship, for which the WCC is deeply grateful.

The theme guiding the present Council meeting evokes a much loved image of God's faithful as "trees planted by streams of water" (Psalm 1.3). The Psalmist celebrates the happiness of those who follow the way of the Lord. They are nourished by their faithfulness and each tree bears "fruit in its season". God alone is righteous and the "way of the wicked" perishes.

God has planted many trees, many churches, and through faithfulness each one bears fruit from generation to generation. The modern ecumenical movement has been a celebration in discovering such abundant fruit and the many gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our common quest for unity in response to Christ's prayer urges us to share the fruits of our faith with the entire world so that all may have life in abundance.

Over the past years, the LWF has been engaged in a journey of communion, growing together as a family of churches and reaching out together in service to the world. The bonds of confession and sacrament continue to nurture the communion. The LWF is also embarked on a journey of justice, in which theology and public witness go hand in hand. This is not simply a strategic plan, but a vision of the church being present in the world, inspired by faith and called to service.

The LWF has been strengthened through its growth in communion, while the diaconal engagement of the churches has inspired a strong commitment to advocacy, human rights and dialogue. Together, Lutheran churches stand as trees planted by streams of water in service to the God of life who watches over the "way of the righteous".

The LWF plays a leading role in the ecumenical movement, both the communion office and the member churches. The significant presence of the Lutheran churches at the Busan Assembly of the WCC was encouraging and strengthens the existing cooperation between the LWF and the WCC. Though we cooperate widely on programmes; I want to also ask the LWF to join the steering group that will guide the development of the Ecumenical Centre, our common home in Geneva.

The Busan Assembly called the ecumenical movement to join together on a pilgrimage of justice and peace. In the same spirit, I invite the LWF to join the pilgrimage, sharing the fruits of your journey into communion and for justice. The Lutheran churches' journey of communion has much to offer the pilgrimage of justice and peace. We look forward to walking this way together.

May the days ahead of prayer, dialogue and work be inspired by great faith and bear much fruit.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olav Fykse Tveit". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary