

# **The World Council of Churches**

**(Tenth Assembly)**

**Busan, South Korea, 30.10. – 08.11.2013**

**Report of the Church of England Delegation**

**THE TENTH ASSEMBLY OF  
THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
BUSAN, SOUTH KOREA, 30 OCTOBER – 08 NOVEMBER 2013**

**Theme: God of Life; Lead us to Justice and Peace**

**REPORT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DELEGATION**

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### Other Resources on line

#### 1. The Bible Studies

*A Resource for Parishes and Dioceses*

[http://wcc2013.info/en/resources/documents/BibleStudies\\_en.pdf](http://wcc2013.info/en/resources/documents/BibleStudies_en.pdf)

(A PDF version is available by email on request:

[angeline.leung@churchofengland.org](mailto:angeline.leung@churchofengland.org))

#### 2. The Plenary presentations

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/plenary-presentations>

Videos of all these major presentations are available on the WCC website:

<http://wcc2013.info/en/news-media/video/recordings>

# THE TENTH ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES BUSAN, SOUTH KOREA, 30 OCTOBER – 08 NOVEMBER 2013

## REPORT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DELEGATION

### A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) was held in Busan, Republic of Korea from 30 October to 8 November 2013 under the theme *God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace*. This is a message of hope against hope in the midst of suffering. Into the brokenness of the world the prayer ‘God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace’ is a Christian response. It is both a cry of pain and a cry of defiant confidence in the God who wills us to live with justice and in peace. It is a profoundly biblical prayer: its message encapsulates the message of the covenant people of God through the centuries.
2. An Assembly of the WCC is both the largest and most diverse church gathering and ecumenical event that takes place in the world. It is the highest governing body of the WCC, and meets once every seven years. It is the only occasion when the WCC fellowship of 345 member churches (about 800 delegates) comes together as a whole in prayer and celebration. The Assembly receives and reviews the work of the WCC departments and commissions of the last 7 years, determines the overall policies of the Council for the future, issues public statements and elects a new Central Committee. The programme also includes worship, Bible study, seminars, workshops and plenary presentations which explore contemporary issues before the churches. Churches are visibly on view in this ecumenical gathering which seeks to bring a sense of unity and coherence in the life of the ecumenical movement that the world may believe.
3. The Tenth Assembly brought together not only the member churches of the Council but also representatives of non- member churches, the Global Christian Forum, ecumenical movements, and representatives of Councils of Churches. It could rightly be called ‘a meeting of the one ecumenical movement’.
4. The Assembly was prepared in the spirit of togetherness based on the ethos of fellowship and a commitment to discern by the method of consensus.
5. This Assembly in Busan was the first WCC Assembly in Northeast Asia. The Assembly was held at the BEXCO conference centre, a large facility about 2 miles from our hotels. The local Korean churches went to great lengths, and considerable costs, to welcome us. We saw something of the general vitality of the Church in South Korea. In demonstrations that surrounded the Assembly we also saw the opposition of some Korean Christians to the vision and work of the WCC.
6. Korea offered the Assembly a unique ecumenical horizon. Churches have grown rapidly in Korea and nearly 25% of the population is Christian. It was a joint Korean

initiative of WCC member churches as well as evangelical and Pentecostal churches, which enabled the WCC to meet in Korea.

7. The broader Asian context also shaped the gathering. The rapid growth of Christianity in Asia, the huge challenges faced by Christian minorities in some of the Asian countries, the on going economic and social transformation of the region and the urgent need for reconciliation in Korea – all of these highlighted the importance of a WCC Assembly in Korea with its prayer – ‘God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace.’.
8. Korea remains a politically divided peninsula. Unfortunately, although it was envisaged that some Christians from North Korea would attend the Assembly, this did not materialise. The hope of the Korean people, however, for a reunited Korea continues to remain strong in the hearts and minds of many Koreans. There are, however, those who fear the implications of reunification for the South. More than 500 pilgrims gathered on pilgrimage to a peace park north of Seoul, where the division between North and South Korea is seen at its most painful and offered prayers for the reunification of Korea. The churches in Korea along with the ecumenical movement have been encouraging reunification efforts for decades. The pilgrimage to the peace park was another visible sign of this determination. The hope for reconciliation was present throughout the Assembly.
9. For Anglicans, the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury for 3 days was a highlight. He was very well received when he addressed a large plenary meeting, and the Anglicans present (from across the Communion) were hosted by the local Diocese for a splendid Eucharist and Dinner. The Archbishop’s greeting to the Assembly is in Appendix 1.
10. The *Madang* concept helped to root the Assembly in the Korean context. *Madang* is a Korean term that describes a courtyard in a traditional Korean home. It serves as a space for encounter and sharing, celebration and fellowship, greeting a visitor and welcoming a stranger.
11. The Assembly programme offered the following key ways for participants to engage in and with ecumenical Christianity and its renewal:
  - Prayer marked the beginning and the end of each day. Worship life at the Assembly continues to remain one of the highlights. It was an opportunity to be united in prayer, to share liturgical gifts of the different traditions, and keep the Assembly grounded in the theme. Father Michael Lapsley from South Africa drew together the work of the Assembly in his closing sermon.
  - Daily Bible Study focussed on moments in biblical history in which life was threatened and yet justice and peace, through God’s grace, prevailed.
  - There were six thematic plenaries. Two (exploration of the Assembly theme and the Asia plenary) provided space for celebration and inspiration. The four other plenaries were on mission, unity, justice and peace.

- There were twenty-one Ecumenical Conversations designed to promote in-depth discussion on issues of common concern. Each conversation focussed on a unique topic and provided four 90-minute sessions for sustained dialogue. These conversations were prepared with churches and partners to help profile existing co-operation, while deepening common efforts for the future. Their reports will form an important source for planning the agenda of the years ahead. The Archbishop of Canterbury was the resource person for two such conversations: *Transformed by renewal: biblical sources and ecumenical perspectives*; *Religions working together for peace and freedom*.
12. During the Business Sessions the Assembly followed a consensus procedure which has become the mode of working since the last Assembly. There were some decisions, such as with regard to election to the committees which could be decided upon by majority vote.
  13. Along with Bishop Peter Forster, Leslie Nathaniel was elected by the Assembly to the 150 member strong Central Committee. The Central Committee conducts the business of the WCC between Assemblies and meets once in two years. The next General Assembly is due in 2021.
  14. Dame Mary Tanner, the WCC President for Europe, was a source of wisdom. She has now handed over the baton as WCC President for Europe to the Archbishop of Uppsala, Anders Wejryd, after a very distinguished career with the WCC and in other aspects of the ecumenical movement.

## **B. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DELEGATION**

15. **The Rt Revd Peter Forster**, the Bishop of Chester, led the Church of England delegation. He took over from the Bishop of Southwark in 2010 as the member of the WCC Central Committee.

**Dr Elaine Storkey**, a member of the Church of England Synod; the President of Tear Fund; Member Orthodox-Evangelical Dialogue WCC from 1996; Member Working Party on Christian-Jewish Relations from 1998.

**The Revd Dr Carolyn Hammond**, Dean of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, member of the CofE Faith and Order Commission (FAOC).

**The Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel**, Archbishop of Canterbury's International Ecumenical Secretary and European Secretary CCU.

A fifth delegate, a younger person, dropped out at a late stage and could not be replaced.

**Dame Mary Tanner**, the WCC President for Europe, while not a Church of England delegate as such, was in close touch with the delegation and has agreed the content of this Report.

## C. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S CONTRIBUTION

16. The Church of England's traditional place in Europe and the Archbishop of Canterbury's key role in the Anglican Communion as the focus of unity, presents the CofE with opportunities to take on some leadership roles within the WCC and contribute towards renewal, reconciliation and transformation. Traditionally churches in Europe and in the Anglican Communion have looked to the CofE to play a key role in ecumenical work.
17. The CofE makes an annual contribution of £108,000 to the WCC. It made a further financial contribution of £55,000 towards Assembly costs. In addition to this Bishop Peter Forster was a member of the Central Committee, Bishop John Hind a member of the Faith and Order Commission and Dame Mary Tanner the WCC President for Europe until the Busan Assembly.
18. During the Assembly Bishop Peter Forster was a member of the Public Issues Committee, the Revd Dr Carolyn Hammond a member of the Nominations Committee, Dr Elaine Storkey a rapporteur in Ecumenical Conversations and the Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel a member of the Finance Committee.

## D. ASSEMBLY SNAPSHOTS

### 19. *Plenary Sessions*

#### *The Assembly theme*

The Key address on the assembly theme was presented by the Anglican Bishop, Duleep de Chickera, from Colombo, Sri Lanka. Below are excerpts from his address: He spoke of the "harsh realities of our world and our communion in the God of Life which urges us to endorse the assembly theme as a timely prophetic petition. As a fellowship of Churches this theme is a mother of all petitions and sensitive to the plight of those marginalised. 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 a 'no tomorrow' to whom Jesus announced an emphatic 'yes'."

20. He highlighted the diaconal character of Jesus, but diaconal essence converges on prophetic transformation, he noted. "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 marginalised 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."
21. The theology he articulated is one of 'Presence and Voice' for the current context. Our contribution should be one of sustained pastoral presence and a measured prophetic voice, he emphasised.

22. On being Church he noted that: “the feet washing by Jesus induces 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’s energy for faithful journeying than to touch and refresh one another’s feet; as Jesus did and asked us to do. As an added bonus, the feet washing at the centre will fill the frustrating Eucharistic vacuum at our ecumenical gatherings with a fitting alternative till we are ready to break bread together. It may even move more of our gatherings to warmer locations in the south!” For the full text see **Appendix 2**.
23. **Unity**  
The Unity plenary explored the unity of the Church as inextricably bound up with God’s plan for the unity of the whole of humanity and all creation. Introducing the session Dame Mary Tanner reminded us of the statements on unity made by earlier Assemblies which had summed up the convergences in understanding our commitment to the visible unity of the Church.
24. She asked what we would say about unity at the Tenth Assembly noting that it remains ‘a scandal and a wound that we Christians do not eat and drink around the one Table of the Lord’ which evoked a strong response of agreement from those in the hall.
25. Speakers from Romania, Jamaica, South Africa and an Anglican Bishop from Canada, Mark McDonald, reflected on moves to unity in their own ecclesial and cultural contexts. An Orthodox speaker lamented the failures of his own Church to continue with the ecumenical pilgrimage. A Baptist presenter pointed to the importance of the new convergence document from Faith and Order- *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* – for helping the fellowship of churches understand and express its shared commitment to a unity with rich diversity.
26. The plenary ended with a recommitment to the primary purpose of the World Council of Churches as stated in its Constitution: ‘to call one another to the goal of 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’.
27. The speakers then highlighted specific commitments for future work together including continuing the hard slog of theological dialogue; a resolve to live out the convergences of dialogue in renewed lives and closer fellowship with others; an intention to intensify work together for justice and peace and the healing of creation; and to seek for more participatory and inclusive ways of working together, open to receive gifts from other traditions. The commitment to go on praying for the unity for which Christ prayed that the world might believe was focused in the meditative prayer for unity led by the Taize Community in front of the Rublev icon of the Holy Trinity with which the presentation concluded.



28. Although the Unity Plenary did not present the Unity Statement it was the dynamic of that statement - *God's Gift and call to Unity and our commitment* - that underlay the presentation. Later that day the Assembly delegates formally adopted the Busan Unity Statement agreeing to send it to the churches for study and response. It will serve as a statement which holds together all of the different work and commitments of the fellowship in the next eight years. The full text is to be found in **Appendix 3**.
29. ***Mission and Evangelism***  
 The Mission plenary was moderated by Professor Kirsteen Kim of Leeds Trinity University, England.  
 Participants at the mission plenary committed themselves afresh to a renewed statement on mission in the light of global, political, economic and social changes. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) has developed *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* since the last assembly in Porto Alegre in 2006. Metropolitan Dr Geevarghese Mar Coorilos, the Moderator of CWME spoke of the call to mission from the margins as the heartbeat of the document. *Together Towards Life* challenges the understandings that mission is done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, by the global north to the global south. Through pain and struggles in their daily existence, those marginalised come to know the God of life. Mission does not just entail moving people from the margins to the centre but is a challenge for those at the centre to meet the God of life at the margins.
30. ***Justice***  
 Justice was seen as a Christian imperative. The challenges particularly in the areas of social, economic and ecological justice were highlighted. One of the key difficulties to be overcome was the priority given to financial institutions in a diversity of nations. The greed of some of those in control of these institutions had disrupted the entire global economy. In the area of human rights Dr Julia Duchrow noted that “justice comes from the faith-based perspective that human beings are created in the image of God. Human dignity must be affordable to all human beings no matter which place they come from. The idea of protection of human dignity is in the core of human rights.”
31. ***Peace***  
 The Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee challenged churches to fulfil the mandate given by God to be advocates for peace in the midst of a violent and unjust world. Gbowee had led a nonviolent movement of Christian and Muslim women in her native country, Liberia, which was instrumental in ending the civil war. The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, The Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba spoke of the Christian hope “we want to say we worship the God of hope: the God who even within the sea of those injustices still calls each of us to be a peacemaker.” One Korean voice pointed to the need to start the light inside us in order to stop the dangerous light outside of us. We are called to turn on the light of peace and life inside us.

### 32. ***Bible Studies***

Bible study was one of the ways in which the Assembly was able to explore the theme and encourage mutual learning as we grew together in commitment to the calling of the God of life. (NB I'm not sure what to do with this sentence!) The texts chosen were biblical examples in which life is threatened but through God's grace there is justice and peace. The Assembly Bible Study reflections on the various passages given below can be download from the WCC 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly website:

[http://wcc2013.info/en/resources/documents/BibleStudies\\_en.pdf](http://wcc2013.info/en/resources/documents/BibleStudies_en.pdf)

Genesis 2:4b-17 (theme: assembly theme; image: the tree of life); Amos 5:14-24 (theme: Asia; image Asia: drum); Acts 8:26-40 (theme mission; image: water); Acts 2:1-13 (theme: unity; image: fire and wind); 1 Kings 21:1-22 (theme: justice; image: food); John 14:27-31 (theme: peace; image: flower).

### 33. ***Ecumenical Conversations***

Much of the substantive work of the Assembly was done in 21 Ecumenical Conversations which explored a variety of subjects: the changing ecumenical landscape, the Church and the vision of unity, moral discernment, spirituality, interfaith issues, women's agenda as well as themes relating to justice and peace. Many of the Conversations drew upon the work of the Council since the last Assembly and although participants were self-selecting, these conversations were a way of giving account to the member churches of work done and of offering insights for the direction of future work. Inevitably the success of the Conversations varied. Some spoke highly of their group work. Others found their Conversation less inspiring or helpful. Short reports of what was done in the Conversations were tabled at one of the final business meetings and the notes from these conversations will form a valuable resource for the new Central Committee as it plans and guides future work.

### 34. ***Committees***

#### ***Recommendations of Programme Guidelines Committee (PGC)***

The PGC was responsible for proposing policies for further programmatic work of the WCC and relationship strategies in the areas of churches and ecumenical development, unity and mission and public witness and *diakonia*. The Assembly adopted the following PGC recommendations:

- To continue a pilgrimage of justice and peace with biblical and theological reflection related to the journey.
- To take into account the importance of working with member churches for the success of programmatic work.
- To engage with the wider ecumenical movement on the pilgrimage.
- To develop strategic plan for presentation to the first meeting of the new Central Committee.
- To explore the use of Special Envoys in WCC work.

35. ***Policy Reference Committee***

The Policy Reference Committee presented policy recommendations for Assembly action.

Some of the key resolutions are given below. The Assembly:

- Urged the WCC to continue with the integration of work of its programme areas, 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, thereby enhancing the impact and effectiveness of the Council's work and voice.
- Affirmed the importance 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.
- Urged that communication strategy include representations from the life and witness of a wide array of member churches
- Affirmed the importance of integrating the spiritual and theological work of the churches and the expertise drawn from commissions of the WCC into the on going work of the WCC in all its dimensions
- Adopted the Unity Statement *God's Gift and Call to Unity – And Our Commitment* and called on its member churches to respond to the vision and challenging commitments of the Unity Statement.

36. ***Public Issues***

The following Public Issues Statements were adopted by the Assembly:

- Statement on the politicisation of religion and rights of religious minorities
- Statement on human rights of stateless people
- Statement on peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula
- Statement on the way of just peace
- Statement affirming the Christian presence and witness in the Middle East
- Statement on the current critical situation of Abeyi in South Sudan

A Statement on moving towards a nuclear free world, free of both nuclear weapons and nuclear power, regarded as a 'common threat', was not adopted by the Assembly but referred to the Central Committee, largely due to representations from our delegates, for further deliberation.

37. ***Finance Committee***

The Finance Committee proposed 15 recommendations to the Assembly for ensuring financial stability. These included efforts to increase the number of churches paying membership fees as well as the possibility of declaring a member church as non-active after three consecutive years of non-payment.

38. A large deficit in the WCC pension scheme will require the commercial development of part of the present site of the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva in order to ensure future financial stability of the Council and its Pension Fund.

39. ***Constitutional Changes***

In accordance with the WCC constitution and rules a number of amendments were adopted by the General Assembly. The key changes are as follows:

- The Assembly will in future meet every eight years rather than once every seven years.
- The Central Committee will in future meet once every two years, a reduction of one meeting between Assemblies.
- Commissions will meet once every two years, again a reduction by one meeting. The Faith and Order Commission will have only one layer of governance with a reduction in numbers.

**E. SOME IMPRESSIONS FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DELEGATES**

40. ‘The Korean volunteer helpers could not have been bettered; they were cheerful and friendly, with or without English, and did their very courteous best to help bewildered delegates. The opening presentation of the history of Christianity in Korea was a spectacular and moving one; some of the images have imprinted themselves firmly on my memory. So have images of satin-hatted Orthodox queuing up in Starbucks at the Bexco conference centre; and of the staggering diversity of ecclesiastical costume on display ‘God loves wondrous variety’.’

41. ‘The messages from the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Pope, the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury and (from a political sphere) the Prime Minister of Korea; all these left delegates and representatives alike in no doubt of the importance of what we were involved in. We might compare a WCC Assembly with the first Ecumenical Council in 325 at Nicaea. That must have been an even greater effort and journey for those times. Our aim in Busan was very different, though. One of the gains achieved in the ecumenical movement has been to shift the balance in so many churches away from excluding people from the fold on the basis of points over which there is disagreement, and towards including Christians on the basis of what could be affirmed in common. This does, and did, lead to frustrations at the limitations of the unity on view, but it was creative frustration.’

42. ‘Spending lots of quality time with fellow Christians from across the world was a rare privilege. Normally one meets such people for a few hours and then they are gone, or one is gone oneself, on to the next meeting.’

43. ‘The quality of the input was generally very high. The business plenaries came as a bit of a shock to one not versed in consensus procedures and synod rules; but the processes did manage to get us through a lot of difficult business, while ensuring that dissenting voices were heard. The morning theme plenaries varied in quality

according to who was leading and contributing. The point was well made by a priest from Jerusalem that delegates had soon to go back from this place of gathered unity to situations of division in Syria, Iraq Afghanistan and elsewhere. The unstable situations of many churches loomed large in their thinking and speaking.’

44. One of the highlights for Revd Dr Carolyn Hammond was the nominations committee. She writes: “It came as a surprise to find myself on that committee; there were 25 of us, representing a mix of backgrounds in a similar way to the balances we were tasked with respecting when finalising the membership (subject to Council approval) of the Central Committee of 150 who would take on the organization of the next WCC. It was an entirely new way of working for me. Previously I had only ever encountered the theoretically meritocratic method of selection which results in PLU (‘people like us’) and the reproduction of the status quo. I thought at first that the chairing was slow and inefficient; but as the committee began to pull together and trust one another, it became plain that the long spread of time allotted to the task was entirely necessary, to ensure that all were heard, and all respected: and still the right people (to a large extent) got through. The sensitivities surrounding the role of the Orthodox churches also began to make more sense as time went on. As a result of working on the committee I found it easier and more enjoyable to interact with other people; we had things to talk about beyond the low-level friendly chat which prevailed everywhere.”
45. ‘The standard of material presented for use at WCC was very high indeed. There were beautifully printed booklets for the worship and Bible studies, and a daily newspaper with reports of all the events. This was a valuable, albeit presumably costly, contribution to WCC’s work because it meant people would have things to take home and use; materials which would bring new words, music and ideas for Christians to share.’
46. ‘There was much evident joy and enthusiasm for Christianity on view in Busan, than one generally finds at home; whether because of genuine demographic differences, or because of the success of the ‘balance’ (not ‘quotas’, we were warned) strategy, there was a genuine mix of age, gender, race, lay/ordained, and people with disabilities were present, and were given a prominent voice. Some of the fringe participants in the ‘Madang’ (courtyard) hall, from around the world, broadened the reach of WCC still further.’
47. There were some less positive reflections:  
  
‘The wider social dimension of the Assembly was generally rather problematic. Although we were accommodated in excellent hotels, their dining rooms were too expensive for delegates, and there was not the mixing over common meals which are an important element of conferences such as this. At lunchtime, too, there were no communal dining arrangements.’

48. 'It would have been helpful if the official Message from the Assembly made reference to Christian unity, since the Unity Statement adopted by the Assembly is a significant document (see Appendix 3). The Constitution states that the purpose of the WCC is to pursue the visible unity of the Church, and it would have been appropriate to make reference to the formal considerations of the unity statement which had been discussed and approved.'
49. 'Around 80% of the revenue of the WCC comes from only 15 churches, including the Church of England, and around 70 members pay no subscription at all. This cannot be the basis for the healthy functioning of the WCC. The contributions from, essentially, the liberal Protestant denominations of Europe and North America have been declining. In 15 years the income of the WCC has halved in cash terms, mainly reflecting the decline of the major donating churches, as well as the appreciation of the Swiss Franc. Contributions from non-paying members will need further work at the Central Committee and the area of providing subsidies tackled as a key financial issue. The recommendations of the finance committee for financial stability did, however, receive the unanimous support of the Assembly.'
50. 'There was some unease about the predominance of English as the main language of WCC. It was inevitable, sensible and practical, but still felt awkward.'

## **F. CONCLUSION**

51. Overall, there is still a lot of work to be done and substantial questions remain, but the struggle for greater unity and closer fellowship will continue in obedience to Christ's call that all may be one that the world may see.
52. The Archbishop of Canterbury in his address to the November 2013 Church of England General Synod noted, "the WCC certainly has its issues of unity and coherence, as do we, but it holds together an extraordinary diversity, united in the main by the love for Jesus Christ". This message of a world Christian presence and witness in the difficult political context of Korea was conveyed to the world and we look back upon the Assembly with considerable pleasure.
53. We were privileged to represent the Church of England at the Tenth Assembly in Busan and commend the materials from the Assembly available on the WCC web site to members of the General Synod. We were proud of the role Anglicans from around the Communion played at the Assembly and we look forward to the Church of England playing its part in the work of the fellowship of churches in the years ahead.

**The Rt Revd Peter Forster**

**Dr Elaine Storkey**

**The Revd Dr Carolyn Hammond**

**Dame Mary Tanner**

**The Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel**

## Appendix 1

### Archbishop of Canterbury's Message to the Assembly

01 November 2013

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

1. 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 first 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

5. The fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches 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.
6. 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."



## Appendix 2

### **Keynote Address on the Assembly Theme** *God of Life Lead us to Justice and Peace*

#### **Plenary Reflections by Bishop Duleep de Chickera** **Anglican Church of Sri Lanka**

1. 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.
2. It presses our parent-protector to arrest the terrible trends of human degradation and to bring speedy relief to all who groan.
3. In light of those who promote the ways of aggressive greed, it is a defiant call for repentance and visible change, now.
4. For the restless faithful within the fragmented Body of Christ, it opens a door to a common global witness.
5. As a fellowship of Churches sensitive to the plight of marginalised victims, it is indeed the mother of all petitions.
6. 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**

7. 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.
8. 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 a 'no tomorrow' to whom Jesus announced an emphatic 'yes'.
9. Immersed in this world of marginalised victims, Jesus discloses a dynamic re-arrangement of right living and shared obligations acceptable to God, which He called the 'Reign of God'. His passionate search for the marginalised victim—a sign of this new arrangement—highlights the diakonial character of Jesus.
10. But diakonial essence 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 marginalised 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.

11. The system however refuses to surrender the gain of its greed to any compromise, and the victim's advocate is eventually victimised. 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's 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**

12. Like 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 victim and resist attempts to restore her to the middle.
13. 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.
14. It is in these circumstances of brazen authoritarianism that victim theology emerges. This theology initially reclaims the centre of the discourse for the marginalised victim; just as Jesus did. It is from here that the enemy aggressor is identified and his obligations and needs discerned, and the ensuing cycle of repentance and forgiveness, truth and mercy, integration and community reconstructed to pave the way for justice and peace. The exclusion of the marginalised victim from the centre, as is the case—for instance—in Sri Lanka today, ironically deprives all Sri Lankans of justice and peace.
15. 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**

16. 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 marginalised victim dignity and the aggressor to his 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.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. But our Churches have seen too much of the de-humanisation 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.
20. 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'**

21. 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.
22. 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's energy for faithful journeying than to touch and refresh one another's feet; as Jesus did and asked us to do.

23. As an added bonus, the feet washing at the centre will fill the frustrating Eucharistic vacuum at our ecumenical gatherings with a fitting alternative till 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**

24. 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.
25. 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 the least, the rapid resurgence of senseless civil wars, ethno-religious extremism and different expressions of poverty and disease which simply multiply victims before a bewildered world.
26. 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.

## Appendix 3

### **The Unity Statement** *God's Gift and Call to Unity – And Our Commitment*

#### **God's Gift and Call to Unity - and our Commitment**

1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 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, 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 marginalised 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 recognise 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; Isaiah 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 on the crowds, healed the sick and preached good news to the poor (Math. 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 Church is to be: foretaste of new creation; prophetic sign to the whole world of the life God intends for all; and 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>i</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 marginalisation 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 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>ii</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>iii</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 (Ephesians 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, through witness and service to the world and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.<sup>iv</sup>*  
*We affirm the uniqueness of our fellowship and our conviction to pursue the visible unity of the 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 finds 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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i 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.

ii 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.

iii 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 Peace Convocation; 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*.

iv 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 First 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.'