
In early 2020, the World Council of Churches (WCC) issued a statement condemning the execution of Lawan Andimi, a leader in Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigéria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). The WCC condemned the brutal act of violence and expressed condolences to his family, community, and church. Andimi was district secretary in the Michika area and chair of the Christian Association of Nigeria for the Michika area.

“We have lost a brother who worked for peace, who worked for ecumenism, and whose life has been cut short by senseless violence,” wrote WCC general secretary Olav Fykse. EYN is a member of the WCC.

A call for the churches to join a pilgrimage of justice and peace has shaped all the council’s programs since the last assembly. This emphasis was an outgrowth of earlier efforts by the Mennonites and the Brethren.

As part of this emphasis, each year delegations are sent to troubled places to be a living letter of hope (2 Corinthians 3:3) as well as an international witness to conflict. For 2019, Asia was selected as a focus area and visits were made to a number of conflicts. While one area might have the spotlight, the World Council of Churches remains vigilant to seek peace throughout the world. Of great concern is the religious and economic violence that affects Christians in northern Nigeria, including our sisters and brothers of EYN.

Every meeting, gathering, and program of the WCC is infused with worship and prayer. Prayer is at the center of the ecumenical movement, for Jesus prayed that all might be one so that the world might believe (John 17:21). The ecumenical prayer cycle is an invitation to member church to join together in prayer and worship.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is one particular avenue for prayer. Every year the WCC Commission on Faith and Order, in partnership with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, publishes a basic liturgical text on a biblical theme for the encouragement of churches to be in solidarity with one another—either physically worshiping together or being mindful of our common witness. Resources can be found on the WCC website.

Matthew 25 is embodied over and again as the many ministries of the WCC are recounted. How do we care for the least of these? The WCC protects the rights of children, seeks healing for those with HIV, shines a light on the dark veil of violence and rape that terrorizes women around the world. The council seeks a blue planet where there is clean water to drink and proper sanitation so that communities might flourish without disease and disorder. In areas of migration, economic hardship, war, and religious conflict, the WCC organizes communities to engage the powers that be while providing personal care for those whose lives are encumbered.
Because of the global efforts of the WCC, there are many stories of those who have experienced the life that is truly life. At the center is Jesus Christ, the one who calls us to love others as we have first been loved.

Resource materials for the next WCC Assembly, to be held in Germany in September 2021, are posted online so that congregations and individuals can begin studying and discussing the theme, “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.” Assemblies, which meet every eight years, are the highest legislative body of the WCC.

The Church of the Brethren is a founding member of the World Council of Churches, which began in 1948. Now the council brings together about 350 member churches in more than 110 countries. Church of the Brethren representatives are Elizabeth Bidgood Enders, delegate, and Glenn Bollinger, alternate. Jeff Carter serves on the Central Committee and on the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

David Steele, general secretary
Elizabeth Bidgood Enders, delegate
Glenn Bollinger, alternate
Jeff Carter, Central Committee member