

7. Report of the Delegates to the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches works to support member churches in promoting justice and peace in the world through faithful discipleship. In focus areas of Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Relations, Public Witness and Diakonia, and Ecumenical Formation, the WCC is a leading voice for ecumenical partnerships and unity.

In 2023, the WCC followed up the previous year's 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, by strengthening relationships and encouraging Christians around the world. In November, executive committee members met in Nigeria, where one of the denominations visited was Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). As WCC moderator Heinrich Bedford-Strohm heard stories of people who had experienced attacks on Christian congregations, he was struck by the power of faith and peaceful witness that ultimately overcomes violence.

As a voice for peace and justice, the WCC has spoken for humanitarian response in Gaza and decried violence against civilians. Churches in the Holy Land are leading voices calling for healing and justice with a longing for safety and security for all. A call for urgent humanitarian response in Gaza came in consultation with heads of churches and members of Palestinian Christian organizations. A meeting between WCC staff and the Palestinian ambassador to Switzerland discussed calls for de-escalation of violence to preserve the lives of thousands of people.

In addition to personal visits, the WCC is expanding its social media presence. In 2023, more than 97,000 people were followers of the WCC on social media platforms, opening additional ways to offer prophetic storytelling, peacebuilding, interreligious dialogue, youth, disability advocacy, and presence in regions of conflict. These online connections increase ways for people to engage in ecumenical work when face-to-face meetings aren't possible.

Following the 11th Assembly, Jeff Carter of the Church of the Brethren was re-elected to the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. The CCIA advises the WCC on critical situations in the world and on opportunities to support initiatives for peacemaking and justice. The commission helps the WCC identify challenges to the churches and guide them in shaping a coherent ecumenical response.

The WCC commemorated its 75th anniversary in multiple ways from June through December, beginning with a worship service at St. Pierre Cathedral and a special celebration at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. The council came into being at the First Assembly in 1948. Church of the Brethren delegates that year in Amsterdam were Raymond Peters and M. R. Zigler.

1 With 352 churches, the WCC represents more than 580 million Christians in
2 more than 120 countries. As it has for 75 years, the Church of the Brethren joins
3 other Christians in calling people of the world to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

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5 David Steele, General Secretary

6 Liz Bidgood Enders, delegate

7 Jeff Carter, CCIA member

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