



Arkivsak: 17/00359-23

Saksdokumenter:

WCC Communication Strategy 2018-2021
WCC Statement on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, and the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize
Olav Fykse Tveit: Tale i Uppsala 4. november 2018
Uttalelse fra Roma-konferansen 21.09.18

Nytt fra den verdensvide kirke – Kirkenes verdensråd (KV)

Sammendrag

Uppsala var sentrum for en rekke arrangementer med tilknytning til Kirkenes verdensråd.

ACT Assembly

ACT holdt sin tredje generalforsamling i Uppsala. Den norske kirke er indirekte medlem gjennom Kirkens Nødhjelp. Mer om ACTs generalforsamling finnes her: [LENKE ACT Assembly 2018](#)

Møte i KVs eksekutivkomite

Kirkenes verdensråds eksekutivkomite møttes i Uppsala 1.-8. november.



Eksekutivkomiteen, som møttes i Uppsala første uka i november, evaluerte sentralkomiteemøtet og pave Frans' besøk til Genève i juni. Møtet drøftet også KVs planer for 2019 og tema for generalforsamlingen i 2021. Temaforslaget sendes nå ut til godkjenning hos sentralkomiteemedlemmene. Eksekutivkomiteen vedtok en ny kommunikasjonsstrategi som kan være interessant å se på i forbindelse med at MKR og Kirkerådet skal drøfte en sak om satsing på sosiale medier. KVs nye kommunikasjonsstrategi er derfor vedlagt.

Agnes Aboum og Olav Fykse Tveits rapporter til eksekutivkomiteen gir en god oppdatering av hva som rører seg i KV nå, og rapportene kan leses her: [LENKE Rapporter](#)

Eksekutivkomiteen drøftet også en rekke ulike temaer som endte opp i disse uttalelsene:

- Statement on People on the Move: Migrants and Refugees
- Statement on COP 24 and Just Transition to Sustainable Economy
- Statement on Ecumenical Witness and Action for Primary Health Care for All: 40th Anniversary of the Alma-Ata Declaration
- Statement on Reconciliation and Restoration in Ethiopia and Eritrea
- Statement on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, and the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize
- Statement on the Urgent Challenge of Economic Transformation: 10 Years After the Global Financial Crisis
- Minute on the Impacts of Nuclear Weapons Testing in French Polynesia (Maóhi Nui), and Decolonization

LENKE [Uttalelsene og mer informasjon om møtet finnes her.](#)

Uttalelsen om seksualisert vold er interessant og et uttrykk for at man i KV-fellesskapet har tatt et avgjørende skritt videre i hva man sammen kan si om dette viktige temaet. Uttalelsen er vedlagt.

Swedish Ecumenical Weekend: 50-års markering av Uppsalamøtet i 1968

I år er det 50 år siden KVs generalforsamling i Uppsala. 1968-møtet har satt dype spor i KVs historie på mange måter, ikke minst ved å gi startsignal til støtten til frigjøringsbevegelsene i Det sørlige Afrika gjennom «Program to Combat Racism». Møtet åpnet også for dialog med andre religioner, noe som utfordret klassisk misjonstenkning. I Norge betraktes møtet ofte som starten på en sosial-etisk vekkelse i kirken (jf. boka «Da Gud skiftet mening» av Trond Bakkevig og Tomm Kristiansen).

MKR var representert i Uppsala med generalsekretæren og tre andre fra staben.

Sveriges kristne råd, Ekumeniakyrkan og Svenska Kyrkan var vertskap for et godt og innholdsrikt program, og erkebiskop Antje Jackelen deltok i flere av arrangementene.

MKR bidro med seminaret «Faith and Fear in the Public Sphere» hvor Sturla Stålsett og Berit Hagen Agøy holdt innledninger. Vårt arbeid med «Frykt ikke!» vekker stor interesse i det økumeniske fellesskapet. Beate Fagerli deltok på seminar om videreføring av misjonskonferansen i Arusha i nordisk sammenheng.



På søndagen var det en flott gudstjeneste i Uppsala domkirke ledet av erkebiskop Ante Jackelen og hvor Olav Fykse Tveit holdt en svært god preken om å være lys og salt i verden. Prekene kan leses her:

LENKE [Preken Fykse Tveit](#)

Se hele gudstjenesten her:

LENKE [Uppsala domkirke 4. nov.](#)

Agnes Aboum på Norgesbesøk

Agnes Aboum deltok på Rettferdskonferansen i Oslo 9. november og holdt innledning om «Kirkenes rolle i rettferdskonferansen»

LENKE [Foredraget finnes her.](#)

Agnes Aboum ble kreert som æresdoktor ved VID Misjonshøgskolen 10. november, i forbindelse med markeringen av Misjonshøgskolens 175-årsjubileum. Hun deltok også med en hilsen under jubileumsgudstjenesten i Stavanger domkirke.

LENKE [Les mer på KV's hjemmeside](#)

LENKE [Les mer på VIDs hjemmeside](#)



Rektor ved VID Ingunn Moser overrekker æresdoktor diplom til Agnes Aboum Foto: VID

20-års markering for «Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women»

I begynnelsen av oktober markerte KV at det er 20 år siden avslutningen av tiåret for kirker i solidaritet med kvinner (1988-98) ved å holde en konsultasjon på Jamaica.

I lenken kan en lese om dette viktige arbeidet gjennom 30 år, og om hvordan KV viderefører det i dag. LENKE [Solidarity with Women](#)

Konferanse i Roma om fremmedfrykt og rasisme

20-21. september var Vatikanet og KV vertskap sammen for en internasjonal konsultasjon med tema «Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration». Uttalelsen fra møtet (vedlagt) er en viktig ressurs for MKRs videre arbeid med «Frykt ikke»! Vi var representert på konferansen med Sigrid Flataa, som arbeider med flyktninger og integrering i Kirkerådet.

Person fra MKR-stab til KV

Beate Fagerli skal ha permisjon fra Mellomkirkelig Råd i tre år fra 1. januar 2019 for å lede arbeidet i WCC Assembly Planning Committee. Neste generalforsamling finner sted i Karlsruhe i Tyskland i 20121.

Følg med på alt som skjer i KV ved å motta nyhetsmeldinger!

Meld deg på her: [Få nyhetsmeldinger fra KV](#)

Forslag til vedtak

Mellomkirkelig råd tar saken og følgende dokumenter til orientering:

WCC Communication Strategy 2018-2021

WCC Statement on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Uttalelse fra Roma-konferansen 21.09.18

For action

WCC COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2018-2021
A Living and Loving Fellowship to Walk, Pray and Work Together

The executive committee is asked to approve the communication strategy and its direction until the next WCC assembly.

□ **Background**

The WCC executive committee decided at its meeting in June 2017 to prioritize resources for communication for 2018-2021 to strengthen relations with member churches, international partners and ecumenical partners. A first draft of the new Communication Strategy 2018-2021 with a special focus on the Living Fellowship was presented to the executive committee in June 2018, and two additional foci – prophetic communication and organizational accountability – were added.

The goal of WCC communications is to raise the profile and impact of the work of the WCC. This is done through a variety of means which reflect the core Christian and ecumenical values of the WCC. Communication is an important strategic tool for the WCC and its member churches and ecumenical partners to sustain influence, gain visibility and promote good causes. Ensuring relevant, credible, transparent and well-coordinated communication in a timely manner is a pivotal task for WCC Communication. The WCC audience is international, including the WCC membership, and its committees, commissions and the churches and the public at large.

To quote the WCC General Secretary's Report, 7 June 2017:

Unity has a lot to do with information and communication. The work we do for unity is not only something we should share information about, it is also something we pursue through means of communication.... I am more and more convinced that ecumenism increasingly will be about communication, building relations through all the media available for us today. The access to electronic means of communication is almost the same all over the world, and plays an enormous role in developing the world relationships in the future – for good and for worse. We can use our potential based on our legacy of values, our relations, our possibilities to meet and to learn, as a great contribution to building relations in the time ahead of us.

Introduction

The WCC must be a catalyst for change – for a world with unity, justice and peace at its heart. Its communication reflects this.

The WCC is to inspire and invite its member churches to work together, actively lending weight to the churches' common voice. The member churches are the heart of the council.

Communications from the WCC must be inclusive and have participation and hope at their core. Our task is to ignite hope for a better world where human dignity prevails. Human dignity and equality must permeate all communications.

Communication Strategy

The strategy is articulated around the WCC Strategic Objective 5: Inspiring and innovative communication:

- The communication strategy is the overarching framework for internal and external communications, having fellowship as a key component.
- Communication must be integrated, coordinated and spiritual, as well as inspirational and innovative.
- The WCC plays a leading role and lays solid foundations for professional communication within the fellowship.
- The WCC should not only focus on strategies to communicate the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and the WCC but also reflect and promote reflection on the role of communication in building just and peaceful communities.
- All communications produced by the WCC should be seen as emanating from the WCC. The WCC's visual identity, including the WCC logo, shall be applied consistently.
- The WCC uses a personal form of address and comprehensible and inclusive language.
- The communication strategy and the communication framework will be supplemented by plans and detailed strategies that support day-to-day work throughout 2018-2021.

Fellowship Communication

- Communication is crucial to the fellowship and its credibility. Communication comes from the Latin word *communicare*, meaning to share. Communication in the WCC expects participation and transparency in order to build fellowship – to walk, pray and work together. Professional communication plays a vital role in that.
- The WCC shall maintain high accessibility and welcome people warmly and respectfully. The WCC must be perceived as relevant and credible.

- Communications must effectively support the fellowship, the organization and the WCC management. This includes:
 - further developing regional collaborations;
 - gathering and sharing the stories of the “living fellowship” through the web, news media, social media, publications such as books and journals and other channels;
 - offering resources for nurturing the spiritual life of the fellowship with prayers and Bible study.
 - developing joint communication activities with member churches and ecumenical partners.

Prophetic Communication

- WCC Communications is committed to prophetic communication, that is, to telling the truth (Gen. 20:6, 7), even when it is inconvenient or unwelcome or from voices previously silenced, ignored, powerless or marginalized.
- The WCC seeks to lift up and convey the authentic experiences, stories, insights, and values of people and communities within the churches that might otherwise not be heard, even if they are critical of our habitual or accepted practices or challenge principalities and powers.
- The WCC is committed to empowering people and groups to speak for themselves and to enabling communication by those who might otherwise not have access to the public sphere.

Advocacy Communication

- The WCC is to inspire and invite its member churches to work together, actively lending weight to the churches’ common voice.
- For the WCC to be a catalyst for change – fostering a world with unity, justice and peace at its heart—its communication must reflect the most pressing concerns and deepest aspirations of people in the churches and beyond.
- Communications from the WCC must be inclusive and have participation and hope at their core. Our task is to ignite hope for a better world where human dignity prevails. Human dignity and equality must permeate all communications. That includes:
 - engaging in advocacy and communication campaigns;
 - actively reaching out to journalists and public media;
 - fostering capacity-building with member churches and ecumenical partners.

Capacity-Building

- As a fellowship working with and for the churches, the WCC believes in the ability of all member churches and ecumenical partners to participate, exert influence and communicate.

- Through capacity-building, such as training, inspiration and networking, members' ability to communicate can be strengthened.
- The WCC will seek ways to ensure that its communication resources and memory are shared within the fellowship, allowing the greatest possible access to information. This includes:
 - training leadership, staff and member churches to become better communicators;
 - utilizing publications such as books and journals to further spiritual reflection and ecumenical formation;
 - translating WCC content.

Accountable Communication

- The WCC is committed to accountability in its communications, intent on being a credible instrument of Christian communication and a trustworthy witness to the truth.
- WCC communications must not only convey truth but also counter falsehood, lies, and misconceptions that threaten understanding and dialogue among Christians and churches, as well as with people of other faiths or no faith
- WCC Communications aspires to transparency in its work methods and accountability to the organization, its member churches and partners, as well as its readerships and the public.

WCC Communications: An Ecumenical Window

WCC Communications employ a variety of media and channels to communicate with the fellowship and the wider world:

- These include interactive social media; news and information releases on the WCC website and distributed to media and the public; posted documentation from the WCC, its fellowship of churches and ecumenical partners; book and journal publications that offer in-depth analysis and stimulate theological reflection, and a variety of printed introductory materials about the WCC and the ecumenical movement for distribution at the Ecumenical Centre and meetings and exhibits.
- WCC communications must employ the appropriate and effective channels to meet its specific objectives and remain open to new, innovative means of communication in its work.

Of special significance is the current renewal of the WCC website. The website is a digital communication hub for the WCC's multilingual fellowship. It inspires and encourages the member churches to work together and showcases what the churches are doing together on national, regional and global levels. The WCC website serves also as a "hotline" for media, increasing the fellowship's exposure in media across the world. The overall strategic goal of the WCC website is to be an "ecumenical window" providing insight, as well as the latest news and developments in the ecumenical movement. The WCC website also offers resources for ecumenical engagement, and facilitates access to the vast documentation about the ecumenical movement and its involvement in a variety of topics.

Statement on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, and the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize
07 November 2018
World Council of Churches

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Uppsala, Sweden
2-8 November 2018
Doc. No. 03.5

Statement on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, and the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3: 28)

In March 1992 the World Council of Churches wrote to the Secretary-General of the United Nations: “In various international fora, women are urging the United Nations to recognize that violence against women constitutes the violation of the basic human rights of half the world’s population. As Christians we support these initiatives, guided by the firm conviction that all human beings are made in the image of God and deserve protection and care.” Reading the signs of our times, there has been an increase in sexual and gender-based violence against women, children and vulnerable people. The purpose of the current statement is a call from the WCC for new commitments and contributions to stop, prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

This call for addressing sexual and gender-based violence is rooted in the outcomes of a recent consultation marking the 20th anniversary of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), which took place in Kingston, Jamaica, 1-6 October 2018. It is also inspired by the award of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize to Dr Denis Mukwege and Ms Nadia Murad, whose work embodies the very issues that were emphasised at the consultation, and addressed during the Ecumenical Decade itself.

Hearing the painful testimonies and inspirational stories of women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, we are encouraged and challenged to affirm the dignity, rights and needs of all women, children and others who are vulnerable – or are made vulnerable – to such violence.

We recognize that sexual and gender-based violence is evident in many different and often hidden contexts, including spousal abuse and ‘child marriage’, and that its risks and impacts are compounded by stigma, racial discrimination, socioeconomic divisions, poverty, abuse, armed conflict, and lack of access to quality reproductive healthcare. Issues related to human sexual behaviour and gender relations within the family are taboo in many churches and church communities, preventing the church from being a safe and protective place for women who are victims of or threatened by sexual and gender-based violence. The church must actively contribute to the elimination of such violence and abuse.

Goal 5.3 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls for the eradication of ‘child marriage’ and female genital mutilation by 2030. It is estimated that 20 million girls and women still do not have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education and services. It is imperative that the church, in partnership with civil society, governmental and intergovernmental partners, take the necessary steps to break the culture of silence and

address the issues which are impacting women and girls, families and communities around the world.

The 2018 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad is an encouragement to all those working to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Denis Mukwege is a physician who has helped thousands of victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and has condemned the use of sexual violence against women as a strategy and weapon of war. Nadia Murad is a survivor of war crimes who was abducted, repeatedly raped and abused by so-called 'Islamic State' (IS) fighters who attacked her Yazidi community in northern Iraq in 2014 with genocidal intent. Since escaping, she has spoken out about her experience and became the UN's first Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking in 2016.

We note that both the DRC and Iraq are priority countries on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. We recall the 2009 public statement by the WCC condemning violence against women in the DRC, and we acknowledge the work being done by the WCC to promote social cohesion in Iraq and to promote and protect the rights of religious minority communities in that country.

Through the Churches' Commitments to Children we are all called to provide safe and open space for children's participation in the life of our churches as well as in society, and to be more effective advocates and actors for the elimination of violence against children. The Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women raised similar stories of sexual and gender-based violence from 30 years ago. The present reality seems even more brutal, with so many girl children in refugee camps 'married' as 'protection' from sexual violence; rape and sexual violence continuing to be used as a weapon of war; so many lives lost or blighted due to discrimination based on gender, race, poverty or human sexuality; and political and social institutions – including the church – continuing to demonstrate misogyny, impunity and discrimination despite the hard-fought struggles of so many for equity and liberation; The executive committee of the WCC, meeting in Uppsala, Sweden, 2-8 November 2018, therefore:

- **Urges** WCC member churches and ecumenical partners to condemn or reiterate their condemnation of sexual and gender-based violence and of any form of violence against women, children and vulnerable people; to declare such violence a sin; and to make constructive efforts to overcome the attitudes that predispose to such violence, including by the development of clear sexual harassment policies that clearly spell out consequences for such harassment.
- **Encourages** WCC member churches and ecumenical partners to continue working with local organizations and groups in opposition to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and offering support including trauma healing for women, girls, and others vulnerable to such violence in their communities.
- **Encourages** the creation of new and more effective ways for communication and collaboration among WCC member churches, and local advocacy groups on gender justice issues, including by taking up and promoting the Thursdays in Black Campaign.

- **Appeals** to WCC member churches and ecumenical partners to develop urgent *action* networks to stop assaults, abuse, and the killing of women, girls (including female foeticide), and other vulnerable people in their context, and to clearly identify and denounce ‘child marriage’ as the rape and abuse of girl children.
- **Encourages** WCC member churches and ecumenical partners to support boys’ and men’s organizations in becoming spaces for transformation and affirmation of positive and anti-violent masculinities.
- **Calls** upon WCC member churches and ecumenical partners to promote the audit of institutional budgets through a gender justice lens at all levels of operation.
- **Encourages** WCC member churches and ecumenical partners and their theological institutions and networks to promote research on gender justice to influence religious, ecumenical, inter-religious and cross-cultural curricula development.

Sermon of Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit in Uppsala Cathedral

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5: 13-16

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

On the 4th of July 1968, Dr Martin Luther King Jr. should have entered this pulpit here in Uppsala Cathedral, to preach at the opening service of the 4th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. He never came. On April 4 he was assassinated, for being the salt and the light in the world that he was called by our Lord Jesus Christ to be.

At this All Saints Day we remember him as the World Council of Churches executive committee is meeting here, 50 years after a meeting that decisively turned the WCC toward social engagement in the world.

You are the salt of the world. You are the light of the world. These are Jesus’ words to his followers. In a world of destruction and darkness, in a world of discrimination and hate speech, in a world of violence and death, in a world of evil and sin, these words are our guide and goad.

Where things get rotten and tasteless, you are the salt. Where people cannot find their way in the darkness, you are the light. You are there to be the signs of the love of God. You are there to be the signs of the coming kingdom of God.

“Behold, I make all things new.” This was the theme that gathered and challenged the participants from around the world as they came to Uppsala in July 1968.

We thank the Archbishop of Uppsala and Primate of the Church of Sweden, Antje Jackelén, and the churches here in Sweden for inviting the WCC executive committee and many others to celebrate and to be challenged at this 50th anniversary. This is one of many events that also mark the 70 years of the WCC this year. The Uppsala assembly became a milestone, even a turning point on that pilgrimage journey.

They saw that hope means to anticipate, which means to participate in the coming reign of God. It led to a renewed commitment to be salt and light in the world – together, to be signs of this new reality. Together as one fellowship of churches, as one ecumenical movement. “The Church is bold in speaking of itself as the sign of the coming unity of mankind.” So they even said in the report from the assembly in 1968.

For the small community of disciples in a world where the emperor was the light and the power, Jesus’ words to them might have sounded almost ridiculous. Likewise, the bold words of the assembly in Uppsala might have sounded exaggerated, speaking of the coming unity of

humankind when the world in 1968 was divided between East and West in the Cold War, and between South and North for centuries due to the era of colonization that was only then coming to an end.

What made the church delegates boldly announce this new mandate they had discovered? How were they emboldened to be the sign of the unity of all created in the image of God—black and white, rich and poor, from all continents, women and men? What made them so bold as to be salt and light in the world together?

I think there are several answers, and I will mention three of them:

First: Dr Martin Luther King Jr. did not come to the assembly. But it looks like his struggle and his boldness to work for justice were there. The leader of the civil rights movement in the USA was a true witness and prophet of the new things to come, that had to come, but that only would come through hard work and struggle. He proclaimed nonviolent struggle to end racism in legislation, in politics, in practices, in attitudes, in speech, in the media, in the schools. He had become the voice of the growing cries for justice and for peace among the oppressed peoples in many countries in (what we today call) the global south. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. We can well understand that he was invited to give new inspiration and new direction to the churches' understanding of what it meant to be salt and light in the world – and how to be so together. The unity of the church must be a unity in reconciliation, in justice and peace, between all people of any race, gender, land or continent. The spirit of his work was very much alive in Uppsala in July 1968. He became a martyr for his faith, his dream, of a new humanity – according to God's will. He continues to inspire so many around the world today.

On All Saints Day we gather to offer thanks to God and to them for their lives and ministry – for all that bear such fruit among us. I am convinced that the martyrdom of Martin Luther King made the participants in the assembly in 1968 sad but also courageous, even so bold as to see themselves as salt and light, signs of the new unity of humankind. Nothing less. In the one ecumenical movement we are walking, praying and working together, also with those who are not members of the WCC. There are different ways of honouring the people who have gone before us and left examples to us. Two weeks ago, Pope Francis canonized another church leader in the Roman Catholic Church who has been an inspiration for people in all churches worldwide in my generation, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. He was shot dead as he celebrated mass before the altar in his church in San Salvador in 1980. He did what he was asked and called to do, being a priest and a bishop for his people who experienced military dictatorship, oppression, violence, injustice, and poverty. In his canonization the virtue of courage was emphasized: The courage to tell the truth in love, the courage to care for the people who need the signs of the kingdom of God, the courage to be salt and light. Here in Sweden you commemorate and give thanks to God – together with people from many other countries – for the life and witness of the Holy Birgitta. She continues to help us to pray: “God, show me your way, and make me ready to follow it.” She too remains salt and light to the world.

We could make the list much longer. Whether we call them saints or not, there are so many people who have been given the grace and the strength and the courage to show us the way. Many of them are unknown to most of us, without names in the history of the church, women and men. They were human beings like us, not perfect, but real salt and light for our lives. Their names are in God's eternal memory. I know some I could name in my heart who have given me faith, hope and love. Some are very close to us, some we never met personally. I am

sure you can do the same. The communion of saints among us today, which we confess together, is also the communion with those who have gone before us.

Second: However, there was another remarkable dimension to the Uppsala assembly that we should not forget in this respect. There were many young people and young voices there, and they had a lot to say to the church leaders. The photos from the Uppsala cathedral from 1968 are remarkable. The photos in my mind are those of youth representatives as they were carrying posters here in the aisle saying “end colonization,” “eradicate poverty,” “stop the war,” The world desperately needed new signs of the unity of the humankind: Justice for all, ending oppression, discrimination, colonization and racism. Peace for all, in all continents and nations and communities. We need the new voices again and again to tell the truth. We must give them space and make them visible.

The *third* reason I see in the reports why they were so bold is that they heard the promise of something new as words to themselves. The Gospel took on new dimensions. Today the words are for us, here and now. “You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.”

Who were they to whom Jesus addressed these words the first time? They were the poor, the poor in spirit, the meek, those who thirst and hunger for righteousness, the peacemakers, those who are clean in their hearts, those who experience difficulties following Jesus Christ. They were people like you and me, with our limitations and our mistakes, our failures and even sins. But as church, in the fellowship with all the saints, we are called to show the power of the salt and the clarity of the light.

These are big words. I am glad we should not say such things about ourselves. It is Jesus Christ that qualifies us to do so and to be so.

Today we live in a world disfigured by hate speech, polarization, violence, even martyrdom for the faith that people carry in their hearts and profess in words. Christians, Jews, Muslims, and people of other faiths – and people without religious faith – experience the effects of words of hate.

As followers of Jesus Christ, as church, we live not in a closed circle or behind thick walls, but in the world where the salt and light are needed. Our posters today are not on paper but in social media. We live in a time when accountability and love are needed in our communication – more than ever.

The ecumenical movement of love appears with saltiness and clarity. It all began with Christ’s love and Christ’s call to share this love. That is why we seek unity, not for the sake of our own comfort and peacefulness, but because the world needs the true signs of love.

Glory to the Father and to Son and to the Holy Spirit; one God, our Creator, Redeemer and Life-giver; as it was in the beginning, is now and forever shall be. Amen.

MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE
**“XENOPHOBIA, RACISM, AND POPULIST NATIONALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF
GLOBAL MIGRATION”**

ORGANIZED JOINTLY BY THE DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING INTEGRAL HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT (Vatican City) AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (Geneva)
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN UNITY (Vatican City), ROME, 18 - 20 SEPTEMBER 2018

We profess our faith in the God of Jesus Christ, and we believe that humanity is created and loved by God and that human beings are equal in dignity and are entitled to the same fundamental human rights.

1. In a global context marked by migration within and between countries, we participants in the Conference “Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration” gathered in Rome from 18-20 September 2018. Conscious of a rise in xenophobic and racist reactions to refugees and migrants, we have striven to describe, analyze, understand and address the exclusion, marginalization, stigmatization and criminalization of migrants and refugees, and the justifications for these attitudes and discourses which now exist in several different parts of the world, even within the churches.
2. As Christians from different denominations and regions – together with representatives of inter-religious, civil society and inter-governmental partners – the common basis for our reflections is the conviction that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights and equally to be respected and protected, and as a consequence we are called by God to resist evil, to act justly, and pursue peace to transform the world. While we seek and promote dialogue for the resolution of differences on any of the issues raised in this message, this core conviction is fixed and permanent.
3. (a) Migration – the movement of people – is an inherent feature of the human condition. It belongs to the whole history of humanity – past, present and future – and the entire biblical narrative. We are all migrants and sojourners, and we are all members of the one human family.

(b) Recent drivers of forced displacement and migration have included unresolved brutal conflicts and the lingering consequences of global economic crisis and austerity policies, as well as other root causes such as extreme poverty, food insecurity, lack of opportunity, and insecurity. The advancing impacts of climate change will likely add significantly to the drivers of displacement.

(c) While recognizing the right of refugees to return to their country of origin and live there in dignity and security, we affirm and uphold the institution of asylum for those fleeing from armed conflicts, persecution or natural disaster. We also invoke respect for the rights of all people on the move, regardless of their status.

(d) While migration generally contributes positively to both countries of destination and countries of origin, we recognize that significant challenges are still associated

with migration, particularly in the area of protecting the rights of undocumented migrants.

4. Using multidisciplinary insights, lived experiences, and testimonies from different religious traditions to better understand the causes and effects of hate speech against migrants and refugees, and of tensions between countries and between social, cultural, or religious communities in the context of global migration, we have striven to grasp what is at stake in the encounter with other human beings made vulnerable by the experience of war or poverty, and seeking asylum, protection and dignity.
5. (a) The way in which a person made vulnerable by violence or economic precariousness is looked at is, indeed, at the heart of our reflection. Xenophobia, which primarily means “fear of the foreigner,” is expressed by an attitude that excludes and confines the other in their predicament and by forms and structures of indifference and rejection, extending even to the denial of assistance in emergencies and for survival. It is therefore necessary to address the fear of the other and to challenge the exclusion and marginalization of migrants and refugees. This fear can reveal a complex personal or collective relationship with the past, the present or the future, and expresses the anxiety of losing one’s identity, security, possessions and power in confronting the challenges of life and the future.

(b) It is also necessary to acknowledge the fear experienced by someone forced to flee their home and country due to vulnerability caused by armed conflict, destructive national and regional policies, persecution, natural disaster or abject poverty.
6. (a) Race is a social construct which claims to explain and justify the separation between human groups by advancing physical, social, cultural and religious criteria. Racism is the systemic and systematic impact of actions taken against groups of people based on the colour of their skin. It separates people from each other in the name of a false notion of the purity and superiority of a specific community. It is an ideological stance expressed through marginalization, discrimination and exclusion against certain persons, minorities, ethnic groups or communities.

(b) The definition of racial discrimination in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (art. 1.1) highlights “*any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms*”.

(c) Racism creates and maintains the vulnerability of members of certain groups, denying them their rights and their existence, and seeks to justify their oppression. In this sense racism is a sin, in both its personal and systemic expressions, radically incompatible with the Christian faith. It is often present both in countries from which migrants come and to which they go. People of faith must condemn racism because it denies human dignity and the mutual belonging to the one human family, and defaces the image of God in every human being.
7. (a) Populist nationalism is a political strategy that seeks to rely on and promote the fears of individuals and groups in order to assert the need for an authoritarian political

power to protect the interests of the dominant social or ethnic group established on a particular territory. It is in the name of this “protection” that populist leaders justify the refusal to offer refuge, to receive and to integrate individuals or groups from other countries or different cultural or religious contexts.

(b) However, to refuse to receive and help those in need is contrary to the example and calling of Jesus Christ. Claiming to protect Christian values or communities by shutting out those who seek safe refuge from violence and suffering is unacceptable, undermines Christian witness in the world, and raises up national boundaries as idols.

(c) We call on all Christians and all those who support fundamental human rights to reject such populist initiatives incompatible with Gospel values. This should inspire political life and public discourse, and inform fundamental choices especially at the time of elections.

(d) We also call on all media platforms to refrain from disseminating divisive and dehumanizing ideas and initiatives, and commit to engaging media for the promotion of positive messages

8. (a) In this reflection and dialogue, we observe the importance of narrative and memory, at personal, community and institutional levels. The scriptural foundations that bring us together in this conference remind us that the experience of migration is a constant theme in the Abrahamic traditions. The biblical narrative is one of people on the move. And they discover, in their journey, that God accompanies them. The duty of hospitality, common to all the sons and daughters of Abraham, is evoked in the reception of the "strangers" by Sarah and Abraham (Genesis 18, 1 - 16), in the teaching of the prophets, and by Jesus himself who identifies with the stranger (Matthew 25:35-40) and calls all believers to welcome the stranger as an act of love inspired by faith.

(b) We recognize that the concerns of many individuals and communities who feel threatened by migrants – whether for security, economic or cultural identity reasons – have to be acknowledged and examined. We wish to be in genuine dialogue with all those who hold such concerns. But based upon the principles of our Christian faith and the example of Jesus Christ, we seek to raise a narrative of love and of hope, against the populist narrative of hate and of fear.

9. The churches and all Christians have the mission to proclaim that every human being is worthy of respect and protection. The churches are also called to live out, on a daily basis, the welcome of the stranger but also the protection and the mutual encouragement to all – each in the diversity of their origins and history - to participate according to their own talents in the building of a society that seeks peaceful well-being in equality and rejecting all discrimination. Churches are constantly called to be places where we experience and learn respect for diversity and where we rejoice in the encounter and the mutual enrichment. This is particularly important in the context of pastoral care, preaching and solidarity initiatives, within the churches, and with special attention to initiatives for and with young people.

10. We are called to accompany and hold accountable those who exercise power and participate directly in decisions that affect the future of the human community, at

national and international levels. The advice that all believers can offer may be inspired by the “golden rule,” common to different traditions, according to which one should “do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12). This “golden rule” is reflected in fundamental human rights, which are conditions to be achieved for others as well as for ourselves, and call for the construction of social cohesion. Only an inclusive approach that considers all dimensions of the human being and calls for the participation of each and every one in society can effectively fight against discrimination and exclusion.

11. We encourage further efforts by the United Nations and its member states to “eliminate all forms of discrimination, condemn and counter expressions, acts and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, violence, xenophobia and related intolerance against all migrants” in the context of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Objective 17), and to “combat all forms of discrimination and promote peaceful coexistence between refugee and host communities” in the context of the Global Compact on Refugees (para 84), which explicitly recognise “the power and positive impact of civil society, faith-based organizations, and the media” (ibid) – both to be formally adopted by the end of the year. These two Global Compacts, having been drafted with the active participation of churches, civil society, academia, the private sector, and governments, provide useful, human rights-based global policy frameworks that should be used by all stakeholders in fighting xenophobia and racism against migrants and refugees.
12. Churches are important actors in civil society and political life, and we urge them to participate, in close cooperation with inter-religious and other partners, in political, economic and social affairs, in caring for the planet "our common home", and in caring for those who are suffering, by building social protection networks, through advocacy and by proposing legal and ethical principles (such as the Holy See’s 20 action points for the Global Compacts). Good cooperation between faith communities, civil society actors, academics, economic and political actors is essential in the fight against xenophobia and racism.
13. (a) We participants in the Conference “Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration” appeal to all believers who affirm, in their own tradition, the dignity of the human person and solidarity among peoples, so that all instances of violations of fundamental human rights, xenophobia and racism, are steadfastly countered by education (including human rights education), the democratic process, dialogue between religions, law and love.

(b) We commit ourselves to work together for the transformation of unjust structures and systems which perpetuate themselves on the grounds of stability and security, and which create cultures and conditions which exclude others and deny the equal dignity and rights of all.

(c) We look for the churches to exercise leadership in raising critical consciousness among Christians of the complicity of some theologies in xenophobia and racism, for a radical disengagement from such theologies, and for the church to fully assume its role as conscience-keeper in this context.

(d) We express our solidarity with churches suffering under persecution or occupation.

(e) Churches are called to be places of memory, hope and love. In the name of Jesus, who shared the experience of the migrant and the refugee and offered the Word of hope to the excluded and the suffering, we commit even more strongly to the promotion of a culture of encounter and dialogue, recognizing God in the faces of migrants. For stronger than the way of death is the way of life and love.

Rome, 19 September 2018