

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

November – December 2015

Cardinal Kurt Koch tells WCC News: We have to deepen our solidarity

Marianne Ejdersten from World Council of Churches reported on 5 November 2015:

Cardinal Kurt Koch of the Roman Catholic Church, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has granted an interview to WCC News, a communication vehicle of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The following conversation took place at the Global Christian Forum in Tirana, Albania where 150 high level leaders and representatives of various church traditions from more than 60 countries gathered to listen and learn from one another and to stand in solidarity with churches and Christians experiencing discrimination and persecution in the world today.

Cardinal Koch said: "I feel most privileged and honoured to be a part of this unique gathering, which represents a meaningful illustration of global Christianity today and a significant expression of universal Christian solidarity which exceeds 'denominational' or 'confessional' boundaries."

The migrant crisis seems to pre-occupy Europe and will do so for many years. Yet it also has split churches, between those that worry about threats to their identity and those that are more welcoming. In an age that emphasizes diversity, how do you see the unity agenda evolving? What kind of hope can Your Eminence see?

Cardinal Koch: "We have many challenges in the world, and they are common for all the Christians and all human beings. I think the challenges are bringing us closer together. Right now I think especially about ethical questions such as the refugee crisis, human trafficking and all these difficult questions in the world."

Koch added: "It's important that Christian churches have a common voice, because when the Christian churches don't have a common voice concerning the main questions of our society, then the Christian voice becomes ever weaker."

Koch also said: ***"First of all we must have better solidarity between Christians. We must deepen our solidarity. Then we will have a better appeal to the world of solidarity. We must show more solidarity between Christians. We have to stay together much more."***

The Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC has recently marked its 50th anniversary, and Pope Francis sent a very gracious letter marking the anniversary and encouraging further, practical collaboration. How do you see that developing? How may we deepen our solidarity?

Cardinal Koch: "The World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church have a long tradition of working together, and I think we have good collaboration. I think we should continue our collaboration but also deepen our collaboration. We are working together for justice and peace."

Koch said: "We are meeting at this great consultation in Tirana, Albania, to strengthen and deepen the personal bonds of unity between us, participants in this consultation, and between our churches and ecclesial communities around the world. That's one part, but that's not the only way. I believe that we must deepen the solidarity more in a bi-lateral way, through dialogue and with practical collaboration."

More on this interview is available at

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/cardinal-kurt-koch-tells-wcc-news-we-have-to-deepen-our-solidarity>

Faith leaders urge action at UN climate talks 02 December 2015



© Sean Hawkey/WCC

Over 20 faith leaders, with youth, political and civil society representatives sat down for a unique lunch at COP21 at a table with knives and forks but no food, in a public demonstration of their hunger for climate justice. The stunt was part of the Fast for the Climate initiatives on December 1st in Paris.

Yeb Saño, former Philippines' chief climate negotiator, the Most Rev. Dr Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town, and Imam Ibrahim Saïdy of Norway were among the 'diners' taking part in

the Fast For The Climate at the UN climate summit in Paris.

The event was a chance for the campaigners to tell gathered journalists and COP delegates why they had chosen to abstain from food: to show solidarity with communities worst affected by global warming and make a compelling call for climate justice.

Other faith leaders at the empty lunch table included Archbishop Antje Jackelén, Primate of the Church of Sweden, a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Bishop of Salisbury the Rt. Rev Nick Holtam, and the Rev. Dr Martin Junge, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Together with 10,000 people worldwide, they were part of the global initiative, which takes place on the first of every month. Besides the demonstration, the Fast for the Climate day at COP21 also included an official side event at the climate conference and the celebration of the breaking of the fasting.

Commenting on the inter-faith initiative, Junge stressed the spiritual aspect of fasting. "Since time immemorial, we have fasted in order to get space in our minds and hearts for renewal. So when I fast for the climate, I'm fasting first to get that mental space, that very strong focus, on vulnerable people suffering the most from climate change", said the head executive of LWF.

"Climate change is an issue of inter-generational justice. That's why I am fasting for the climate with a particular focus on the youth, who are already taking – and will take – the brunt of what will happen if we remain inactive on this issue", added Junge.

For Archbishop Antje Jackelén fasting is always a powerful reminder of the interdependence among people and with the planet. "Fasting for the climate is an expression of the global commitment in the worldwide church", she said. "For all of our churches involved in the initiative, this has to do with leadership, values, lifestyle and justice", added the Swedish church leader.

ACT Alliance general secretary Dr John Nduna fasted in solidarity with those who don't have food on the table due to climate change. "It's our responsibility, as an international community, to ensure that climate change is addressed and to reverse the problems that communities are facing, for the sake of those who have nothing to eat, whose children go to bed hungry", he said.

Later the same day, Fast for the Climate enthusiasts gathered in a small church downtown Paris for the breaking of 24-hour fast and feast to celebrate unity and the solutions for a better future. Organizers estimate that about 10,000 people worldwide were fasting for climate action.

Addressing the participants of the celebration, Yeb Saño, who inspired the Fast for the Climate campaign, emphasized that the initiative is also a mechanism of pressure upon negotiators gathered at COP21. "We want to tell the world leaders here in Paris that, please, don't disappoint the world. The whole world is watching", he said.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/faith-leaders-urge-action-at-un-climate-talks>

INTERFAITH WORKSHOP CALLS FOR JUSTICE AND COMPASSION IN FINANCE 03 DECEMBER 2015



How and in which ways are money and finance shaping the world economy and society? What ought to be the roles of money and finance and what can we do together as faith communities to make the prevailing international financial architecture more just and compassionate?

These questions were the subject of a workshop, "Faith and Finance," organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Bangkok, Thailand from 28-29 November. Bringing together participants from Buddhist, Christian and Muslim traditions, the workshop sought to identify common ground as well as cultivate trust and cooperation toward developing interfaith initiatives to mend the broken financial system.

"Faith communities can be both a moral compass and a catalyst for change in the world economy and the local economy," said Athena Peralta, WCC consultant for economic and ecological justice. "Closely examining financial systems — and how our values fit into them — is an important facet of our pilgrimage of justice and peace."

Reflecting from faith-based perspectives, participants expressed deep concern over how current financial structures, propelled by the

dynamic of limitless growth, have normalized greed through instruments such as usury, debt and speculation.

This greed promotes “a delusional narrative of the self as an isolated entity that is rightfully obsessed with its individual interests,” observes the Interfaith Call for Justice and Compassion in Finance produced by the gathering.

Therefore, the text points out, transforming the international financial architecture “requires a counter-narrative based on inter-connectedness and ethics of reciprocity” which “helps us to rediscover that the source of our well-being lies in our ‘inter-being.’” The interfaith call further reads: “Spiritual precepts found in our faith traditions such as kalyana mitra (good friendship), koinonia (fellowship/communion), ubuntu (“I am because we are”) and ummah (community) refute the current monoculture that ‘I am what I have.’”

Highlighting grassroots initiatives such as social finance and community currency networks, participants observed that money and finance can contribute to building life-affirming communities and economies if wealth and profits are justly distributed, if risks and liabilities are shared, and if surpluses are reinvested for the common good. The interfaith call points out that the use and governance of money ought to foster solidarity: “Money here becomes a means of social cohesion rather than alienation.”

As a follow-up to the workshop, participants committed to work together toward jointly planning and convening an interfaith consultation focusing on alternatives to the international financial architecture.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/interfaith-workshop-calls-for-justice-and-compassion-in-finance>

COP21: “A moment of truth” - 01 December 2015



WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit at the UN climate talks. © Sean Hawkey

“The political leaders of the world are speaking like preachers. May they continue as believers,” said Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), as he attended the opening sessions of the UN climate talks in Paris (COP21) on 30 November.

Tveit took part of an interfaith panel promoted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) focused on theological reflections concerning the crisis of humanity in relation to nature, climate and human compassion.

“This is a moment of truth, of recognizing that something is wrong and needs to change,” Tveit continued, referring to what he perceived as a common message of hope in the world leaders’ speeches at the opening of COP21.

For Inger Andersen, the IUCN’s director general, climate change has to be seen also as a moral and ethical issue. “It is an issue of justice”, she said. “We are here with the hope to hear a unified call for action with strong emphasis on environmental stewardship,” Andersen stated.

The panel was opened with a blessing led by Imam Ibrahim Saïdy from the Daru Salaam Centre, Oslo, Norway.

Besides the head executive of the WCC, the line-up of speakers included Sister Jayanti Kirplani of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, Monsignor Luís Miguel Muñoz Cárdbaba, a counsellor representing the Holy See at the Apostolic Nunciature to France, Fazlun Khalid, representing the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES), and Barbara Maas of the International Buddhist Confederation.

Khalid and Maas emphasized the convergence processes that led to both the Global Buddhist Collective on Climate Change Declaration for COP21 and the Istanbul Islamic Declaration on Climate Change.

Dr Guillermo Kerber, WCC programme executive for Care for Creation and Climate Change, summarized the spirit of the first day of COP21: “I saw ambition, responsibility and hope”, he said. “These elements were present both in the interventions of the heads of state and in the mobilizations and reflections of several actors involved in side events here in Paris”, he added.

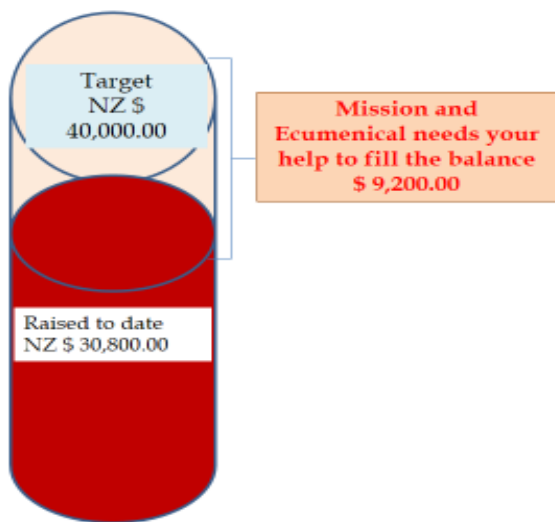
COP21 continues until 11 December. The WCC, together with several of its member churches and partners such as the Lutheran World Federation, ACT Alliance, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches, sent an ecumenical delegation to Paris to strengthen the call for a legally binding climate agreement and for

the imperative that COP21 “translates human and ecological stewardship into concrete climate action, to show inter-generational responsibility, to initiate unprecedented individual, economic and structural transformation, and to pursue climate justice”, as stated in a recent declaration of the WCC Executive Committee.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/cop21-2015-a-moment-of-truth2015>

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE TABAKA SOLAR POWER FUND - To light up the young lives Mission and Ecumenical needs \$ 9,200 more to make this project a success
Your donation makes a large impact**

We thank all those who are continuing to support our assistance to Solomon Islands. We look forward to your contribution to complete the Tabaka project as well.



NEWS FROM SASAMUQA HOSPITAL

Hospital Secretary at Sasamuqa Rev. Caleb Kotali made a request to M&E asking funds to replace the Out Board Motor (OBM) for the Sea Ambulance at Sasamuqa. M&E funded the purchase of a new OBM. In response Rev. Kotali wrote on 14 October:

Dear Rev. Prince, Thank you so much for buying the OBM engine for Sasamuqa Hospital. The staff and patients will be very happy indeed to hear the good news that the health services continue on because of your love with great support. Please convey our Greetings and Appreciation to your finance committee members as well as members of the Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Board in New Zealand.

Mission and Ecumenical Board having discussed the need decided to pay the full amount of NZ \$ 9,248.00. Rev. Kotali stated, Tomorrow I am going up to Koleasi village, inland of Guadalcanal to

attend the Assembly Executive Meeting for one week. I will be back in Honiara on Thursday next week and on Friday I will collect the OBM engine.

Rev. Kotali followed it with another note on 23 October:

Dear Rev. Prince, I returned to Honiara yesterday and confirmed that the fund is already appeared is the company" bank account.

Today I organized the certificate of tax exemption with the company and tomorrow the OBM engine will be transported to Sasamuqa per MV Channealla leaving Honiara on Sunday 25th October, 2015.

In addition, Mission and Ecumenical Board also met the costs NZ \$ 4,501.00 towards wiring of the wards in Sasamuqa Hospital.

HELENA GOLDIE HOSPITAL [HGH] AND SEA AMBULANCE

M&E paid NZ \$ 48,117.75 towards the cost of Sea Ambulance for Helena Goldie Hospital on 25 November 2015. The sea ambulance to be named “Marama Davinia” in memory of Davinia Taylor who served in Helena Goldie Hospital. The director M&E is waiting to see the developments in Helena Goldie Hospital during his visit to Solomon Islands in April 2016.

In addition to the sea ambulance, M&E funded the building of two additional self-contained paid facility rooms for the hospital at a cost of NZ \$ 9,781.00. The work is progressing and due to be completed before Christmas.

With regard to a doctor, the acting secretary John Sasabule informed the director M&E: At the AEC I met up with Rev Dr Cliff Bird who is taking over negotiations for a Fijian doctor for HGH from the Fiji Methodist Church; it looks promising and we are looking at mid-2016 for the Fijian doctor for 2 years. At the health conference the Ministry of Health assured us that they would be sending doctors under locum contract, with an incentive package from our National Fisheries Development at Noro. A locum doctor is now at post, much to the relief of Andrew Telokana, the director of nursing. We hope and pray that the doctor from Fiji will be available to work in HGH from 2016. ****

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