



FOR ACTION

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Original

## Report of the Message Committee rev

### Introductory Note

Every assembly of the World Council of Churches has released a message to convey the experience of the assembly and the inspirational nature of its work. We offer this message to be read in every congregation of our member churches, and published in all church media. We hope this message may be widely translated and used. It would be good to see it discussed and dissected, pondered over, and prayed over, because it represents the deliberations and prayers of over 4000 people who participated in the assembly, as we seek the unity Christ offers. We entrust this message now to you, asking you to hand it on to all Christians and people of goodwill, that together we might unite in discovering how Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.

### A Call to Act Together

*"The Love of Christ urges us on." (2 Cor. 5:14, NRSV)*

#### "Come, follow me!"

1. From the time he journeyed on earth, and even in this present moment, Jesus unceasingly addresses these words to every human being. Jesus' life, words, and actions are a constant invitation to movement – from one physical place to another, from one group of people to another, from one mindset to another. Above all, amid the problems of the world, Jesus calls us to come to him and to abide in his love, a love which is offered for all the world (cf. Matt. 11:28).
2. The very last book of the Bible, Revelation, speaks of ancient forces of human suffering at work in the world: war, death, disease, and famine. As the assembly of the World Council of Churches gathered in Karlsruhe in 2022, we were conscious of their manifestations in the world today. In their wake come injustice and discrimination, where those who have power often use it to oppress others rather than to build inclusion, justice, and peace.
3. Individuals, peoples, and countries also face catastrophes arising directly from an irresponsible and broken relationship with creation that has led to ecological injustice and climate crisis. As the climate emergency accelerates, so does the suffering experienced by impoverished and marginalized people.
4. Yet continuing our pilgrimage together as an assembly of the World Council of Churches, our mood has been one of anticipation and hope, and even joy, because through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's invitation remains open to everyone, in fact to the whole of creation.

5. *“Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.”* This love, in answer to the cries of those who are suffering, compels us to come to him in solidarity and to respond and act for justice. We are summoned to be reconciled in God’s love, and to witness to that love revealed in Christ (1 John 4:9-11).

6. Reconciliation is a movement toward God and toward each other. It implies a readiness to listen to God and to one another. It is a conversion of the heart, from selfishness and apathy to inclusion and service, acknowledging our interdependence with creation. We confess that, even as we desire with our whole hearts to serve God and our neighbour, we have found ourselves failing, disagreeing, and sometimes walking in opposite directions. We confess that we need the transformative power of Christ’s love to move to a world truly reconciled and united.

7. Christians, and the structures that we have built, have been complicit in the abuse of others, and we must repent and join in this movement of reconciliation. In the face of war, inequality, and sins against creation today, Christ’s love calls us all to repentance, reconciliation, and justice.

### **Our journey together**

8: Amid all our diversity, we have relearned in our assembly that there is a pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity to be undertaken together.

Meeting together in Germany, we learn the cost of war and the possibility of reconciliation;  
Hearing the word of God together, we recognize our common calling;  
Listening and talking together, we become closer neighbours;  
Lamenting together, we open ourselves to each other’s pain and suffering;  
Working together, we consent to common action;  
Celebrating together, we delight in each other’s joys and hopes;  
Praying together, we discover the richness of our traditions and the pain of our divisions.

### **“Go into the whole world”**

9. From the time of his ascension into heaven, and even in this present moment, Christ unceasingly gives this command to all who follow him.

10. As reconciliation brings us closer to God and each other, it opens the way toward a unity founded in God’s love. As Christians we are called to dwell in Christ’s love and to be one (John 17). Such unity, which is a gift from God, and which arises from reconciliation and is grounded in his love, enables us to address the world’s urgent problems. We will find a strength to act from a unity founded in Christ’s love, for it enables us to learn the things that make for peace, to transform division into reconciliation, and to work for the healing of our living planet. Christ’s love will sustain all of us in the task of embracing everyone and overcoming exclusion.

11. We have tasted the experience of such love as we gathered from 352 member churches with our ecumenical partners, friends from other faith communities, and from all regions of the world to seek unity amid our diversity. Together we have listened to voices often marginalized in the world: women, youth, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples.

12. We long for a wider movement, the reconciliation and unity of all humanity, and indeed of the entire cosmos. This would be a unity in which God establishes justice, an equal place for all, through which creation may be renewed and strengthened. We rely on Christ’s love as we act and advocate for climate justice. We join our voices with the Amsterdam assembly (1948) that “war is contrary to the will of God,” and the Nairobi assembly (1975) that “racism is a sin against God.” We lament that we have to repeat these statements.

13. In our assembly, we have used many words, but from these we have fashioned a new resolve. Now we ask God's assistance to transform our commitments into action. We commit ourselves to working with all people of good will. As we reflect on the fruits of our work in Karlsruhe, we invite all to become pilgrims together. For in Christ, all things will be made new. His love which is open to all, including the last, the least, and the lost, and is offered to all, can move and empower us in a pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity.