



World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

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Geneva, 31 October 2023

A Message to The Most Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit

Rev. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary

Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God.—Eccl. 44

We at the World Council of Churches congratulate you, Bishop Olav, on your receipt of this much-deserved award and recognition for your decades of ecumenical work and its manifest achievements.

Through your early service to the Church of Norway, then your tenure as WCC general secretary, and your subsequent labours as presiding bishop, you have changed the landscape of the ecumenical movement and enhanced the effectiveness of its action and advocacy in the world.

Through your theological insights into mutual accountability, you have moved the churches beyond mere tolerance of their diversity or patching up of their divisions to envision and encourage the genuine reform that member churches must undertake to be fully accountable to their faith, their people, and their sister churches in the fellowship. This mutual accountability moves the ecumenical churches to consequential change and whole-hearted engagement toward a sustainable world.

Through your emphatic stress on the cross of Christ, you have illumined the necessity for and cost of genuine solidarity, the measure of Christian love, and the mystery of God's redemptive presence among us.

Through your stewardship of the World Council of Churches, you have steered the WCC toward sustainability and ensured justice to its retired staff.

Through launching and leading the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, you have reframed the ecumenical mandate and lifted up the transformative journey of faith to which our shared discipleship invites and calls us for the sake of the world.

Through your leadership of international ecumenical initiatives for just peace and social justice, you have held up the inviolability of our God-given human dignity and its concrete expression in structures of economic justice, gender justice, and global health.

Through your outreach to churches outside the ecumenical fellowship, to leaders and organisations of other faiths, and to all people of good will, you have expanded the horizon of ecumenical engagement for human fraternity and cooperative action for social and environmental change.

Through your own pilgrimages to and with churches around the world, you have embraced the global role that the churches and the ecumenical movement can play in supporting each other, achieving justice, securing peace, and ensuring sustainability.

In short, your ecumenical leadership has not only encouraged us to account for our hope in Jesus Christ but also to live it in dedicated, transformative ways.

For all these reasons and so much more, we salute you, Bishop Olav, true Ecumenical Pilgrim of Hope.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Pillay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "P".

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches