



World Council of Churches

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Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera
Evangelical Christian Church in
Halmahera (GMIH)

Geneva, 30 September 2023

Greetings to the 2nd Annual Synod Assembly of the Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH)

Rev. Dr Jerry Pillay

General Secretary, World Council of Churches

To all of you gathered in the second Annual Assembly of the GMIH Synod: Many thanks to you and to your church president, the Rev. Dr. Demianus Ice, and church secretary Rev. Abram Ugu for this opportunity to participate, albeit virtually, and to address you today.

I hope that this message can convey the hopes of the whole ecumenical fellowship of the World Council of Churches and my heartfelt prayers that your gathering will bolster your unity, strengthen your resolve, and further solidify your shared commitment to walk as disciples of our Lord, Jesus Christ in the North Moluccas.

For almost 75 years, the Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH) has consistently witnessed to and professed its Christian faith in its congregational life, strong mission work, commitment to theological formation, and openness to interfaith dialogue. Through massive social change, frequent turmoil, and personal danger, you, the people of God in Halmahera, have persevered not just in your faith in God and commitment to each other, but also in lending your hearts and minds to constructive dialogue and interchange with your neighbours.

These last years have been especially difficult ones for you, I know. Yet you inspire us in the global fellowship, the whole *oikoumene*, We see you persevere, united as people of faith, despite upheavals and turmoil. We admire you, as you witness publicly and assume agency against extremism and injustice. And we marvel that, despite years of painful history and ongoing suspicions, you continue to open yourselves to reconciliation and to life together in peace.

Through your important witness and work, you teach us in ways directly pertinent to all churches and perhaps especially to other churches in South Asia and East Asia, which also struggle with economic transformation, complex colonial legacies, ethnic tensions, and religious extremism.

From you we learn that our commitment to Jesus and to his way is not a barrier that segregates us and sets us apart in some exclusive group or identity but an authorisation and motive, indeed a command, to reach out in love to the whole world, as God does, even and especially to those who are different, even hostile to us. As the theme of the WCC's 11th Assembly put it, "Christ's love moves us to reconciliation and unity."

That is why I was heartened to learn that you meet this year under the theme and banner of Christ, the Alpha and Omega, and with the pledge to remain united, unified, and acting always in Christ.

Indeed, it is Christ that unites us, within the GMIH and in the whole *oikoumene*, in determined solidarity. It is Christ whose life and message announce the reconciliation of all humanity in the all-inclusive reign of God. And it is Christ crucified who opens his arms to the whole world with a love that embraces all people and all creation.

So, as you join hands and hearts in these days for worship and fellowship and deliberation, we in the wider fellowship greet you and salute you and hope to encourage you in your faith, your journey, and your shared labours. May God bless you and keep you safe and bring great fruit from your time together!

Your brother in Christ,

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