



Christ's love  
moves the world  
to reconciliation  
and unity

World Council of Churches

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# Christian Unity and the Churches' Common Witness

The plenary is an occasion to reflect on what Christian unity means today and the new horizons for the mission of the church. The reconciling love of Christ summons Christians to concrete actions of unity and common witness. In Matthew 20:20-28, Jesus teaches the disciples about love and humility in service. The love of Christ becomes the mark of true leadership, the foundation of commitment to Christian unity (*koinonia*), public witness (*martyria*) and the call to serve (*diakonia*).

The plenary will challenge the churches to examine the quality of their companionship and togetherness on their common journey in Christ. The search for “visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship” includes addressing what separates the churches. Christian unity and mission are at the heart of our common calling (John 17:21). The love of Christ transforms our discipleship and invites us to proclaim and participate in his ministry of love and reconciliation. This requires acknowledging and repenting for the wrongs of the past, restoring justice and peace, healing memories and acting with forgiveness.

Objectives:

- Challenge the churches towards growth in humility, love, mutual accountability and service.
- Express ecclesiological distinctions as opportunities for mutual understanding and enrichment, while highlighting what binds us together.
- Share concrete stories of common actions towards unity and transforming discipleship.

The biblical anchor text is Matthew 20:20-28.

## Welcome

### Announcements for participants and assembly greetings

#### Introduction

The moderator, Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, introduces the plenary and welcomes the presenters.

#### Unity of Christ's church serves God's mission in the world

The Archbishop Most Rev. Justin Welby reflects on unity, mission and reconciliation in the fellowship and the ecumenical movement.

*Interlude of instrumental music*

### **Christian unity and the churches common witness: walking together**

Panel discussion on the accomplishments and challenges with regard to “Christian unity” and “mission” since the WCC 10th Assembly. A video will highlight key moments of Christian unity and the churches' common witness (mission) as a fellowship, and progress made in the relationships with the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostals and other ecumenical partners.

### **Christian unity and the churches common witness: our common call for the future**

Panel discussion on mutual accountability and witnessing to the love of Christ in rapidly changing landscapes and horizons for the future.

### **Announcement of the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea**

Through song and dance Oikoumene Pasifika will announce the coming anniversary of Nicaea 2025.

### **Concluding remarks**

#### **Moderator**

**Bishop Prof Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm**, a delegate of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), is the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and served as the chair of the EKD council from 2014 to 2021.

#### **Speakers**

**Ms Lani Mireya Anaya Jiménez**, an advisor to the assembly, is a member of the Methodist Church in Mexico. She is a specialist in peace and sustainable development who works in research and practical projects related to meaningful participation of women and youth in decision-making processes.

**H.E. Most Rev. Brian Farrell**, a delegated observer to the assembly, is the secretary of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and vice-president of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism.

**Ms Bran Friesen**, a guest at the assembly and member of the Mennonite Church in Canada, serves on the executive committee of the World Student Christian Federation and WCC reference group on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. She works with Indigenous leadership and communities across Turtle Island (within Canada).

**Rev. Prof Dr Jacqueline Grey**, a delegated observer from the Pentecostal World Fellowship, is professor of biblical studies at the Alphacrucis University College in Australia. She belongs to the Australian Christian Churches movement of Pentecostal Churches.

**H.E. Metropolitan Job of Psidia**, a delegate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, is the permanent representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the World Council of Churches.

**Rev. Prof. Dr Jooseop Keum**, a delegated representative and general secretary of the Council for World Mission. He is a member of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and past WCC director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

**Rev. Canon Dr Rosemary Muthoni Mbogo**, a delegate and provincial secretary of the Anglican Church of Kenya, served as the chair of the National Council of Churches Kenya from 2012 to 2018.

**H.G. Archbishop Justin Welby**, Church of England, is the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and head *primus inter pares* of the Anglican Communion.

**Oikoumene Pasifika** is composed of young singers and musicians from the Pacific and employs song and dance inspired by Pacific traditions to celebrate creation and relationships.